

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights

Public Hearing – 29 July 2024

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Inquiry into Compulsory Income Management

Question reference number: IQ24-000138

Question asked by: David Shoebridge

Type of Question: Spoken. **Hansard Page/s:** 7-8

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 05 August 2024

Question:

Senator SHOEBRIDGE: When the report says that most stakeholders strongly supported the ending of the cashless debit card, did you get any breakdown from the review authors about what the proportions were?

Mrs Hope: I might hand to Mr Boneham to give you some of the definitions around what 'most', 'some' and the 'majority' actually mean.

Mr Boneham: They didn't give us actual numbers that I'm aware of. If you wanted proportions, et cetera, we don't have that. But they use the term 'most' and 'many', which is a majority of respondents. And 'respondents' means both stakeholders and participants. The term 'some' is a sizable minority of respondents, and 'few/several' is a small minority of respondents.

Senator SHOEBRIDGE: They have their meaning in ordinary usage?

Mr Boneham: Yes.

Senator SHOEBRIDGE: But you didn't seek any breakdown? When it says 'most' CDC participants welcomed the ending, the removal of stigmatisation and the obtaining of agency, you can't help us understand if it's the majority?

Mr Boneham: We don't have that. We would need to seek that from the university and see whether they actually have that or not.

Mrs Hope: We can take that on notice for you.

Senator SHOEBRIDGE: Can you seek to get some granular data about what the actual people who are on the cashless debit card said about it? I would have thought as a human rights committee understanding what the people who were subject to this particular government policy thought about it would be particularly useful. If we could, that would be great.

Answer:

The design of the *Review of the Impact of the Cessation of the Cashless Debit Card Report* did not provide quantification of the size of respondents that supported the ending of the CDC. The report uses the terms "most" and "many" to indicate that a majority of respondents expressed a viewpoint. Likewise, the term "some" was used when a sizeable minority of respondents shared an opinion. Finally, the terms "a few" and "several" were used interchangeably when only a small minority of respondents expressed a particular opinion. Page 22 of the report provides the definition of these terms.