Australian Government

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Broome Employment Services Evaluation Strategy

December 2024

Acknowledgement of Country

The Yawuru people are the traditional owners of the lands and waters in and around Rubibi (the town of Broome), from Bangarangara to the yalimban (south) to Wirrjinmirr (Willie Creek) to the guniyan (north), and banu (east) covering Roebuck Plains and Thangoo pastoral leases, in the Kimberley region of northern Western Australia

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations acknowledges the Yawuru people as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters surrounding Rubibi. We pay our respects to Yawuru people, culture and Elders past, present and emerging. We also extend our respects to First Nations people who travel to Rubibi to live, learn or work.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations acknowledges diversity and respectfully uses the terms 'Indigenous' and 'First Nations people' interchangeably throughout this document.

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The document must be attributed as the *Broome Employment Services Evaluation Strategy*.

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1. Introduction

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the department) is required to progressively monitor and evaluate Australian Government employment services and programs under the terms of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (*PGPA Act*) and specific directives from Cabinet.

The Employment Evaluation Branch (EEB) in the department is responsible for planning, designing and conducting the evaluation of Broome Employment Services. The evaluation is overseen by the department's Employment and Workforce Assistant Secretaries Committee (EAC).

This strategy outlines how Broome Employment Services (operating from 1 November 2023 to 30 June 2027) will be evaluated against its objectives and intended outcomes. The Evaluation Strategy is presented in the following sections:

- Section 2 provides an overview of Broome Employment Services, including employment services pre and post Broome Employment Services
- Section 3 outlines evaluation objectives, scope and guiding principles for conducting the evaluation, including the program logic
- Section 4 describes evaluation approaches, including key evaluation questions, methods and considerations for cultural safety
- Section 5 covers governance and research ethics for the evaluation, as well as risks and limitations
- Section 6 presents the timeline of key evaluation activities and reporting, as well as how the evaluation findings will be disseminated.

2. Overview of Broome Employment Services

The needs of the local Broome community are unique and complex, largely impacting First Nations people in a thin labour market.

In the 2021 Census, First Nations people made up 28.6% of people in the Broome Local Government Area[1] (compared to 3.3% in Western Australia).[2] The employment services in the region are expected to service a caseload of mostly First Nations clients.

Broome Employment Services commenced on 1 November 2023 and is delivered by Job Pathways, supported by locally based Australian Public Service (APS) personnel.

2.1 Prior to Broome Employment Services

Workforce Australia Employment Services (Workforce Australia Services) is the mainstream government-funded employment service. It commenced on 4 July 2022 in all non-remote regions of Australia, with the exception of Yarrabah and Norfolk Island.

[1] The Broome Local Government Area (as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics) is the best available data that covers a similar but not identical area to the Broome Employment Region (as defined by the department).
[2] Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 Census All persons QuickStats, Broome Local Government Area

In 2023 the sole Workforce Australia Services provider in the Broome Employment Region requested to hand back its licence to the department.

In response to the servicing gap arising from the provider's market exit, the Australian Government announced in the 2023–24 Budget that it is providing $5.6 million over 5 years to ensure continuity of employment services in the Broome Employment Region. This led to the design of Broome Employment Services and the engagement of a new First Nations provider. In the 2024–25 Budget, the Australian Government announced the extension of Broome Employment Services to 30 June 2027.

2.2 Broome Employment Services

Broome Employment Services aims to:

- Maintain service continuity to around 700 mainly First Nations clients on the caseload in Broome.
- Trial a new model for employment services that could be more sustainable and better suited to the unique local context and complex needs of the Broome caseload.
- Build the capability and capacity of the First Nations provider.
- Build the capability of the APS to deliver and complement employment services.
- Contribute to several Priority Reforms outlined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The design of Broome Employment Services is based on the existing model for Workforce Australia Services, with modifications to mitigate the risks of provider financial viability, support capability and capacity building for the local community and provider and ensure services can be responsive to local needs. These key features include support from locally based APS personnel, upfront capital for the provider, and a new payment structure. A new performance framework for Broome Employment Services will reflect the objectives of the Broome Employment Services Deed.

More information on Broome Employment Services is presented at **Appendix 7.1**.

2.3 Considerations for future servicing arrangements in the Broome region

During 2024 a consultation process will be conducted with the local community and the Broome Employment Services provider to develop elements of a place-based model for future consideration when the trial ceases in June 2027.

More information on the consultation process for consideration for future servicing arrangements is presented at **Appendix 7.2**.

3. Evaluation framework

This section outlines the objectives of the evaluation, and principles to guide the planning, management and conduct of the evaluation, including a program logic of Broome Employment Services model.

3.1 Evaluation objectives

The evaluation will:

1. Examine the appropriateness and effectiveness of Broome Employment Services.
2. Examine local community and provider engagement in the consultation process for future servicing arrangements in the Broome region.

The evaluation findings from Broome Employment Services will contribute to ongoing learning and the evidence base for the development and improvement of place-based employment services.

