Gerry Wood, the Independent Member for Nelson, says he agrees with the thrust of today’s editorial in the NT News but it misses a key reason why it is difficult to get people in remote areas to work, it is welfare.

As long as it’s easier to receive welfare rather than work, it will always be harder to get people to work.

Gerry says that the Federal Government’s new program to replace CDEP by introducing a new layer of bureaucracy, the Remote Jobs and Communities Program, shows they are going around in the same old circle.

Gerry says Shire Councils or Resource Centres should be the centre for jobs in communities and not outside job agencies. Welfare payments should be paid to those bodies so they can use that money for employment locally. The welfare payments need to be topped up to a proper hourly rate and those wanting work will need to register to get a job.

Gerry says the Commonwealth would need to make sure Councils received enough for capital equipment so that everyone could be gainfully employed. If people are looking for an example of this, then they need to look at Community Robinson River.

Gerry says that when you get people back to work then you have a better chance to improve skills and open up opportunities for better jobs in a community or elsewhere such as with Inpex, a local mining company, an abattoirs or tourism.

While people are stuck on welfare or on continual Commonwealth training for ‘real jobs’ that hardly exist, then things will never really improve.

*Cessi foro gallinarum sed surgo*