

# **Social Services Legislation Amendment (Cashless Debit Card) Bill 2017**

22<sup>nd</sup> August 2017

The Cashless Welfare card compulsorily quarantines 80% of a person's welfare benefits. It restricts purchases, with the aim of promoting "socially responsible behaviour" and falls short of meeting the trial's objectives – despite approx. A\$410.5 million spent.

## ***The Cards (Cashless and Basic) are unfair:***

The compulsory roll out and expansion of Income management is unfair to most of the people on Income support as they are doing the right thing. We don't jail ALL Catholic Priests, if one is found to be a pedophile, or, stand down ALL Parliamentary Members, if one is found to be a dual citizen. Targeting everyone with the sins of a few is heavy handed, unjust and imbalanced.

## ***The Cards (Cashless and Basic) are expensive:***

The cost of 'administration' fees are either \$4,000, or \$7,000 or \$10,000 PER card PER year (dependent on the card type).

The contract was awarded to 'Indue' a foreign private company – when an Australian Government agency could manage these cards and the income generated could be used for much needed services. This income would also help the Australian economy. It would create more jobs in Australia, be cost effective and also be accountable (as all public funds should be). The Australian public and all sides of Parliament would all benefit with this implementation.

The contract with Indue could be cancelled – with grounds, as they are not providing an effective product – (many card participants have found that they can not purchase approved products i.e. car registration, bill payments, rent or mortgage etc.)

***The Cards (Cashless and Basic) should target ONLY selected participants:***

Government Departments deal with participants on all payment levels and can identify and target individuals who need help, such as Schools (i.e. truancy, no lunch), Centrelink (for breaches), Police (drug and alcohol issues) and Family Services (child endangerment) and Hospitals, would be the trigger for a participant to be quarantined and put onto the Card – when compliance is achieved they are then taken off the card – this provides an incentive to comply and would be fair. Participants are also able to have decisions reviewed by appropriate officers and have timely and appropriate help given to achieve compliance.

***The Cards (Cashless and Basic) consultation on implementation of the Cards, should be with participants' not social leaders:***

Social leaders could be anyone in the community but rarely are participants themselves; so therefore, they are unaware of the implications and day-to-day use of the Card in society.

***Income support should be fair, appropriate and beneficial to all  
Australians, and the 'Cards' are  
discriminatory, unjust and not effective.***