

Submission to the Community Affairs Committee, Department of the Senate,
Parliament House Canberra ACT

Re the Federal Government's plan to link welfare payments to school attendance.

I believe the Social Security and Veteran's Entitlements Legislation Amendment (Schooling Requirements) Bill 2008 needs to be very seriously considered. Many reports have been made regarding the ill effects of the Income Management scheme relating to the Northern Territory Emergency Intervention and this proposal would have similar effects.

Punitive measures in my experience are never effective. If the finance required to put in place people and processes to police the proposed scheme were instead put towards employing people, including Aboriginals where possible and appropriate, to work with schools and local communities to encourage school attendance, the money would be better spent even if significant training for such people were required.

I know that many Aboriginal people feel completely disempowered by the way they are being treated. We need to look at justice for all people within our own beloved Australia.

No-one denies that education is important but let us look at measures alternative to the harsh proposals contained in this legislation.

Joan Evans