3.2 Guiding principles

Consistent with good evaluation practices, the evaluation of Broome Employment Services will follow defined evaluation principles,[3] including:

- a clearly defined evaluation objective and scope that is fit for purpose and includes key evaluation questions and a data framework
- being impartial and independent from the policymaking, implementation and program management at all stages of the evaluation process
- ensuring credibility through the expertise and independence of the evaluation team and the transparency of the evaluation process, including publication of the Evaluation Strategy and Evaluation Reports
- delivering relevant and useful evaluation findings, presented clearly and concisely in a timely manner, to inform decision-making.

This evaluation also adopts the overarching principle of the whole-of-government Productivity Commission's Indigenous Evaluation Strategy[4] of **'centring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, perspectives, priorities and knowledges'** and contributes to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reforms[5] by:

- **Priority Reform 1: Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making** – identifying opportunities for engaging and ensuring First Nations people are engaged early in the evaluation design process.
- **Priority Reform 2: Building the Community-Controlled Sector** – working closely with local First Nations organisations in designing the evaluation.
- **Priority Reform 3: Transforming Government Organisations** – continually building the evaluation team's cultural capability, applying a strengths-based narrative and ensuring First Nations successes are factored into evaluation design.

[3] These defined evaluation principles are adopted from the department's Evaluation Strategy for Workforce Australia Employment Services 2022–2028
[4] Productivity Commission, Indigenous Evaluation Strategy, October 2020
[5] National Agreement on Closing the Gap, Priority Reforms

- **Priority Reform 4**: **Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level** – asking First Nations people, communities and providers what data is important and useful to help inform decisions for community.

3.3 Evaluation consultation and community collaboration

To make evaluation useful and relevant, evaluators need a good understanding of the program context and how the evaluation would benefit the stakeholders and the community. This requires active engagement with stakeholders and the community in clarifying the intent of the services, determining the measures of success and the data collection methods that are culturally appropriate.

To serve this purpose, a workshop was conducted in August 2023 by the employment evaluation team with the department's program and policy stakeholders who developed and implemented Broome Employment Services to get insights on:

- the program inputs, activities, how it is intended to work and the expected outcomes
- key evaluation questions of interest.

Community input was gathered in October 2023 in a collaboration between the employment evaluation team and local stakeholders,[6] including employers, community organisations (which refers to community representative organisations, other employment services providers, other support services providers and Registered Training Organisations) and government agencies (which refers to regional development bodies, local and state government agencies and Commonwealth Government agencies) in Broome. The focus was to understand the views on:

- what the success of Broome Employment Services looks like from stakeholders' perspectives
- culturally appropriate ways of measuring the success
- what cultural safety means to stakeholders
- other local insights to consider for the evaluation.

Inputs from the stakeholder consultation and the evaluation community collaboration were used to assist in the development of a program logic (**Section 3.4**) and the design of evaluation methods and data collection (**Section 4.2**).

More information on the evaluation community collaboration is presented at **Appendix 7.3.**

3.4 Broome Employment Services program logic

A program logic provides a visual summary of the core elements and activities of the program and the outcomes that it aims to achieve. This provides essential program information that the evaluation assesses and reveals whether and how the program works as intended.

The Broome Employment Services program logic[7] reflects stakeholder consultation and the evaluation community collaboration. In addition to employment-related outcomes, outcomes that matter to the community are also incorporated. In particular, the community highlighted the

[6] This does not include clients and Elders.
[7] Note that the consultation for future services in the Broome region is not part of the program logic.

importance of clients' wellbeing and having a positive experience with the employment services. The program logic captures the intended outcomes for:

- clients
- family and community of the client
- employers
- the provider
- the department
- others (community organisations and government agencies).

The Broome Employment Services program logic is at **Appendix 7.4.**

3.5 Evaluation scope

3.5.1 In scope

The evaluation reference period is 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2025 and the evaluation scope includes:

- Broome Employment Services
- interactions, such as referrals, with other programs and services[8]
- local community and provider engagement in the consultation process for future servicing arrangements in the Broome region.

3.5.2 Out of scope

The evaluation will not assess:

- service continuity arrangements and the transition period (April 2023 to October 2023)
- the effectiveness of the consultation planning and process for future servicing arrangements
- effects on clients and the community from programs and services other than Broome Employment Services
- Workforce Australia Online[9]
- broader social and economic imperatives with the potential to influence social and economic development in Broome, such as ownership of land and other assets and Native Title determinations.

[8] Including but not limited to: Disability Employment Services, the Community Development Program, Career Transition Assistance, Employability Skills Training, Transition to Work, ParentsNext, the Local Jobs program, and other social and health services.

[9] Workforce Australia Employment Services primarily consist of Workforce Australia Services (by providers) and Workforce Australia Online. While Workforce Australia Services in the Broome region was replaced by Broome Employment Services from 1 November 2023, Workforce Australia Online remains the same.

4. Evaluation approach

The evaluation approach is guided by key evaluation questions and characteristics of Broome Employment Services. As it operates within an employment services and environmental landscape characterised by change, there is a need for flexibility in evaluation design and implementation. The views gathered from the evaluation community collaboration are also taken into consideration to ensure the evaluation approach meets the needs of the community and is culturally appropriate.

4.1 Key evaluation questions

The key evaluation questions to meet the evaluation objectives outlined in **Section 3.1** are:

EQ1. Is the Broome service model appropriate in meeting and responding to community needs and expectations?

