

PUBLIC FORUM

Not In Bankstown, Not Anywhere!

Why we need a moratorium on Government's Income Management

Thursday, 6 October 2011

11.30 – 1pm

Guest Speakers

Barbara Shaw

Aboriginal leader from Alice Springs and resident of Mt Nancy town camp in Alice Springs, a 'prescribed area' under the Northern Territory Intervention. Barbara has been held on the Income Management system against her will since January 2008



Dr John Falzon

Chief Executive Officer of St Vincent de Paul Society, National Council of Australia and long time activist for social justice



@ Life Church

Ground floor, 194 Stacey Street Bankstown

Nearest corners: Stanley Street & South Terrace

Parking available at the back of the building or nearby streets

About the Forum

The Campaign of the Say No to Government's Income Management: Not In Bankstown Not Anywhere has gathered momentum locally and nationally and has gained support from a range of organisations and groups. The campaign coalition is now holding this forum for Bankstown residents, service providers and advocates to hear firsthand about the experience of the Income Management under the Northern Territory Intervention. The Forum will also be an opportunity for you to learn more about the concerns of the welfare sector and to hear what long time advocates are saying about this policy. You will also learn more about the campaign, how you can be part of it and how you too can take action to protect the rights of people on social security.

All Welcome

For more information and to RSVP

- ph: (02) 9709 4333
- email: say.no.to.gov.im@gmail.com
- campaign website: www.sayno2gim.info

Read the Call for a Moratorium →→→

NO to Government's Income Management

Call for an Immediate Moratorium

We are calling for a moratorium on the system of government Income Management, which quarantines between 50-70 per cent of Centrelink payments so they can only be used to buy 'priority items' at government approved stores.

Income Management is bad social policy. The vulnerable in our community need improved social services, higher incomes and employment opportunities, not measures that control their lives and restrict their movements. Centrelink should provide entitlements, not exercise discretionary power over people's lives. Aboriginal communities living under the Northern Territory Intervention have experienced four years of hardship and humiliation as a result of Income Management.

'Women's Experience of Income Management in the Northern Territory', an Equality Rights Alliance report released in August 2011 found overwhelming opposition to the system. More than 180 women were surveyed, the largest study ever conducted. 79 per cent wanted to exit Income Management immediately, 85 per cent had not changed what they buy and 74 per cent agreed with the statement, "people aren't as nice to me when they see I use BasicsCard".

Income Management is a gross waste of funds. \$350 million has been budgeted for 2010-13 to maintain the system in the Northern Territory. \$117.5 million has been budgeted for five new "trial sites" around Australia from 2012-16. In both cases, the estimated cost per recipient per year is more than \$4500.

Income Management is discriminatory. The Prescribed Area People's Alliance, representing communities across the NT have said, "The BasicsCard has disempowered us. It's very racist. We are going backwards to the welfare days." Despite the reinstatement of the Racial Discrimination Act, as of February 2011 94 per cent of people on the system in the NT were Indigenous and 75 per cent of exemptions had been granted to non-Indigenous people. As the system expands across Australia, both Indigenous people and other already stigmatised groups will bear the burden.

Income Management unfairly disadvantages small businesses and co-operatives who do not have the resources to run the system or apply for a licence.

Income Management is unnecessary. There are long-standing voluntary programs that assist Centrelink recipients to manage their money, such as Centrepay. We encourage further investment and improvements in these programs. But Income Management is fundamentally coercive and a breach of human rights.

We demand a moratorium on Income Management

1. Immediate amnesty

Grant the right to immediate, unconditional exit from Income Management to the more than 15,000 people still on the system in the NT, along with Western Australia and Queensland.

2. No expansion

Abandon plans to expand Income Management into five new "trial sites" across Australia - Bankstown, Rockhampton, Shepparton, Logan and Playford.

3. New opportunities

Redirect investment planned for the Income Management system to increase the income of welfare recipients, create employment opportunities and improve social services.