WELFARE, EDUCATION AND JOBS LINKED

Gerry Wood, the Independent Member for Nelson, says it come at no surprise that the ambitious target of finding 50,000 jobs for aboriginal people has only produced around 3000 jobs is not a surprise.

Gerry says that in many remote parts of the Northern Territory there are simply very few jobs and certainly not enough for all working age people. He says that the idea of real jobs is spin because unless there is mining, year round tourism, agriculture and the arts then there are very few opportunities for employment.

Gerry says this means people are employed by Government and their agencies or are on a CDEP programme that is soon to end, now being replaced by work for the dole – welfare.

He says that if the Government believes that people should work then they should give the welfare money to the local councils, top that money up to real wage status, throw in enough money for plant and equipment and let the councils find the work.

He says that the present system of welfare which was introduced over 30 years ago has destroyed the notion of working for a wage and left many Aboriginal communities with the belief that a handout in the form of a welfare payment is normal.

As can be seen from the small numbers of local people working on a melon farm in Central Australia, welfare for many is the better or easier option.

If people want real jobs they are going to have to leave their communities, get a year 12 education and look for jobs elsewhere, perhaps one of the 50,000 promised, but in the meantime some jobs are better than no jobs and much better than welfare.