EQ2. What are the experiences of and satisfaction with the service among clients, employers and the broader community?

EQ3. What are the impacts and outcomes of the service on clients, employers and among the broader community?

EQ4. To what extent has the embedded APS personnel model built the capability and capacity of the provider and the APS to deliver and complement employment services and coordinate services?

EQ5. What are the drivers of and the extent to which community stakeholders are engaged in the consultation process for future servicing arrangements?

In assessing the appropriateness and effectiveness, where possible, specific cohorts, including First Nations people and women, will be separately examined.

In addressing these key evaluation questions, the evaluation will provide learnings on the extent to which the Broome Employment Services model could be replicated, including in other thin labour markets.

The evaluation design is flexible to allow it to adapt to changes in policy, to address changes in relative importance of issues and the availability of resources and data. Sub evaluation questions will be developed during the evaluation and finalised over time so that adjustment of evaluation focus is possible over the evaluation period.

A data framework mapping areas of focus to the evaluation objectives is presented at **Appendix 7.7**.

4.2 Methods

The evaluation will use a mixed method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Qualitative and quantitative methods are complementary and ensure that understanding is improved by integrating different ways of knowing.

4.2.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research provides an in-depth understanding of the process of change, of what works, what does not and why. It focuses on identifying factors contributing to outcomes and may also be used to fill emerging data gaps and respond to emerging questions.

Qualitative data collection

The data collection method for qualitative research is typically through focus group discussions and in-depth interviews.

The community feedback also indicates that First Nations people's ways of knowing include:

- stories and storytelling
- seeing and feeling the impact in the community
- asking local people.

Other data sources suggested during the evaluation community collaboration are:

- client file notes (where available)
- day in the life of an employment consultant
- local departmental staff to keep track of achievements
- good news stories on collaboration.

Stories of significant changes present a strong qualitative indicator for the impact of the program.

Areas of focus for qualitative research

The qualitative research will provide insights that are broader than only employment-related outcomes, including into:

- clients' experience with Broome Employment Services, the development of clients' human capability and linkages to other support services
- impacts on the family and friends of clients and the broader community
- employers' experience with Broome Employment Services, meeting employers' needs and employers' support for clients
- the provider's quality of service, operational conditions and capability
- the department's administration of Broome Employment Services, trust in government and the impact of local APS personnel
- other community organisations' experiences with Broome Employment Services and relationships between services.

For further details, see the intended outcomes described in the program logic (**Appendix 7.4**) and the data framework mapping areas of focus to the evaluation objectives (**Appendix 7.7**).

Research participant groups

An inclusive list of research participants in the qualitative research will enable the gathering of various perspectives, including perspectives from First Nations people. The qualitative research will involve the following groups:

- Broome Employment Services clients
- the Broome Employment Services provider
- Elders and community members, including clients' family members, friends and mentors
- other employment services or support services providers
- local businesses/employers
- Registered Training Organisations
- the department
- the government Employment Facilitator
- Commonwealth Government agencies, including Services Australia and the National Indigenous Australians Agency
- local and state government agencies
- other community stakeholders (not listed above but involved in the consultation for future services).

4.2.2 Quantitative analysis

Quantitative analysis can provide a summary of the extent of program impacts and outcomes being achieved, using administrative data. The administrative data on outcomes and activities from the department's Employment Services System (ESS) will be the primary source, and data from the Research and Evaluation Database (RED) and the Personal Level Integrated Data Asset (PLIDA) may also be used. Where appropriate, survey data will be collected about clients' experience and wellbeing.

Measuring employment-related outcomes

Key measures of Broome Employment Services effectiveness may draw on proxy measures of individuals' progress to employment, employment and employment sustainability.

This includes:

- progress to employment, including engagement in support services and addressing non-vocational barriers
- work-ready outcomes, including certificates I and II
- conversions from training to employment
- part-time employment and seasonal employment for outcomes
- exit from or reduced reliance on income support
- proxy outcome measure, using provider outcomes payments.

Estimating net impact

Estimating net impact in the evaluation refers to quantifying the impact of the program on the intended outcomes, in comparison to those in the absence of the program. A net impact study, usually involving statistical modelling, will provide findings that meet higher evidence standards than findings from descriptive summary or insights of a qualitative nature, as it offers a more definite claim that the impact is attributed to the program. Refer to **Appendix 7.5** for the standards of evidence.

The net impact study requires the identification of a group of people who are not in Broome Employment Services but are similar to Broome Employment Services clients (namely, a

counterfactual). There are also data requirements such as the availability of individual characteristics data and outcome measures for the counterfactual.

There may be limitations to the availability and quality of the department's administrative data in the Broome Employment Region. The way of life in the Kimberley region may also mean proxies for employment ordinarily used by the department may not be reliable. Collectively, these challenges mean that quantitative analysis of employment outcomes and exits may be difficult, as these outcomes are under reported and may not be a reliable proxy for employment. Attempting to estimate net impact (that is, attributing any change in outcomes and/or exits to the Broome Employment Services model) using these measures may be limited.

A summary of the department's data and limitations is presented at **Appendix 7.6**.

