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Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin needs to stop perpetuating misinformation about income management and its supposed benefits, particularly to children, says a spokesperson for the Intervention Rollback Action Group, which is based in Alice Springs.

There is no evidence, either in Australia or internationally, that income management helps underprivileged people to deal with issues arising from their circumstances. The measure in fact goes against the government's own policy of social inclusion. Extending the measure to other areas of disadvantage around the country will not help people who are struggling to cope with issues impacting on their lives but will add to their psychological and financial stress.

“Out of the hundreds of people we have spoken to over the last 2 ½ years, no-one has said they like income management or find it a ‘useful tool’ as the Minister keeps stating” says Marlene Hodder from the Intervention Rollback Action Group based in Alice Springs. “No-one has actually said it is good for them and is helping them manage their money. If people were given a real choice they would opt not to be income managed.”

“Mothers are finding it hard to provide for their children and families,” reports Barbara Shaw from Mt Nancy Town Camp. “People are now walking out from community stores with less food than before the intervention. It's hard for old people who don't have ID. It's hard for people who have to spend \$200 on transport to get to a major centre and aren't able to pool their money,” Ms Shaw added.

Life has become harder for people on low incomes struggling to survive and deal with the extra requirements under the system and the difficulties of having an uncertain and split income. Lack of access to services such as transport and telephones is an added stress.

The group's recent research findings show that many Aboriginal people are now being forced to work for the dole and receive half their pay on Basics Card. Barbara Shaw asks “How can people be happy when they're working for the dole as cheap ‘slave labour’ and then getting only half their pay?”

“The real jobs that were promised are just non-existent. Minister Macklin is ignoring her own department's reports and all the expert findings. She is planning to spend another \$350 million on this ineffective means of controlling people's incomes and their lives - money desperately needed to provide employment and basic services” says Paddy Gibson from the Intervention Rollback Action Group.

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Issued by the Intervention Rollback Action Group, Mparntwe-Alice Springs