



The National Council of Single Mothers and their Children Inc stands in union with the Yolngu Nations and opposes the *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011*

The Northern Territory Intervention was developed without consultation with Australian citizens; most notably the absence of Indigenous Communities, their Leaders and their trusted Alliances. History has confirmed that government intervention which is 'top down' most likely results in long-term human damage. Unfortunately, Australia is peppered with such examples and it is then left to future governments and generations to acknowledge the harm and then to remedy those mistakes. This is a resource intense and expensive outcome and for the individuals who have had to endure such policies the cost is in-measurable.

NCSMC opposes Income Management and cites research undertaken by Equality and Rights Alliance regarding *Women's Experiences of Income Management in the Northern Territory*. The research gave agency to women who succinctly and powerfully challenged the assertion that Income Management empowers and protects them. Furthermore, these women provided examples of its discriminatory and harmful impact. Such findings identified that:

- a. Women were poorly informed or aware of their rights.
- b. Income management decreased their safety and reduced their capacity to flee.
- c. Increased conflict when family members desired goods and items which did not fit the scope of the 'basic card'
- d. It ceased their ability to shop around for cheaper goods.
- e. It increased their reliance upon a few nominated shops.
- f. Decreased their autonomy and built greater reliance upon the government and its controls.
- g. Prevented access to a range of important services such a hearing services.
- h. Found the 'basic card' to be discriminatory and felt judged when it was known that they were using the basic card.

The role of the Government is to actively seek to reduce prejudice and discrimination. Policies that 'target' particular population groups with a punitive approach send a concerning signal to those who are directly impacted as well as the broader community.

We can and must do better than the Northern Territory Intervention.

Eliminate and respond to violence, hardship and inequality for single mothers and their children

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