4.2.3 Measuring clients' wellbeing

Positive experiences and improved wellbeing for clients are key success measures for Broome Employment Services. Wellbeing measures will be aligned with First Nations people's way of expressing wellbeing, as quoted from the Yawuru Wellbeing Project:[10]

> *In the western notion of subjective wellbeing expressions such as happiness can invoke a host of meanings and interpretation. Indigenous peoples have long explained and described wellbeing from a relational perspective, with the Yawuru notion of liyan reflecting a continuity and connection between the mind, body, spirit, culture and land.*

Where appropriate, qualitative and/or quantitative data collection tools and qualitative analytical frameworks will be aligned with the Mabu Liyan domain and indicator areas.

4.3 Cultural safety and capability

Given the nature of Broome Employment Services, one important consideration is to ensure the evaluation is culturally safe for First Nations people and the employment evaluation team is equipped with adequate cultural capability.

Cultural safety

Cultural safety means showing respect. When visiting the community to conduct fieldwork, culturally safe approaches may include but are not limited to:

- considering cultural protocols – providing comfortable spaces for fieldwork (for example, separate interviews for men and women) and having options for individual interviews or focus groups
- making use of existing gatherings for fieldwork (where appropriate to do so)
- considering sensitive periods and/or events for fieldwork
- using plain English language when communicating with the community
- having strengths-based conversations.

[10] Yawuru Wellbeing Project, Yap and Yu (2016), Community wellbeing from the ground up: a Yawuru example, Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre Research Report 3/16.

Further advice will be sought from the locally based APS personnel, the department's engagement team/Indigenous Liaison Officer and the data collection business (if available) to ensure the evaluation is culturally appropriate.

Cultural capability

Feedback from the evaluation community collaboration is that the employment evaluation team should include members with an understanding of the local community and cultural obligations, protocols and safety.

Where possible, a suitable data collection business (which preferably has connections to the Broome region) will work with the evaluation team to help bridge the gap and build the evaluation team's cultural capability. The role of a data collection business will not only assist with the conduct of the fieldwork in a way that is culturally appropriate to the local community but also help share findings that are presented through the world views of First Nations people.

5. Evaluation management

5.1 Key stakeholders

Key internal and external stakeholders will be consulted, where appropriate. To the extent possible, the employment evaluation team will incorporate the views of stakeholders in the evaluation design and implementation. Key departmental stakeholders include but are not limited to:

- policy and program areas (including the senior responsible officer of Broome Employment Service)
- embedded APS personnel
- government Employment Facilitator.

Key external stakeholders include but are not limited to:

- relevant individuals and community organisations (including First Nations individuals and community organisations)
- the Broome Employment Services provider
- other affected government agencies (including Services Australia and the National Indigenous Australians Agency)
- other government agencies that provide analysis (including Jobs and Skills Australia).

5.2 Governance

In line with the defined evaluation principles, this evaluation is impartial and independent from the policymaking, implementation and program management at all stages of the evaluation process.

The evaluation has been designed and will be conducted in close collaboration with the departmental working group for Broome Employment Services, and evaluation documents are provided to the EAC for noting.

The responsible program area will contribute to the evaluation by:

- informing the evaluation team of key program issues which may affect the evaluation
- assisting with contacting and visiting the Broome Employment Services provider and other participating organisations, facilitating data provision and evaluation participation.

Where possible, a community governance arrangement is to be established, in line with the evaluation principle of placing First Nations clients' and community stakeholders' voices at the centre of the evaluation.

Key findings from the evaluation will be provided to the responsible program area, departmental working group and EAC as they become available.

5.3 Research ethics

The research activities will be undertaken in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. Where required, a review by a registered Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) will be undertaken by the data collection business supporting the evaluation.

5.4 Risk and limitations

There are several risks and limitations to the conduct and the quality of the evaluation, including:

- Data quality and availability: administrative data, including Employment Services System data, is the primary data source for employment-related outcome measures.
- Primary data collection: qualitative data is the primary source. The evaluation will be limited if the qualitative research coverage and engagement is limited.
- Access to income support data: the evaluation assumes that the department will have timely access to income support data from Services Australia and that this data will be similar to what has previously been shared. Any changes may impact the scope of the evaluation.
- Changing policy and program elements: changes to policy and program settings make it more difficult to attribute effects and outcomes to the given program settings.
- Meeting community expectations: community stakeholders aspired to an evaluation that would capture wide-ranging outcomes more than employment outcomes. The scope of the evaluation is limited to what is achievable in the timeframe and utilising the data available, as well as most relevant to evaluating the service itself.
- Resource management: the evaluation depends on the availability of adequate funding for external research and recruiting and retaining internal staff with appropriate skills.
- Cultural capability: any lack of adequate cultural capability of the evaluation team members could affect the qualitative research coverage and engagement.

