

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Public Hearing – 5 July 2024

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Income Management and the history of control and discrimination against aboriginal people

Question reference number: IQ24-000060

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

2. The majority of submissions talk about how income management today continues to segregate, discriminate and disadvantage First Nations people, denying our opportunity to lead dignified, self-determined and healthy lives. Does the department accept this evidence?

Answer:

Witnesses from the Department of Social Services noted the range of views on Income Management during the hearing. The full transcript can be viewed at www.aph.gov.au.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Public Hearing – 5 July 2024

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Income Management and the history of control and discrimination against aboriginal people

Question reference number: IQ24-000061

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

3. What specific evidence does the government have to justify the continuation of any form of compulsory or conditional income management, especially in light of widespread community opposition and evidence of ineffectiveness?

Answer:

The Australian Government has committed to making Income Management voluntary and is consulting with communities and stakeholders on future program design.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Public Hearing – 5 July 2024

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Misuse and Misrepresentation of Data

Question reference number: IQ24-000062

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

4. Income Management has contributed to many detrimental outcomes. Why have these not been detailed or even referenced in the DSS submissions?

Answer:

The Department of Social Services prepared its submission to focus on the design and objectives of the Income Management (IM) policy and legislation. The submission also outlines the approach to consultation on the future of IM which is focused on hearing from individuals, communities and stakeholders who are impacted by IM programs.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Public Hearing – 5 July 2024

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Misuse and Misrepresentation of Data

Question reference number: IQ24-000063

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

5. Bray and Gray submit DSS has on multiple occasions deliberately misused data regarding CDC providing false evidence as to the efficacy of Income Management. Do you accept their submission that DSS have done this, considering it is their own data that DSS misused?
- Why has the department misused and misrepresented Bray and Gray's data?
 - Has the department contacted Bray and Gray about this, and sought advice on how they can remedy this situation and ensure this committee is not misled?

Answer:

The Department of Social Services does not accept the assertion that it has misused and misrepresented data regarding the Cashless Debit Card, or that the department has provided false evidence.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Public Hearing – 5 July 2024

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Misuse and Misrepresentation of Data

Question reference number: IQ24-000064

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

6. Why should the public and First Nations communities trust the department after their misuse and misrepresentation of data for a Senate Inquiry?

Answer:

The Department of Social Services rejects the assertion that it used misleading data or misrepresented data for a Senate Inquiry.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Public Hearing – 5 July 2024

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Misuse and Misrepresentation of Data

Question reference number: IQ24-000065

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

7. Are income management, and compulsory income management schemes targeted towards First Nations communities and why has the Northern Territory been targeted by income management schemes if not for its First Nations population?

a. Given that location-based implementation has been criticized as particularly discriminatory by Bray and Gray, why does the department continue to misuse data to obscure this fact?

Answer:

There were a number of criteria used to select placed-based income management approaches. These include high levels of unemployment, welfare dependency, challenges related to financial mismanagement, and substance and alcohol abuse.

The locations that each program operates and the various measures is available on the Department of Social Services website for both Income Management (<https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/programs-services/family-finance/income-management>) and enhanced Income Management (<https://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children/programs-services/welfare-conditional/enhanced-income-management-overview>).

Statistics by eligibility is available on data.gov (<https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/australian-government-income-management-program>)

a. The Department of Social Services does not accept the premise of this question.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Misuse and Misrepresentation of Data

Question reference number: IQ24-000066

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

8. Table 4 of the short submission from DSS shows “participants by indigenous indicator” and Table 5 shows “IM exemptions by indigenous indicator”. This fails to recognise participants of the scheme versus those on welfare benefits more broadly. Could you please advise, how many people are on Centrelink in total, how many of those are First Nations People, and how many of those First Peoples are on income management schemes compared to non-First Nations Peoples?

Answer:

The number of First Nations compared to non-First Nations Income Management participants has been provided in IQ24-000041 (Table 1.B.1).

The number of people receiving Centrelink payments by First Nations People is available on data.gov (www.data.gov.au/data/dataset/dss-payment-demographic-data).

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Human Rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

Question reference number: IQ24-000069

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

11. How does the department view the Family Responsibilities Commission program as being compliant with human rights, including the UNDRIP and principles of free, prior, and informed consent and self-determination when the Commissioner holds the power to quarantine someone's income without their consent, and deny requests to be taken off even a voluntary program if the commissioner believes it is not in the “best interests” to do so?

Answer:

The Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC) is a statutory authority established by Queensland state legislation. Referral to income management is one of a range of activities that may be carried out by the FRC and income management legislation provisions facilitate the operation of the state-based FRC Act.

