

MEDIA RELEASE: Premier Jay Weatherill Fails To Listen To The Evidence On Income Management

Further Information: Pas Forgione, SIMPla (Stop Income Management in Playford) Spokesperson, on 0411 587 663 or at simpla.playford@gmail.com.

Reports in *The Australian* on Friday August 15th that South Australian Premier Jay Weatherill supports Andrew Forrest's welfare proposals, including significantly expanding Income Management, are deeply concerning.

"Mr Forrest's recommendation that selected Centrelink clients have 100 percent of their funds 'managed' is an unprecedented attack on the rights of those on income support to control their finances", SIMPla (Stop Income Management in Playford) Spokesperson Pas Forgione said.

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 improve the financial or personal skills of vulnerable clients nor improve their health and well-being. 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.

A Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs study from the same year, *Evaluating New Income Management In The Northern Territory: First Evaluation Report*, was less guarded:

"[Income Management] has been applied to many who do not believe they need Income Management and for whom there is no evidence that they have a need for, or benefit from Income Management. Income Management has led to widespread feelings of unfairness and disempowerment...for many people the program largely operates more as a means of control rather than a process for building behaviours or changing attitudes or norms."

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. Over 80 percent of Income Management clients were forced on the scheme.

The majority of clients are young people on the Unreasonable To Live At Home rate of Youth Allowance who have automatically been placed on Income Management simply because of their payment, without regard to their financial and personal history and skills.'

"SIMPla are all calling for Income Management to be terminated, with savings put into services that build the strengths of vulnerable individuals and communities, and have a track-record of success, and for Centrelink payments to be lifted to more adequate levels, as called for by unions, business, and welfare groups", Forgione said.