

Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council

Answer to written Question on Notice – Adelaide 4 March 2009

Senator Scullion: In your evidence you suggest because drugs are expensive, a decreasing amount of income is available for food and other essential items.

Would you see some value in the introduction of “welfare quarantining” similar to what has been introduced in the Northern Territory (i.e. 50% of welfare payments can only be used to buy food and other essential items) ?

In principle we are opposed to the “welfare quarantining” as it doesn't give people choice and in particular those from remote communities in SA only have access to their local community stores. A lot of community people do in fact travel 100's of kilometers to regional centres for shopping. We see that if it was a voluntary scheme then for some community members who are hassled for their benefit (i.e. hassled for money) then a quarantining albeit voluntary might be a scheme that they would benefit from. Clearly if it was imposed then you would see shop keepers obviously reaping a financial benefit with little increase in range and quality of food and other items that they could purchase.