



Submission to the Inquiry into Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee Bill 2023

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About UnitingCare Australia

UnitingCare Australia is the national body for the Uniting Church's community services network and is an agency of the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia.

We give voice to the Uniting Church's commitment to social justice through advocacy and by strengthening community service provisions.

We are the largest network of social service providers in Australia, supporting 1.4 million people very year across urban, rural, and remote communities.

We focus on articulating and meeting the needs of people at all stages of life and those that are most vulnerable.

Introduction

UnitingCare Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee (the Committee) in relation to the Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee Bill 2023 [Provisions] (the Bill). The UnitingCare network, as the country's largest network of social service providers, understands firsthand the importance of economic inclusion and the potential positive impact this Bill can have on our community.

Transparency, Independence, and Inclusivity

We believe for the Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee (EIAC) to fulfill its potential, there must be a solid foundation of transparency, independence, and inclusivity. With these principles at the forefront, the community can truly engage with and contribute to the work of the EIAC.

Recommendations

UnitingCare Australia puts forward the following recommendations to strengthen the Bill:

1. **Transparency:** We recommend that the EIAC report be made public. This transparency will build trust with the community, ensuring that the EIAC is accountable and providing a clear reflection of its advice.
2. **Annual Workplan:** It is crucial that the EIAC publish its workplan on an annual basis. This proactive approach will provide a roadmap of the EIAC's intentions and activities, allowing for community feedback, engagement, and collaboration.
3. **Inclusivity in Membership:** To truly represent the diverse voices of Australia, we firmly believe that the EIAC should include at least one First Nations person and one person with lived experience of economic disadvantage. These perspectives are invaluable and will enrich the Committee's understanding of the issues it seeks to address.

Conclusion

UnitingCare Australia thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide input on the Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee Bill 2023 [Provisions]. We believe that with the aforementioned amendments, this Bill has the potential to ensure that economic inclusion remains at the forefront of our national agenda.

We would be pleased to discuss the content of this submission further and provide any additional information or clarification as required.