

MEDIA RELEASE: Protest Against Premier Jay Weatherill's Endorsement Of Andrew Forrest's Income Management Plan And Other Recommendations

WHEN: Tuesday September 9th 10am

WHERE: State Administration Centre, 200 Victoria Square

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY: Oversized BasicsCards With Weatherill And Forrest's Names On Them

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Members of SIMPla (Stop Income Management in Playford), Anti-Poverty Network SA, and Aboriginal rights activists will protest against Premier Jay Weatherill's endorsement of all 27 of Andrew Forrest's proposals in his *Indigenous Employment and Training Review*, including significantly expanding Income Management.

"Mr Weatherill's broad support of Forrest's recommendations is rushed and misguided, and puts him at odds with Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Federal Opposition Leader Bill Shorten, neither of whom have endorsed all of Mr Forrest's suggestions", SIMPla Spokesperson Pas Forgione said.

"Mr Forrest's recommendation that working-age Centrelink clients have 100 percent of their funds quarantined is an unprecedented attack on the rights of those on income support to control their finances."

It would, as the Australian Council of Social Service has noted, "take our nation back to the 1930s when unemployed people did not get cash benefits and had to work on the roads or beg for charity to survive."

"Income Management is a blunt, heavy-handed policy that does not improve the financial or personal skills and well-being of vulnerable individuals. There is evidence that the humiliation and stress it inflicts on clients could be harmful over the long-term", Forgione said.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Library's 2012 paper, *Is Income Management Working*, said there was "an absence of evidence relating to the effectiveness or otherwise" of the program.

In the City of Playford, where Income Management has operated since July 2012, there were 588 residents affected by this punitive scheme as of May 16, according to the Department of Social Services. 80 percent of Income Management clients were forced on the scheme.

"Other aspects of Forrest's report also concern us. Moves to restrict access to the Disability Support Pension, which already has very strict eligibility criteria, will lead to many with limited work capacity having to languish on the extremely inadequate Newstart Allowance", Forgione said.

"Reduced flexibility for Centrelink to waive penalties for job-seekers will needlessly increase hardship and will not address the shortage of jobs. Nor will expanding Work For The Dole, a failed policy which demoralises unemployed people but does not create more paid positions."

"Linking Family Tax Benefits to school attendance fails to address the many underlying issues behind truancy in remote Aboriginal communities, and may seriously damage critical relationships between schools and parents."

"We are calling for Income Management to be terminated, with savings put into services that build the strengths of vulnerable individuals and communities, for Centrelink payments to be lifted to more adequate levels, and for serious efforts by governments to address the under-supply of jobs, especially in regional and remote communities."