6. Timeline, reporting and dissemination

6.1 Timeline of key evaluation activities

Timeline	Key evaluation activities
Ongoing	Close collaboration with the relevant policy and program areas for the design and conduct of the evaluation, as well as timely provision of early insights to facilitate evidence-based continuous improvement.
February 2024	Evaluation Strategy noted by the department's EAC.
April – May 2024	HREC application submission.
May – June 2024	Commence fieldwork on local community and provider engagement in the consultation for future services in the Broome region.
July – August 2024	Qualitative research of early insights into the awareness, experiences and impacts of Broome Employment Services.
December 2024	Deliver the interim report of early insights of Broome Employment Services and an assessment of the local community and provider engagement in the consultation of future services.
May – June 2025	Qualitative research into the impact and effectiveness of Broome Employment Services.
December 2025	Deliver the qualitative research report.
July 2024 – December 2025	Undertake quantitative analysis.
June 2026	Deliver the final report of the assessment of the impact and effectiveness of Broome Employment Services.

6.2 Key deliverables

6.2.1 Ongoing sharing of insights

The evaluation team will provide regular and timely fieldwork reports to policy and program areas to facilitate evidence-based continuous improvement. The evaluation team will also contribute to any reviews or inquiries as evidence becomes available. This includes presentations of findings to departmental senior management committees as appropriate.

6.2.2 Interim report

The interim report will examine the local community and provider engagement in the consultation process for future servicing arrangements and provide early qualitative insights into Broome Employment Services.

The interim report is expected to be completed by December 2024.

6.2.3 Final report

This will assess the overall effectiveness and appropriateness of Broome Employment Services and focus on short-term outcomes. The final report will be informed by both qualitative and quantitative research, where possible.

The final report is expected to be completed by June 2026.

6.3 Dissemination

The evaluation team will provide regular and timely fieldwork reports to policy and program areas, and to departmental senior management committees as appropriate.

The evaluation team will also provide timely updates to the Broome community in a format that meets the needs of the community. During the evaluation collaboration process, stakeholders stated that evaluation plans and findings should be shared with the community, with summaries presented in a visual format and plain English used for reporting.

The expectation is that both the interim and final evaluation reports will be published.

7. Appendices

7.1 More information on Broome Employment Services

Client eligibility

People are eligible for Broome Employment Services if they live in the Broome Employment Region and:

- are on income support
- have multiple or significant barriers to employment
- are unable to use Workforce Australia Online
- have exited Workforce Australia Online after 12 months (as they are not engaged in work or training) and
- are not referred to Disability Employment Services or eligible for Transition to Work.

How the new servicing arrangements differ from Workforce Australia Services

Key differences of Broome Employment Services include:

- **New payment structure** – in addition to the 4-, 12- and 26-week outcome payments and the associated Very Long Term Unemployment Bonus under Workforce Australia Services, new employment outcome payments include:
    - 8-week outcomes
    - 18-week outcomes
    - permanent employment bonus.
- **Upfront capital for the new provider** – to support capability and capacity building activities to deliver outcomes for clients, employers and Broome Employment Services. This could include funding for staff development, such as First Nations cultural competency or case management training, the development of tools and resources to improve service delivery, and purchasing software to streamline business processes.
- **Support from APS personnel** – APS personnel work alongside provider staff to deliver local area engagement and coordination, advocacy and awareness raising across the services system to streamline the user experience and improve outcomes for clients. APS personnel also support the capability and capacity of provider staff to deliver improvements to employment services and employment outcomes for clients.
- **Performance Framework** – to account for the differences between the new model and Workforce Australia Services, provider performance will be measured through a separate performance framework.

7.2 More information on consultation for future service arrangements

During 2024 a consultation process will be conducted with the local community and the Broome Employment Services provider to develop elements of a place-based model for future consideration when the trial ceases in June 2027.

The objective is to consult on specific areas for innovation, focused on embedding a stronger case management approach to support clients to navigate the services system to prepare for and move towards employment.

Key elements to be considered in the consultation process include:

- Client Outcomes Framework – to outline key foundational areas that support progress to and achievement of employment outcomes, including housing, physical and mental health and wellbeing, family functioning and social support, justice, education and training.
- Service delivery model – to outline the underlying principles, interrelated processes and interactions involved in delivering employment services in Broome (for example, service culture, employee engagement, quality of services and client experience).
- Use of data to drive service delivery – to outline ways for the provider and the department to better use local labour market data and caseload data to drive decision-making and continuous improvements in services.

7.3 Evaluation community collaboration

Elements of the evaluation strategy have been designed in collaboration with representatives of the Broome community, as well as departmental officers involved in the development and implementation of the program. The rationale for this is to ensure the active engagement of these key stakeholders in determining the measures of success and the methodology for collecting data. This approach is expected to increase the likelihood that both the Broome community and the department benefit from the findings of the evaluation.

7.3.1 Community stakeholders engaged

Collaboration occurred with stakeholder groups that represent the broader Broome community and/or deliver services to the Broome community, including Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. Stakeholder groups engaged included:

- community representative organisations
- other employment services providers
- other support services providers
- Registered Training Organisations
- regional development bodies
- employers
- local and state government agencies
- Commonwealth Government agencies with a presence in Broome.

