



ACSJC

AUSTRALIAN ♦ CATHOLIC ♦ SOCIAL ♦ JUSTICE ♦ COUNCIL

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Real job creation needed to close gap in remote Australia**

There is an urgent need to create more jobs in remote communities if the Government is to meet its 2018 target of halving the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employment, says Bishop Christopher Saunders.

The Chairman of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council says: 'Basic community services that Australians take for granted, including reliable rubbish removal, emergency services, building maintenance and public transport, are lacking in many remote communities.'

'Looking at the actual need of these communities, it becomes clear there is a multitude of potential employment opportunities and there are people currently on welfare support who could be employed to fill them.'

'The Government maintains that welfare should not be a destination or a way of life. But it is hard to imagine any alternative to long-term welfare dependence without a robust job creation strategy for communities where almost half of those employed have been in subsidised Community Development Employment Program ('CDEP') jobs.'

'For the past two years the Government has been in the process of dismantling the CDEP scheme and requiring participants to "transition" into "properly paid jobs". In many remote communities, however, the jobs just aren't there.'

'The alternative, a transition to welfare and compulsory income management, will not address the underlying causes of poverty. Where private sector demand is lacking, all levels of government need to work together to create jobs.'

'Indigenous communities want proper consultation about the services that are needed and the jobs that will be created. More action is needed to achieve the most basic form of social justice – real jobs ensuring the dignity of workers and the development of communities,' Bishops Saunders concluded.

**Download the Pastoral Letter for the Feast of St Joseph the Worker: [www.acsjc.org.au](http://www.acsjc.org.au)**

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