

SENATOR RACHEL SIEWERT

MEDIA RELEASE



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CASHLESS DEBIT CARD

Further evidence that cashless debit card does not work and Newstart must be increased

[An independent study from the University of Queensland](#) showing that people on income management have an 'overwhelming number' of negative experiences' is further evidence that the cashless debit card should be abandoned and current moves to extend it voted down.

"It is untenable for the Government to continue the so-called cashless debit card trial sites in Ceduna, the East Kimberley, Goldfields and Hinkler region and to extend it to the NT," Senator Rachel Siewert said.

"Income management has been a racist discriminatory tool imposed on First Nations peoples for over a decade, since the NT Intervention.

"The Government is trying to entrench this card by stealth through legislation that extends the card, year by year without proper evaluation. It is appalling that the Government is hinting at a national rollout as people are suffering right now on this card.

"This study reflects what was found by the final evaluation of the NT intervention, that income management met none of its objectives, as well as the ANAO report which found that there was no evidence that there had been a reduction in social harm in the so-called trial sites.

"There was never any baseline data collected in any of the trial sites.

"The Government says that the cashless debit card is just like any other card but many people cannot even use it to pay rent or bills and are penalised with late fees.

"As the University of Queensland study shows, people on low incomes are excluded from local markets, their community sporting events and fairs that

require payment in cash and people cannot do simple things like buy second hand goods for cash.

“These are experiences that are reported to my office all the time.

“There are many reports of Indue, a private company telling people what they can and can’t buy which is outrageous.

"The point this study clearly makes is that people simply don't have enough to live on. That is their key problem, they don't need to be told how to manage their money.

“If this Government wanted to assist people to face barriers like poverty, addiction and unemployment they would immediately increase Newstart and invest in community led wrap around services rather than punishing them with this expensive and punitive program.

"This card needs to be stopped."

The report can be found [here](#).

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