



Subject: Inquiry into compulsory income management

We thank Mr Henry Pike MP, Deputy Chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, for the written questions on notice posed as a part of the Inquiry into compulsory income management.

The QON relate to the final report of the *Review of the Impact of the Cessation of the Cashless Debit Card*. The full report is available at <https://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children-programs-services-welfare-reform-enhanced-income-management/review-of-the-impact-of-the-cessation-of-the-cashless-debit-card-final-report>.

The review of the impact of the cessation of the CDC is an important piece of work and provides sound and rigorous evidence-based information and knowledge. A key aim of the review was to develop an evidence base that may be used to inform future policy and program development. As such, the commissioning of this review demonstrates engagement by the Government to understand the impacts of the ending of compulsory income management and what is needed going forward in the past CDC trial sites.

The review was designed to ensure that the voice of those who were subjects of the policy change were at the centre of the evidence that was collected. These are the voices of those who do not often have the opportunity to have a say about the policies and programs that affect them. The review does this in a way that is independent, objective and methodologically rigorous.

The review documents the types of things that CDC trial site communities consider would be useful to assist their communities in dealing with some of the negative social issues that they are experiencing. This includes the funding and provision of support and other essential services such as housing, employment and training, health (particularly mental health supports), and family and domestic violence supports. These findings can inform governments (both state/territory and federally) to design future policies and programs.

1. How did your team ensure that the report was procedurally sound and vigorous in establishing its findings?

Critical practices ensured that the review was procedurally sound and vigorous. These included the reviews methodological rigour, adherence to national ethical research standards, and the independence and objectivity of the review team. Each of these are elaborated upon below.

Methodologically Rigorous - The review was conducted by a University of Adelaide multidisciplinary team, primarily from the disciplines of Sociology and Economics, who specialise in mixed-methods and multi-disciplinary policy reviews and evaluations. The strong and continued academic engagement of our researchers guarantees that our methodologies are at the forefront of best practice in the field of policy and program research. Our team is therefore able to utilise a variety of approaches in our research. Our expertise in numerous qualitative and quantitative research methodologies ensures that the design of our research and evaluations can draw from a range of best practice research methods. This includes qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews, focus groups, and stakeholder engagement activities; and quantitative analysis of administrative or survey data. The combination of these approaches provides diverse, deep and broad ranging insights and evidence relating to policy interventions.

Independent - It is imperative that any assessment of a policy intervention be undertaken by a person or group *independent* to the intervention that is under evaluation or review. All staff involved

in the review of the impact of the cessation of the Cashless Debit Card were independent of the Department and Government more broadly. This ensured that the review was undertaken without bias or partiality.

Objective – The review was conducted by a multidisciplinary team of academic experts guided by the principles of objectivity. The academic objectivity of the review ensures that the findings are informed by objective empirical research and evidence rather than subjective personal feelings or opinions.

Guided by Ethical standards - The research team is professional in their conduct and practice, ensuring ethical, reliable and accountable research outcomes. We are governed by and follow the research policies and procedures of the University of Adelaide and the NHMRC *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023*. In our research with Indigenous peoples we also follow the NHMRC's 2018 *Ethical Conduct in Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities: Guidelines for Researcher and Stakeholders*, and AIATSIS's 2020 *Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research*, as well as adhering to the guidelines for ethical research conduct as outlined by the *Lowitja Institute Ethics Hub*. Ethical approval for the review was obtained from the University of Adelaide's Human Research Ethics Committee (Ethics Approval Number: H-2023-037).

2. How accurate would you contend your report's outcomes are?

As a result of the independent, objective and methodologically rigorous nature of the review (as outlined above) we consider the findings to have high internal and external validity and reliability. We contend that the accuracy of the report is irreproachable.

3. Of the stakeholders interviewed and consulted in this report, how many of them were locally based, and is it possible to determine how many of them were Indigenous?

Of the 135 representatives from various stakeholder organisations operating in the four CDC trial locations, all were locally based or delivering services in the four CDC trial locations (including Indigenous organisations). We are unable to determine how many stakeholders identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

4. When was the final report, and any earlier draft reports, submitted to the Department?

The initial draft Final report was submitted to the Department of Social Services on the 15/03/2024

Upon receiving requests for minor revisions, a revised report was submitted to the DSS on the 17/04/2024

The Final report was submitted to the Department on the 30th of May 2024

5. Have you had the opportunity to brief the Minister on the findings of the report?

We have not been asked by Parliamentary members to provide briefings on the findings of the report.

Sincerely,

Associate Professor Megan Moskos
Faculty of Arts, Business, Law and Economics (ABLE)