

7 March 2019

Dear Committee Secretary,

Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management and Cashless Welfare) Bill 2019

The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (the Centre) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on the *Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management and Cashless Welfare) Bill 2019* for consideration by the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee.

The Centre is the peak body for child and family services in Victoria. For over 100 years we have advocated for the rights of children and young people to be heard, to be safe, to access education and to remain connected to family, community and culture. We represent over 150 community service organisations, students and individuals in Victoria working across child and family services.

The Centre does not support this Bill and urges the Committee to recommend it be opposed. As a member of the Accountable Income Management Network (AIMN), we write in support of the evidence presented in their submission. In summary, compulsory income management:

- Causes harm and creates social division, stigma and shame
- Constitutes an unjust and disproportionate restriction of personal agency and choice that creates additional stress and hardship
- Is applied in an unfair and discriminatory manner on the basis of race, income status and geographic region
- Places limitations on human rights to social security, privacy, self-determination and equality and non-discrimination
- Inhibits the realisation of an adequate standard of living for families and their children, by limiting access to cash and affordable goods
- Is excessively costly to administer
- Has not been informed by quality, sustained consultation with affected communities, particularly people subjected to it
- Has failed to produce valid evidence of benefits for the people, communities and populations affected.

And in relation to the Cashless Debit Card Trial specifically,

- Is supported by government based on flawed evidence from a heavily criticised government-commissioned evaluation
- Has not been supported by significant investment in complementary social services
- Has not been found to be effective according to the Australian National Audit Office
- Has enabled a private company to profit from Australia's social security system.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further clarification of any of the points raised here.

Sincerely,

Deb Tsorbaris