



10 August 2022

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

By email: [community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au)

To whom it may concern

**Submission in relation to the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Repeal of Cashless Debit Card and Other Measures) Bill 2022 (the Bill)**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission in relation to the Bill prior to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee providing its report on this matter by 31 August 2022.

Empowered Communities East Kimberley (ECEK) is a collaboration between 27 Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations based in the East Kimberley, supported by a neutral backbone organisation Binarri-binyja yarrowoo Aboriginal Corporation (BBY). ECEK has articulated a shared vision of Aboriginal-led development in our [Regional Development Agenda](#). Further information about ECEK and our ACCO members is available on the BBY [website](#).

We note:

- The provisions of the Bill and its intention to abolish the Cashless Debit Card (CDC) arrangements in Part 3D of the *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999* and, as an alternative, facilitate arrangements for individuals to enter the income management regime under Part 3B of that Act in appropriate cases
- The Australian Government's stated intention to undertake extensive consultation with affected communities on the future of income management and other local support needs.

ECEK welcomes the Australian Government's intention to closely engage with affected communities to effectively manage the transition away from the CDC and support the identification of other solutions that are responsive to local needs.

The abolition of the CDC will have consequences in the East Kimberley and there is a risk that it may facilitate an increase in alcohol and drug consumption and gambling. This would have an adverse impact on children and families across our region and compound existing problems, particularly in relation to health, housing, education, employment and community safety.

ECEK is interested to understand whether the Australian Government has or is planning to undertake work to measure the impact of the abolition of the CDC on alcohol-related harm. This would greatly assist our region to better understand the implications of the repeal of the CDC and the policy responses that should replace it.

We are interested in further engaging with the Australian Government to help identify the alternative policy responses, for example by considering changes to voluntary income management, re-design of the



Community Development Program or the introduction of other measures that aim to monitor and reduce alcohol-related harm.

As part of the reform process, ECEK submits that the Australian Government should first consult with Aboriginal leaders and local communities to ensure that policy responses are holistic, Aboriginal-led and community-based. Further, we submit that Government must work collaboratively with, and be culturally sensitive to, Aboriginal people during the reform process in order to prevent further disempowerment and ensure that future reforms are responsive to local and cultural needs.

The effects of excessive alcohol and drug use will continue to have adverse health, social and cultural impacts in the East Kimberley unless they are addressed promptly and effectively. We would welcome the opportunity to engage further with the Australian Government on these issues as soon as is feasible.

To discuss this submission further, please contact me by email on [ceo@bby.org.au](mailto:ceo@bby.org.au) or by phone on (08) 9169 2272.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christy Hawker".

Christy Hawker  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Binarri-binyja yarrowoo Aboriginal Corporation**