Questions about the operation of the FRC and its commissioners are best directed to the FRC.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Human Rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

Question reference number: IQ24-000070

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

12. How does the government justify the consistency of compulsorily restricting spending of welfare payments with international human rights law, including the rights to social security, privacy, non-discrimination, and the contravention of the UNDRIP?

Answer:

The explanatory memoranda accompanying legislation implementing income management regimes includes a Statement of Compatibility with Human Rights which details the legislation's human rights implications.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Human Rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

Question reference number: IQ24-000071

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

13. Given the acknowledgment that all forms of compulsory income management are incompatible with human rights, what steps will be taken to phase out coercive, conditional/compulsory measures?

Answer:

The Cashless Debit Card was abolished in March 2023 and the Department of Social Services is consulting with communities and stakeholders, including state and territory governments, on the future of Income Management.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Public Hearing – 5 July 2024

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Family Responsibilities Commission Model

Question reference number: IQ24-000073

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

15. In Friday's evidence DSS noted they are acting on the announcement from this government it will be ending Compulsory income management. Is that correct?

Answer:

The Department of Social Services remains focused on progressing the government commitment regarding voluntary Income Management, with future program design to be informed by community consultation.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Public Hearing – 5 July 2024

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Family Responsibilities Commission Model

Question reference number: IQ24-000077

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

19. Our office has reports that the FRC model leads to some First Nations community members moving away from the Cape to try and escape the program, because there are no stores, job opportunities, and no control. They live in shacks and tents on edges of other towns such as Cairns, Kuranda, Mareeba, to try and escape the FRC's program. Does the department have any data on what effect their scheme has on the residency, location and continuing connection to the country for First Nations participants and other community members in the region?

Answer:

The Department of Social Services is not aware of any such observation.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Public Hearing – 5 July 2024

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Family Responsibilities Commission Model

Question reference number: IQ24-000078

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

20. How does DSS respond to community concerns raised with my office regarding First Nations people moving off-country to avoid the FRC program and how this is in contravention to the country's human rights obligations, including the UNDRIP?

Answer:

The Department of Social Services (the department) is not aware of concerns raised with your office.

The department is consulting with communities and stakeholders including state and territory governments on the future of Income Management (IM) including across Cape York where the FRC operates.

The purpose of community consultation is to hear directly from people about: the role of IM in each community, if individuals and communities want to keep IM, how voluntary IM could work in community, and what help is needed to move away from compulsory IM.

Consultation is planned to be finalised later this year. The DSS engage 'Future of IM' consultation webpage will continue to be available during this stage of consultation, to allow individuals to share their views with the department on the future of IM.

Details of future consultation visits will also be published on the page (Future of Income Management | www.engage.dss.gov.au) when available.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Consultation with Community

Question reference number: IQ24-000080

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

22. The Accountable Income Management Network sought a meeting with DSS staff in March this year about concerns around the use of compulsory income management, and how the department's consultation with the community was harmful and divisive, because they met with folks who were not on income management, to talk about those who are on income management. Could you please respond to this?

a. How many of the participants involved in the consultations were currently on income management at the time of their participation?

23. Why was the consultation process limited to "remote" communities and excludes the approximately 20,000 people in Darwin?

Answer:

22. The Department of Social Services (the department) met with a range of stakeholders, charities and peak body organisations including the Accountable Income Management Network about consultation on the future of Income Management (IM).

Consultation activities are open to all members of the public as well as former and existing IM participants to hear directly from them about: the role of IM in each community, if individuals and communities want to keep IM, how voluntary IM could work in community, and what help is needed to move away from compulsory IM.

a. Consultations do not involve the collection and use of personal data, which includes an individual's participation on the program.

23. To date the department has held consultations in 72 communities across the Northern Territory, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands in South Australia, East Kimberley region in Western Australia and Shepparton in Victoria. This includes the Darwin region, with approximately 15 individual community consultation activities held to date across the Darwin region including in Batchelor, Casuarina, Darwin City, Durak, Humpty Doo, Gray, Malak, Nightcliff and Palmerston. Further consultation will occur across the Darwin region later this year.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Alternatives to Income Management

Question reference number: IQ24-000082

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

25. What alternative options are being explored to address the stated aims of income management? How does the government prioritise these alternatives in policy and practice?

Answer:

The outcomes of consultation with communities will inform the development of future Income Management models including voluntary options.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Alternatives to Income Management

Question reference number: IQ24-000083

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

26. Would the commission support a policy move that scrapped all forms of compulsory 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?

a. If not, how can you justify apartheid style legislation like forced income management being a prerequisite for accessing vital services and programs?

