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Welfare changes - proceed with care

Anglicare Australia Executive Director Kasy Chambers has argued the need for greater public debate over the Australian Government's proposed welfare reforms and welcomed its decision to refer them to a Senate Inquiry.

"The Government's announcement yesterday that it is planning to extend involuntary income management across Australia has surprised many in the community sector" Ms Chambers said today.

"And so we welcome the decision to refer this legislation to a Senate Inquiry, so that evidence and arguments for the change of policy can be properly explored."

"We've received mixed reports about the impact of income management, which has been a key element of the Northern Territory Emergency Response. Some of the changes mooted in this draft bill, particularly the reinstatement of the Racial Discrimination Act (RDA), are welcome; but there are other issues that need to be looked at more carefully."

"The imperative to reinstate the RDA should not force our hand into rushing fundamental changes to the way in which welfare services are delivered. These changes are deep and far ranging and have the capacity to effect how any of us might receive welfare support or be perceived by others."

"As such any decision to make such changes must be informed by a broad and well informed debate."

"We look forward to the Senate Inquiry at which the assumptions behind this initiative can be properly tested and the evidence examined" Ms Chambers said.

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THE VOICE FOR ANGLICAN CARE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN AUSTRALIA

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