

Dear Senators,

I wish to make a submission to the Senate Inquiry into Income Management and the NT Intervention.

I am sure that you will receive many better-argued submissions than mine so will restrict my comments to my principal objections:

1 Compulsory income management is an assault on citizenship. It treats welfare (an obligation of society to its disadvantaged citizens) as conditional charity, and worse as conditional charity used punitively – mostly if you don't get charity you are no worse off than before but with compulsory income management you lose something and are worse off.

2 There is no good evidence that it works – and even if there was, my first objection would still stand. Most of us want to improve the health and living conditions of disadvantaged people, especially Indigenous people, but that does not justify *any* intervention, especially not one that transgresses what are basic human rights in a 21st century democracy. I have no doubt that far more effective, less damaging programs could be devised to assist disadvantaged people.

3 There is evidence that it is harmful to individuals and communities.

4 It is open to well meaning or malicious abuse by officers responsible for its administration.

5 It is costly to administer – money that could be spent much better directly assisting disadvantaged people.

I am truly astonished that a Labour government would ever support such a measure in any community in Australia. Indeed, it is the reason I left the ALP last year after being a member for 30 years.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Sainsbury