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UnitingCare Australia urges Senate to scrap the Cashless Debit Card

UnitingCare Australia is urging the Senate to scrap the Cashless Debit Card and restore choice and control to communities in the four trial sites.

Appearing before the recent Senate Inquiry, UnitingCare Australia National Director, Ms Claerwen Little, expressed concern that while compulsory income management should be abolished, it is vital that communities are offered adequate wrap-around services to support the transition.

“We welcome the Government’s announcement that additional funding and services will be provided to help these communities transition off the Cashless Debit Card, from as early as next month. This is a crucial measure and we thank the Government for responding to the needs of these communities.

“We know that choice and control is vital to self-determination for First Peoples, and scrapping compulsory income management is an essential step to real justice for First Peoples.

“And so today we are urging the Senate, including key Independent Senators, to support the repeal of this legislation.”

UnitingCare Australia is supportive of a voluntary opt-in system, developed in consultation with communities and supported by services to support individuals to make positive choices. Ensuring adequate technology and functionality must be a key component of an opt-in system.

“Countless reports have shown that the Cashless Debit Card is ineffective and costly, diverting much needed funds away from evidence-based programs and services.

“We believe the most effective way to ensure long-term, sustainable, positive change is to ensure individualised, culturally safe, wrap-around support to people for as long as required.

“By resourcing community-led solutions and co-designing better programs, we can address the systemic issues that have plagued our communities, particularly our First Nations communities,” said Ms Little.

“Addressing fundamental issues such as inadequate housing, lack of education, meaningful employment opportunities, health and wellbeing, and economic and social participation will achieve long term, sustainable change.”

A copy of the submission is available [here](#).

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