



AUSTRALIAN SENATE
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

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Inquiry into Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Welfare Reform and Reinstatement of Racial Discrimination Act) Bill 2009 and the

Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Other Legislation Amendment (2009 Measures) Bill 2009 along with the

Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Other Legislation Amendment (Restoration of Racial Discrimination Act) Bill 2009 [introduced by Senator Siewert]

On 26 November 2009 the Senate, on the recommendation of the Selection of Bills Committee, referred the provisions of the above Bills to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 9 March 2010. A number of issues were outlined for the Committee to consider during the inquiry and details of these are attached.

The Bills may be accessed at the following links:

[Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment \(Welfare Reform and Reinstatement of Racial Discrimination Act\) Bill 2009](#)

[Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Other Legislation Amendment \(2009 Measures\) Bill 2009](#)

[Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Other Legislation Amendment \(Restoration of Racial Discrimination Act\) Bill 2009](#)

The Committee invites you to provide a written submission addressing issues that may be of relevance to you. The submission should be lodged by 1 February 2010. The Committee prefers to receive submissions electronically as an attached document – email: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au – otherwise by fax (02 6277 5829).

Submissions become Committee documents and are made public only after a decision by the Committee. Publication of submissions includes loading them onto the internet and their being available to other interested parties including the media. Persons making submissions must not release them without the approval of the Committee. Submissions are covered by parliamentary privilege but the unauthorised release of them is not protected. Information relating to Senate Committee inquiries, including notes to assist in the preparation of submissions for a Committee, can be located on the Internet at http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/wit_sub/index.htm

Should you require further information please contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 3515.

Enquiries from hearing and speech impaired people should be directed to Parliament House TTY number 02 6277 7799. Adobe also provides tools at <http://access.adobe.com/> for the blind and visually impaired to access PDF documents. If you require any special arrangements to enable you to participate in the Committee's inquiry, please contact the Secretariat.

Statement of reasons for referral of the Bills

These are significant reforms to welfare policy which will affect a large number of disadvantaged Australians around which there has been significant community interest.

Assess the effectiveness of the amendments proposed in the Bills to:

- improve the social and economic conditions, social inclusion and life outcomes of all the disadvantaged individuals and communities affected by the measures, including but not limited to the Northern Territory;
- deliver measurable improvements in protecting women and children, reducing alcohol-related harm, improving nutrition and food security, promoting community engagement and strengthening personal and cultural sense of value in all affected communities, including but not limited to Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory;
- reinstate the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 and deliver on our international commitments under the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in the operation of relevant legislation, particularly the Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007;

Assess the evidence that the proposed measures will deliver their stated policy objectives in an appropriate and cost effective manner.

Consider the relative merits of alternative measures in achieving these outcomes.

Assess the likely direct and incidental costs of the proposed measures including:

- the cost of administration and delivery of the measures;
- additional costs incurred by those subject to the measures;
- the costs incurred by businesses complying with the Basics Card and potential losses of businesses excluded from the scheme.

In addition to the above in relation to the three Bills referred, the following issues for consideration were also provided in relation to the Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Welfare Reform and Reinstatement of Racial Discrimination Act) Bill 2009 –

Assess the effectiveness of the amendments proposed in the Bill in meeting the Government's policy objectives to:

- address the social and economic disengagement arising from long term welfare dependence in disadvantaged regions, and in particular across the whole of the Northern Territory;
- improve the engagement, participation and responsibility of certain welfare recipients;
- continue and strengthen the measures to protect women and children, including reduce alcohol-related harm, improve food security, ensure appropriately secure tenure for the delivery of government services, promote personal responsibility and rebuild community norms in Northern Territory Indigenous communities; and
- reinstate the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (RDA) in the operation of relevant legislation, particularly the Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007.