

Mann Advisorv



A: 459 Albany Highway, Victoria Park, WA, 6100

W: www.gvroc.com

9 August 2022

Senate Standing Committees
on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

E: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee,

**SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE SOCIAL SECURITY (ADMINISTRATION)
AMENDMENT (REPEAL OF CASHLESS DEBIT CARD AND OTHER MEASURES) BILL
2022**

The Goldfields Voluntary Organisation of Councils (GVROC) provides this submission for consideration by the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee.

The GVROC is an established partnership between Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in the Goldfields Esperance Region of Western Australia including - City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the Shires of Coolgardie, Dundas, Esperance, Laverton, Leonora, Menzies, Ngaanyatjaraku and Wiluna.

The GVROC has recently written to both the Prime Minister, Hon Anthony Albanese MP and the Minister for Social Services, Hon Amanda Rishworth MP on 27 June 2022 regarding the Labor Government's commitment to not continue the basics card in the Northern Territory as a compulsory scheme, allowing welfare recipients to exit the program, and also the cashless debit card (CDC), which operates in trial sites in Western Australia (including the Goldfields region), Queensland and South Australia. Both these letters advised that while the GVROC understood this commitment and process would proceed it requested that the Labor Government first consulted with GVROC and their communities ahead of abolition of the CDC Program and its support services to work out a clear transition plan.

To date the GVROC has not received any formal consultation, but it is aware that the Assistant Minister for Social Services, Justine Elliot MP would be visiting the Goldfields region on 15 - 16th August 2022 to consult with LGAs and the wider community regarding the transition from the Federal Government's proposed cancellation of the CDC program.

The GVROC believes this change in policy direction for the CDC to only being voluntary in the Goldfields Regions or discontinued and replaced with wraparound services such as financial counselling, could have a significant impact on the social and community wellbeing in the Goldfields towns that it is operating.

The CDC scheme has shown to have significant benefits in improving the lives of those that have trialed it the Goldfields region.

Hence it is critical that before the CDC is repealed and discontinued, that people making these decisions in Government, including members of the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee, first visit the communities in which it is operating to see firsthand the outcomes from its operations and to have discussions with its participants.

The GVROC would like to be on the ground floor as part of the consultation with the new Minister to formulate the best possible outcomes for both the participants in these programs, as well as the LGAs and our communities. It is critical that LGA's are consulted, included and supported through the transition of our communities off the Card.

The previous Ministers for both Social Services and Indigenous Affairs left behind a considerable amount of unfinished business with both the CDC and Community Development Program, and along with the disruption of Covid 19 over the past two and half years, the GVROC feel there is a lot of ground to make up.

I'd be happy to discuss this matter further with you and can be contacted via email or mobile

The GVROC look forward to seeing progression on this matter as soon as possible to drive practical, locally led solutions to improve the lives of its residents in the GVROC region.

Yours sincerely

Cr Malcolm Cullen - GVROC Chair
President – Shire of Coolgardie

P:
M:
E:
A: PO Box 138, Kambalda WA 6442

Cc: *Andrew Mann –Executive Officer, GVROC*