Answer:

The Department of Social Services remains focused on progressing the Government commitment regarding voluntary Income Management (IM), with future program design to be informed by community consultation.

The Australian Government committed \$217 million to abolish the Cashless Debit Card (CDC) program, reform IM and fund related support services. Of this, over \$130 million has been committed to income support recipients in IM and former CDC communities.

Funding for IM Support Services has helped communities impacted by IM reform, including the transition away from the CDC. These services help people build financial literacy, navigate services, become job ready, and build capability in line with priorities identified by community.

Additionally, the Government has committed \$707 million to deliver a new Remote Jobs and Economic Development program to start in the second half of 2024. The new program has a significant geographic overlap in areas with IM and will provide people in remote communities with meaningful jobs with fair pay and conditions.

It will support remote communities to determine local projects and job priorities to increase economic opportunities in their areas in line with community needs and aspirations.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: General Questions on Income Management

Question reference number: IQ24-000084

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

27. What are the exit rates for First People who have been subject to income management for a significant period compared to non-Aboriginal people? Could you outline the transition-off plans in place?

Answer:

People leave the Income Management (IM) and enhanced IM programs for a number of reasons including an exemption being granted, relevant welfare payments being cancelled or leaving a declared IM area. Individuals can exit and enter the program multiple times in their life and, as such, it is not possible to provide a reliable estimate of the exit rate.

Exits from the Cashless Debit Card are published on data.gov.

(<https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/australian-government-cashless-debit-card-program>).

There are a range of local support services available to assist people who are on, or have transitioned off IM, enhanced IM and the Cashless Debit Card programs. A directory of these services are available on the Department of Social Services' website.

(<https://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children-programs-services-welfare-reform-enhanced-income-management/support-services>).

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: General Questions on Income Management

Question reference number: IQ24-000085

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

28. Considering that limiting access to cash through income management can pose a barrier to individuals leaving abusive or unsafe family environments, how is this issue being addressed or monitored? What steps are taken to gather and consider data on these impacts?

Answer:

The Department of Social Services is consulting with stakeholder and communities on the future program design with a focus on progressing government commitments regarding voluntary Income Management. For detail on data currently used to monitor program performance please refer to the response provided to IQ24-000043.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: General Questions on Income Management

Question reference number: IQ24-000086

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

29. In cases where child neglect is linked to financial difficulties, how does income management effectively address or improve the underlying issues contributing to people's social and economic situations?

Answer:

Income Management (IM) is an additional tool for child protection authorities to ensure income support payments are spent in the best interest of children and families. A child protection case worker assesses the benefit to the family of participation in IM prior to referring them to the program.

There have been a number of evaluations undertaken by the Australian Government on the IM Programs that include the impact on participants referred under the child protection measure. A comprehensive list of the evaluations are available on the Department of Social Services website – [Income Management and Cashless Debit Card Evaluations | Department of Social Services, Australian Government \(dss.gov.au\)](#)

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: General Questions on Income Management

Question reference number: IQ24-000087

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

30. How does income management contribute to reducing welfare dependency and enhancing financial management skills among recipients? What evidence supports these outcomes?

Answer:

A range of data is captured to support performance monitoring of Income Management programs. For more information please refer to the response provided to IQ24-000043.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Public Hearing – 5 July 2024

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: General Questions on Income Management

Question reference number: IQ24-000088

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

31. Could you confirm if the following problems still exist with the income management scheme, and how the department will remedy these with any future schemes voluntary or otherwise?
- a. The Inability to access funds when the internet down and general difficulty in knowing how much is on the card as outlined in page 85 of 2010 DSS report?
 - b. Is it correct that it can take over 24 hours to transfer funds?
 - c. Is it correct that users can only use their own funds with “approved merchants” which is not all retailers?
 - d. Is it correct that the quarantining of funds means “participants” are unable to use their own money at markets, to buy second hand school uniforms, go second-hand clothes shopping or buy anything second hand, market food, food from gardens, lawn sales which are huge in Mparntwe, anything that’s in cash?

