



## **Responses to Senator Thorpe's Questions on Notice - Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights' Inquiry into Compulsory Income Management**

**Question 1:** I have heard from the community that compulsory income management contributes to situations of family violence, is incompatible with the needs and aspirations of people on welfare and represents a form of state-based violence and colonial control that must be abolished. Your submission notes that income management started due to the Northern Territory Intervention, which was described by Pat Dodson as "a regime of coercive paternalism" that clearly sought to undermine First Peoples rights and power. How does income management today uphold this discriminatory legacy today?

**Response:** As noted in its Submission, the Commission is of the belief that compulsory income management schemes infringe on an individuals' right to social security, the right to a private life, and the right to equality and non-discrimination.

**Question 2:** How are Black women harmed by income management?

**Response:** As noted in its Submission, the Commission is of the view that compulsory income management schemes disproportionately impact women, particularly First Nations women, in contravention of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. In particular, the Submission highlights how compulsory income management schemes can undermine women attempting to escape domestic and family violence, and impact the care they're able to provide their families.

**Question 3:** Your submission did not address the UNDRIP, and how income management contravenes principles of self-determination, and free prior and informed consent. Could you please address this now, and whether income management, and in particular non-voluntary income management is consistent with the UNDRIP and the principles of free, prior, and informed consent?

**Response:** The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) provides for the principles of self-determination and free, prior and informed consent. The Commission is of the view that compulsory income management, particularly involuntary compulsory income management, does not allow for self-determination or free, prior and informed consent and is therefore not consistent with the principles of UNDRIP.

**Question 4:** How does the Family Responsibilities Commission model, which fundamentally still facilitates non-voluntary income management, despite all calls from experts and the community align with the principles of the UNDRIP and other human rights obligations? (For example, the Commissioner holds the power to quarantine someone's income without their consent and deny requests to be taken off even the voluntary program if the commissioner believes it is not in the "best interests" to do so).

**Response:** The Commission is of the view that the model should comply with the principles of UNRIP, but is otherwise not familiar enough to comment further.

**Question 5:** Would the commission support a policy move that scrapped all forms of Income Management and instead invested in programs that create real jobs, with proper award wages and conditions, adequate training and skills, and rebuilding local community decision-making?

**Response:** The Commission is of the view that any policy or program should be voluntary, and designed, implemented and operated in consultation with representatives chosen by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and from Aboriginal-controlled organisations.