7.3.2 The evaluation community collaboration process

The evaluation collaborative approach has involved 3 rounds of engagement with the Broome community, as outlined below:

1. An informal introductory **'meet and greet'** visit (14–18 August 2023), facilitated by the department's representatives from the Broome Taskforce.
2. **Collaborative workshops** (9–13 October 2023) to discuss the evaluation approach, including:
    - what the success of Broome Employment Services looks like from stakeholders' perspectives
    - what are culturally appropriate ways of measuring the success
    - what cultural safety means to stakeholders
    - other local insights to consider for the evaluation.
3. A **follow-up** engagement (16–19 October 2023) to share with stakeholders what we heard in the collaborative workshop and check if we missed anything important or misunderstood what was shared with us.

7.3.3 How the community stakeholders' views have been used

These visits to Broome were valuable, as they provided community members with an opportunity to meet the evaluation team (both formally and informally), learn more about the evaluation and why it is being conducted, and understand that community members' views and opinions are valued and will help determine the success measures against which the program is being evaluated. The visits are expected to also help community members feel safe and comfortable participating in a discussion once the recruitment and fieldwork phase of the evaluation commences.

These visits have also provided the evaluation team with a wealth of information on the history of Broome, issues and challenges within the community, current and previous approaches to the delivery of employment services, and community members' aspirations for an employment service.

Overall, contributions from community members to the collaboration on the evaluation design have been used to identify the outcomes the community values and how to measure these outcomes in a culturally safe way.

Community members aspire to have employment services that deliver a holistic service to the community and address many non-vocational barriers to employment. They hope for an evaluation that will capture these wide-ranging outcomes.[11]

The scope of the evaluation is limited to what is achievable in the timeframe and to utilising the data available, as well as most relevant to evaluating the service itself.

[11] Note: A consultation process will be conducted with the local community and new provider to develop elements of a place-based model for future services arrangements beyond June 2023 (see **Section 7.2**). Future servicing arrangements for the Broome Employment Region will also be considered in the context of recommendations by the Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services. Additionally, the Australian Government has announced it will replace the Community Development Program. For more information, visit www.niaa.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/employment/remote-jobs

7.4 Program logic – Broome Employment Services

Program objective: Trial a new model for employment services, from 1 November 2023 to 30 June 2027, that supports clients to establish an employment pathway to job readiness and achieve sustainable employment through an individualised case management approach; and that addresses skills needs within the local labour market by connecting suitable clients to employer vacancies and supporting employers through a tailored approach.

Inputs

Funding

- $5.6 million over 5 years (including Capability and Capacity Fund)

Program resources

- Deed and variations
- Program guidelines
- Training materials
- IT systems

Partners

- Clients
- Business/industry
- Provider and staff
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations ('department')
- Services Australia
- National Indigenous Australians Agency
- Other federal, state and local government organisations
- Other employment services providers (e.g. CDP, DES, TtW)
- Employment Facilitator and support staff
- Registered Training Organisations
- Other support services providers
- Local community and organisations
- Employment and business peak bodies
- Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations

Activities

Provider

- Provide case management to clients
- Collaborate with local APS personnel
- Meet reporting requirements
- Establish, maintain and continuously improve governance structures
- Establish, maintain and continuously improve service delivery model and business processes
- Undertake stakeholder engagement
- Recruitment, training and development of staff

Department

- Program and contract management, including performance management, risk/issues management and assurance
- Local APS personnel undertakes:
  - stakeholder engagement and coordination
  - advocacy and awareness raising across the services system
  - administrative support to stakeholders
- Undertake evaluation and monitoring with feedback loops established into policy and program development

Outputs

Clients

- Job Seeker Snapshot completed
- Job Plan agreed and signed
- Suitable vocational and non-vocational activities undertaken
- Mutual obligations reported

Provider

- Initial interview conducted
- Job Plan completed
- Regular appointments conducted
- Flexibility in the systems design utilised
- Referral to suitable vocational and non-vocational activities/supports
- Post placement support provided to clients and employers
- Employment Fund expenditure targeted at support for clients to address their specific barriers to employment
- Wage subsidy support tailored to the needs of the client and employer
- Clients screened to ensure appropriate job matches to employment vacancies
- Capacity and Capability Building Plan approved
- Services appropriately delivered and assurance and reporting requirements met

Department

- Provider performance assessed
- Regular reporting on progress
- Key tender representations agreed
- Impact of learnings examined and incorporated iteratively

Assumptions and External Factors

Assumptions

- The model supports the service principles of simple, supported, connected, respectful and sustainable
- The model is able to adapt and cope with labour market changes and shocks, including seasonality
- Provider and department teams collaborate with non-profit, local, state and federal government bodies to address non-vocational and labour market issues
- There are sufficient employment and engagement projects available in the area
- Flexibility in service design and change in payment model will influence provider staffing levels, skills and expertise
- Provider maintains commitment to implement the model as designed
- DEWR and provider IT systems provide essential operational functions

External factors

- Strength of the labour market
- Employers and other stakeholders' attitude towards clients
- Provision of support services, including housing, transport, child care and health
- Transient caseload and employment region boundaries
- Services Australia's services (e.g. availability of face-to-face JSCIs/ESAts, referrals process, online servicing and automation of file review)
- Select Committee inquiry into Workforce Australia Employment Services
- Disability Employment Service policy and reforms
- Community Development Program policy and reforms
- Industry and state and local government policy

What success looks like* (short to medium-term outcomes / long term outcomes)