Answer:

31. The Department of Social Services is consulting with stakeholders and communities on future Income Management (IM) program design.
- a. Depending on the arrangement with the financial institution, merchants may be able to continue to process payments using their VISA/EFTPOS terminal when the network is down, for example during a telecommunications outage.
IM participants can check their card balance in several ways, including:
 - Using the Express Plus Centrelink mobile app, Centrelink online account through myGov, SmartCard eIM mobile app or Traditional Credit Union (TCU) SmartCard eIM mobile app.
 - Calling Services Australia or visiting a service centre.
 - Using a Westpac Bank, Commonwealth Bank, National Australia Bank or ANZ Bank ATM, without charge.
 - Using The SmartCard or TCU SmartCard online account.
 - Using the SMS balance checking option.
 - b. Transferring funds between an IM participant’s income managed account and their BasicsCard, or vice versa, happens instantly. Enhanced IM participants can transfer funds immediately from their enhanced IM account to another enhanced IM account online or via the app.

Transferring funds from an income managed account to an external account typically happens overnight, consistent with standard banking processes. In some circumstances urgent transfers can be delivered the same business day.

- c. There are over 18,000 stores and businesses across Australia that are approved to accept the BasicsCard. If a store does not accept BasicsCard, participants can call Services Australia and request a service officer arrange a direct payment from an IM participant's IM account to the store on their behalf.

Enhanced IM participants can use their funds at over 1 million EFTPOS terminals across Australia, for online shopping and to make BPAY® bill payments.

- d. No. IM participants can access the unquarantined portion of their Income Support Payment via their personal bank account to access cash. If cash is the only option for payment, IM participants may request funds be transferred from their income managed account to their personal account. These requests are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: General Questions on Income Management

Question reference number: IQ24-000089

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

32. Page 11 of DSS submission shows the majority of those on income management are under measures “Long Term Welfare Payment Recipient” or “Disengaged Youth”. How does this meet the aims stated on Page 1 of the DSS submission?

Answer:

The objectives of the Income Management program apply to all eligible participants, regardless of the triggering measure.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: General Questions on Income Management

Question reference number: IQ24-000090

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

33. According to a paper from the Services Australia meeting on 02.11.23, which approved a limited tender approach (at par. 4.18), there is mention of a 'new and permanent Income Management technology solution' that is set to 'go live,' subject to future government direction on income management policy. Can you provide more details on this?

Answer:

There has been no open tender for a new technology solution with any future Income Management (IM) technology.

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Public Hearing – 5 July 2024

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Contracts Around Income Management

Question reference number: IQ24-000093

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

36. Has Services Australia remedied its breach of obligations identified by the Audit Office regarding its paperwork during the tender and contract process with Indue? Can you expand on what happened with the breach of procedure during that period, as referenced in the audit report released 26 June 2024, Transitional Arrangements for the Cashless Debit Card?"
- a. Can this committee request a copy of the documents the audit office acquired during their investigation, as mentioned in the DSS audit report, since they are not publicly available?
 - b. Is the following series of events, correct? On 10 October 2022: Services Australia approved a limited tender to Indue (at para 4.6). On the same day of 10 October 2022 Indue announced their partnership with BioCatch. On 12 October 2022: Services Australia advised the Executive Committee that they had approved a limited tender approach to Indue for Enhanced Income Management. An action item was recorded for the documentation on the procurement to be tabled at the next meeting. There is no evidence in the minutes of the next Executive Committee meeting that this documentation was tabled (at para 4.8). Then on 21 October 2022 an invite was sent to Indue for the limited tender process despite the process not being approved until 2 November by the Services Australia Executive Committee, and evidence from the 12 October meeting never tabled.
 - i. Does DSS know why Services Australia failed to put out a public tender?
 - ii. Was the tender of 10 October made prior to consulting the executive committee?
 - iii. Why was the relevant paperwork not provided to the committee on the 12th of October?
 - iv. The timing of Indue's partnership announcement with BioCatch alongside the tender process raises questions about the transparency of partnerships and potential impacts on program implementation and data security. Why was Indue able to announce its partnerships with Israeli biometric behavioural company Biocatch on the same date a tender offer was sent to Indue?
 - v. Why was BioCatch made aware of the tender before Services Australia's own executive committee was informed?

