

Dear Senate Committee Members of Social Services Legislation Amendment (Cashless Debit Card) Bill 2017

My name is Josie Evans. I am the Coordinator of the Inner West Sydney Branch of the Australian Unemployed Workers Union.

I am well educated and have been unemployed for two years. I am currently receiving the Newstart Allowance which as you surely know is \$170 below the poverty line. I receive approximately \$300 per week.

I avoid spending money with large corporations such as Woolworths when I can. I prefer to use small business as this is a way to connect and support the local community.

These are reasons my group thinks that the cashless welfare card is a terrible idea for everyone, not only our local area:

1. The provision of targeted medical services, not CDC, is the real solution to drug and alcohol addiction.
2. Humiliation and powerlessness caused by CDC is likely to exacerbate any addictions.
3. Only a minority of Newstart recipients have drug and alcohol problems yet all are being unfairly labelled.
4. It is a breach of basic human rights to restrict purchase choices made with one's own money and only undermines the self esteem of Newstart recipients.
5. The validity of trial results are questioned by several sources due to the small sample size and unscientific methods used.
6. Even the official disputed trial results show 50% of participants feel worse off indicating failure of CDC rather than success.
7. The lack of agency and autonomy resulting from this scheme can only worsen the mental and physical health of Newstart recipients.
8. Marginalisation and social exclusion will increase as basics card holders become stigmatised while shopping and paying bills.
9. Crime will escalate if there is a desperate need for cash that can't be met through legal means.
10. Local economies will suffer when there is no cash for Newstart recipients to spend on small businesses such as farmers markets.
11. Many Newstart recipients have no problem paying for their rent in the Northern Territory until they are placed on income management and then service providers fail to make regular rent payments leading to the risk of homelessness.
12. The CDC scheme is being heavily promoted by a mining magnate with questionable motives lacking public sector experience. AUWU has no confidence in this scheme and is calling for an independent study or the total rejection of the scheme.

My group is deeply concerned of the devastating effect that this card could have on local unemployed people.

Kind regards,

Josie Evans