Clients

Experience with Broome Employment Services

- Know they have agency and choice in the activities and services they engage in
- (department) can manage their mutual obligations
- (department) trust in employment services enhanced
- (department) satisfied with employment services
  - (community) referred to the appropriate employment service
  - (community) feel safe and comfortable
  - (community) good 'liyan' – social and emotional wellbeing

Support services

- Aware of and access support services
- (community) understand how to navigate support services
- (community) individualised, targeted support

Development of human capability

- Job readiness improved
- (department) are engaged and progressing their needs and goals
  - (community) individualised progress – something just in reach (from work readiness to employment)
- (department) pathway to employment understood and developed
- (department) training, studies and vocational and non-vocational activities completed
- (department) improved capability to navigate employment and support systems and source and apply for vacancies independently
- (community) build confidence, hope and personal responsibility
- (community) better attitude to work and study
- (community) better understanding of employer expectations

Employment outcomes

- (community) less reliance on income support

* As informed by the departmental stakeholder consultation (department), evaluation community collaboration (community) or both. These outcomes are intended to guide the areas of focus for Key Evaluation Questions and will be considered alongside what is achievable in the timeframe and utilising data available, as well as most relevant to evaluating the service itself.

	• (community) ongoing engagement in support services and activities • (community) access to transport to attend services, activities and employment	• Sustainable and permanent employment secured ○ (community) gain secure permanent employment while maintaining other supports like public housing and other income support
Community	**Family** • (community) family buy-in allows participation in service • (community) family buy-in supports participation in employment • (community) family involved in wraparound support • (community) family keeps client accountable • (community) families have better financial stability and independence	**Community** • (community) inspire the next generation by being an example of another way of being • (community) support client where family connections are limited • (community) members mentor and support clients to reach their goals • (community) connection to country supported by activities • (community) skills built from employment services • (community) contributing back to the community from shared success
Business/industry	**Experience with Broome Employment Services** • Aware of employment services and provider • Engage in the employment service • Increased willingness to engage candidates from the caseload • (department) increased satisfaction, trust and use of employment services (including by employers not previously engaged) • (community) better relationship with the provider • (community) trust in employment services • (community) employers are satisfied and willing to re-engage in employment services • (community) more employers and greater variety of industries engaged	**Meeting employers' needs** • Have access to suitable candidates • (department) receive support tailored to their business/industry • (department) increased business efficiency from sustainable source of suitable candidates • (community) better understand cultural obligations and cultural safety in the workplace • (community) increase First Nations workforce diversity **Supporting clients** • (community) more entry-level jobs offered with career pathways • (community) aware of the level of support clients require to sustain employment • (community) building employers' capacity to support clients with low literacy and numeracy skills • (community) ongoing tailored support to employers for clients to sustain employment • (community) employers are more flexible to accommodate client availability
Provider	**Quality of the service** • (community) provider has positive engagement with clients • (community) know the client and their needs • (community) better use of Employment Fund to support clients to prepare for and sustain employment • (community) better administration for assurance and compliance outcomes • (community) use of flexibility in the service for local conditions **Operational conditions** • (community) better presence in the community • (community) appropriate provider staff to caseload ratios allow for more time with clients • (community) funding and outcome models support sustainability of the service • (department) operations are sustainable and financially viable	**Capability** • (department) increased capability and understanding of the individualised case management model • (department) systems built that ensure clients' agency, circumstances, individual needs, goals and choice in servicing are taken into account • (department) partnerships established and local engagement processes in place • (department) responsive and stable provider staff skilled in case management in place • (department) better capacity and capability to deliver culturally competent employment services • (department) trust and collaboration with local services • (community) better understand community needs and services available • (community) capacity, capability and confidence of provider staff built
Department	**Administering Broome Employment Services** • (department) program is implemented and demonstrates effectiveness • (department) stakeholders are aware of the new arrangements • (department) referral pathways to employment and support services streamlined ○ (community) smoother transition for clients moving between the Community Development Program and Workforce Australia • (department) employment services and referral pathways that are responsive to local needs, culturally appropriate and recognise individual needs are established • (department) contribute to Priority Reform; in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap	**Trust in government** • (department) trust in government enhanced • (department) government is a trusted partner in the region and has strong relationships with stakeholders **Local departmental staff** • (department) partnerships established and local engagement • (community) better understand local needs and can make decisions • (community) collaboration with local departmental staff leads to faster problem solving **Monitoring and evaluation** • (department) capability to assess the impact of the model built • (department) evidence built into development of employment services
Others	**Community organisations** • (community) community organisations have positive engagements with clients • (community) better awareness of and relationships between organisations and agencies • (community) respectful collaborations between organisations • (community) building capacity of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations	**Services of government agencies in the community** • (community) stability and continuity of services from engaging with various funding bodies • (community) less duplication of services • (community) better sustainability of complementary services from better referrals • (community) closer access to government to provide feedback • (community) local workforce with local knowledge can contribute to regional projects

7.5 Standards of evidence

Standards of evidence refers to how confident we can be that findings from the evaluation are accurate. The framework is an approach that helps structure how evidence is gathered, interpreted and assessed.

