

To: Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs  
Delivered by email: [community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au)

29/10/2020



Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: *Strong concerns with the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Continuation of Cashless Welfare) Bill 2020***

QAIHC thanks the Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs on behalf of our Member Services for the opportunity to respond to the *Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Continuation of Cashless Welfare) Bill 2020*.

QAIHC was established in 1990 by dedicated and committed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders within the community-controlled health sector. From our first meeting 30 years ago, QAIHC has grown to be a national leader in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health as a voice for our 26 Members, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Organisations (ATSICCHOs) in Queensland.

QAIHC supports the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation's (NACCHO) submission to the Committee and shares NACCHO's concerns with the legislation relating to:

1. the lack of genuine partnership and shared decision making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representatives in the design of the Cashless Debit Card (CDC) system, its review and this proposed decision to make it a permanent system, as agreed to in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
2. the lack of consideration given to Articles 1 and 2 in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination through the scheme being mainly involuntary to the majority of participants with a difficult exit-system.
3. racial discrimination caused by the CDC's application and inconsistency with the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 and the United Nation's Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination recommendations from 2017.
4. a failure to address the underlying causes of why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may require welfare support, including the ongoing and very real impact of the history of colonialization, racism, poor social determinants and a lack of employment opportunities.
5. practical issues with the existing program including limitations placed on individuals as many services do not accept card payments (resulting in a lack of cash), technical issues, shame and stigma, and concerns around data and information sharing.
6. a lack of evidence of the CDC program's effectiveness.

QAIHC acknowledges the reasons provided for the need to reduce welfare dependency, and advise the Committee to **recommend that Parliament reject the Bill** and commence a genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to design systems that better meet the needs of community and society.

If you would like any further information please direct your enquiries to QAIHC at [policyteam@qaihc.com.au](mailto:policyteam@qaihc.com.au).

Yours sincerely,

**Cleveland Fagan**

Chief Executive Officer (Acting)  
Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council

**Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council** ABN 97 111 116 762

Level 3, 36 Russell Street, South Brisbane QLD 4101 | PO Box 3205, South Brisbane QLD 4101 | T 07 3328 8500 | F 07 3844 1544