Answer:

36. As reported by the ANAO, “Services Australia’s limited tender procurement for the enhanced Income Management program was largely compliant with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules”. No breach of obligations occurred or was identified within the report.
- a. The Department of Social Services (the department) was not involved in the tender and contract process and does not have the documents requested.
 - b. No. The tender was not issued on 10 October 2022. The tender was issued on 3 November 2022, after Services Australia Executive Committee was briefed and documentation tabled. The department and Services Australia have no awareness of any interactions between Indue Ltd and BioCatch.
 - i. The department has not been involved in any contract dealings or negotiations between Services Australia and Indue and/or BioCatch regarding enhanced Income Management. Services Australia used a limited tender approach in compliance with Commonwealth Procurement Rules.
 - ii. Please refer to the response to ‘b’ above.
 - iii. The Services Australia Chief Financial Officer verbally updated the Services Australia Executive Committee on 12 October 2022 to advise that she had approved the limited tender out of session, and undertook to table the relevant paperwork at the following meeting scheduled 2 November 2022, which occurred.
 - iv. The department and Services Australia do not have any relationship or involvement with BioCatch.
 - v. The tender was not issued until 3 November 2022, after the Executive Committee was briefed and documentation tabled. The department and Services Australia has no awareness of any interactions between Indue Ltd and BioCatch.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Bio-Catch

Question reference number: IQ24-000096

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

39. Given that the government's own Closing the Gap agreement prioritises reforms to share the data policy decisions are based on and to proactively build capacity within First Nations communities to collect that data, has the government implemented programs to enable First Nations Peoples to gather their own data about Income Management (IM)?

Answer:

The Department of Social Services regularly engages with communities in former Cashless Debit Card (CDC) regions, including Ceduna, Kalgoorlie Goldfields, East Kimberly and Bundaberg/Hervey Bay to share information and data, and capture insights into community priorities. This information informs decisions to prioritise funding for services reflective of community priorities such as the Community-led Solutions Economic Development Grant round that is providing \$2 million to create initiatives to strengthen and expand digital and physical infrastructure in the former CDC regional areas of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge.

The project is providing financial literacy support and create sustained employment opportunities across the Far North Queensland regions.

Income Management participant data, including location and measure data, is publicly available on www.data.gov.au.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Income management

Question reference number: IQ24-000098

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

2. Is it correct that Indue Pty Ltd administered and issued the BasicsCard under the former scheme?

Answer:

Yes, Services Australia manages the contract for the provision of the BasicsCard.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Income management

Question reference number: IQ24-000099

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

3. Is it correct that Indue Pty Ltd issues the SmartCard under the current scheme?

Answer:

Yes, Services Australia manages the contract for the provision of the SmartCard.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Public Hearing – 5 July 2024

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Business administration services grants/contracts

Question reference number: IQ24-000100

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

4. Is it correct that Indue has existing grants/contracts with Services Australia to deliver “Business Administration Services” from June 2018 to June 2024 totalling at least \$91 million?

Answer:

No.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Indue contract

Question reference number: IQ24-000102

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

6. Is it correct that on 13 Feb 2023 Services Australia granted a confidential contract to Indue for \$11.9 million for "Card and Banking Services," and on 5 January 2024 for \$2.6 million to provide a helpdesk?

Answer:

Services Australia is responsible for the administration and delivery of Income Management, including enhanced Income Management.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: SA - Income management

Question reference number: IQ24-000103

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

7. As with so many colonial capitalist mechanisms, it costs far more money sustaining the systems of oppression than it would to dismantle them. I understand each so-called “SmartCard” costs about \$11,000 per year to administer (approximately \$500 per fortnight). Is that correct and can you provide an accurate figure if not?

Answer:

A reliable estimate of cost per participant is not possible due to the early stages of the program and the increasing participant numbers.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Public Hearing – 5 July 2024

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: SA - BioCatch

Question reference number: IQ24-000105

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

9. BioCatch is an Israeli Behavioural Biometrics and technology company that uses behavioural biometrics to monitor and analyse users' physical and cognitive digital behaviour for financial institutions. The Biocatch founder Avi Turgemen served in Israel's military intelligence and drew on that experience to found BioCatch. Indue has partnered with BioCatch since 10 October 2022, just after this Government scrapped the previous Basics Card. On 8 February BioCatch opened an office in Australia. On 13 Feb 2023 Indue was granted a confidential contract for \$11.9 million. On 6 March 2023 people (mostly First Nations low income welfare recipients) began being trialled on the Indue SmartCard, with reasoning from the Minister that participants now have "choice to use contemporary technology" (although the scheme is compulsory). Can you advise whether BioCatch has any relationship or involvement with the SmartCard program?

Answer:

The Department of Social Services does not have any relationship or involvement with BioCatch.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Public Hearing – 5 July 2024

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: First Nations People

Question reference number: IQ24-000107

Question asked by: Lidia Thorpe

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2024

Question:

11. Does the Minister see the disturbing implications that data gathered in enacting current Frontier Wars and genocide against Palestinian people, could be actively contributing to the continued policies of economic apartheid against First Nations people in this colony?

Answer:

Refer to DSS SQ24-000582