Table 1: NESTA Standards of Evidence

Standards of evidence	Expectation	How the evidence can be generated
Level 1	Be able to give an account of impact. This means providing a logical reason, or set of reasons, why the initiative could have an impact and why that could be an improvement on the current situation.	This is done by drawing upon relevant information and research from existing sources and consulting with relevant stakeholders. Literature review and a theory-based approach are commonly used for this level of evidence.
Level 2	Be able to show some change among those participating in the initiative. At this stage, data can begin to show effect but it will not evidence direct causality.	This is done by gathering baseline and outcome data for individuals and conducting pre and post evaluation or cohort/panel study. This is commonly done by conducting descriptive analysis.
Level 3	Be able to demonstrate that the initiative is causing the impact, by showing less impact among the similar group who do not participate in the initiative.	This is done by applying robust methods, using a control/comparison group (experimental or quasi-experimental designs), that begin to isolate the impact of the initiative. Random selection of individuals (with sufficient sample) strengthens the evidence at this level.
Level 4	Be able to explain why and how the initiative is observed to have the impact. The evaluation quantifies the impact. In addition, the initiative can deliver impact at a reasonable cost, suggesting that it could be replicated and purchased in multiple locations.	Built on the evidence of Level 3, the evaluation at this level also investigates and validates the nature of the impact. This is done via a mixed method approach (including quantitative and qualitative study). It is also expected to collect and report on the cost information for the initiative.
Level 5	Be able to show that the initiative could be operated by someone else, somewhere else, and scaled up, while continuing to have a positive and direct impact on the outcome, and while remaining financially viable.	The evidence at this level will be further supported by such approaches as replication evaluations, future scenario analysis and fidelity evaluation.

7.6 The department's administrative data

The department's administrative data contains information on individuals in Broome Employment Services, sourced from:

- Research and Evaluation Database (RED) data

  The RED contains information related to income support payments and recipients, based on Services Australia administrative data. For example, it includes data on individual demographic characteristics, family circumstances, hours worked and earnings, educational activities and receipt of income support payments. The RED data will mainly be used to examine changes in reliance on income support, including exits from income support as a proxy for employment.

- Employment Services System (ESS) data

  Individual administrative data is held in the ESS. Information in the ESS includes Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI), Job Seeker Snapshot and Employment Services Assessment (ESAt) results; Job Plans; job search activity and compliance outcomes; some types of assistance received; job placements and paid outcomes; and payment transactions. The ESS data will mainly be used to examine employment-related outcomes such as training and job placements, including provider outcome payments as a proxy for employment.

Anecdotally, the employment evaluation team is aware that there may be limitations to the availability and quality of the department's administrative data, including:

- Inaccuracies in JSCI responses, meaning that personal characteristics and subsequently scores may not be accurate.
- A shortfall in employment outcomes recorded due to lower usage of single touch payroll by employers in the region (meaning that employment outcomes are not automatically detected).
- Loss of contact with clients or incomplete information for the provider to manually submit an employment outcome.
- Movements between Community Development Program regions and the Broome Employment Region, meaning that exits from Broome Employment Services may not be a strong proxy for employment.

7.7 A data framework mapping areas of focus to evaluation objectives

Evaluation objectives	Key evaluation questions	Areas of focus[#]	Data sources
1. Examine the appropriateness and effectiveness of Broome Employment Services	EQ1. Assess the appropriateness of the service model in meeting and responding to community needs and expectations	• Understanding of community needs and services available • Operational conditions for the provider • Referral pathways and transition between services • Use of flexibility in the service for local conditions • Meeting employer needs • Tailored/individualised support for clients	• Feedback from the community, the provider and employers • Feedback from the department, locally based APS staff and local service agencies • Activities data in the ESS • Labour market data
	EQ2. Explore experiences of and satisfaction with the service among clients, employers and the broader community	• Social and emotional wellbeing • Satisfaction with employment services by clients • Support services for clients • Support for clients by businesses/employers • Use of employment services by employers • Satisfaction with employment services by employers	• Feedback from clients, the community and employers • Possible wellbeing survey data • Stories /storytelling
	EQ3. Identify the impacts and outcomes of the service on clients, employers and among the broader community	• Development of human capability • Progress to employment • Employment outcomes for clients	• Feedback from clients, the community and employers • Feedback from the department and the provider • The department's administrative data – ESS and RED • Possible wellbeing survey data • Client file notes (where available) • Stories / storytelling

Evaluation objectives	Key evaluation questions	Areas of focus[#]	Data sources
	EQ4. Determine the extent to which the embedded APS staff model built the capability and capacity of the provider and the APS to deliver and complement employment services and coordinate services	• The provider's capability • Local partnerships, engagement and collaboration	• Feedback from the community, the provider, local services providers and employers • Feedback from the department and locally based APS staff • stories on collaboration
Examine the level of local community and provider engagement in the consultation process for future servicing arrangements in the Broome region	EQ5. Determine the drivers of and the extent to which community stakeholders are engaged in the consultation process for future servicing arrangements	• The level of participation • The reasons for participation • Experience with the consultation process	• Feedback from the community, the provider and local stakeholders who are engaged in and participate in the consultation process • Feedback from the department

Areas of focus for EQ1–EQ4 are informed by 'what success looks like' in the program logic.