

Councillor Sylvie Ellsmore

Marrickville Councillor for North Ward - Wali

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24 May 2013

Anne Gardiner
General Secretary
Public Service Association
GPO Box 3365
Sydney NSW 2001

Cc: Bankstown Say No to Government Income Management Campaign Coalition

Solidarity with the No Income Management in Bankstown Campaign

Dear Ms Gardiner,

I am writing to congratulate the Public Service Association (PSA) and its members for their ongoing work ban against the implementation of income management in Bankstown.

At its Council meeting this week Marrickville Council passed a Notice of Motion in support of the PSA's work ban.

We passed the motion: in recognition that income management is a Federal Government policy which disempowers vulnerable families and individuals; and in solidarity with the workers, families and community organisations which are part of the 'Bankstown Say No to Government Income Management Campaign' Coalition.

In passing the Motion Marrickville Council committed to work with the PSA, community organisations and residents who are involved in the current campaign, and to resist any attempts to expand Income Management beyond the trial site, into our Local Government Area. The Motion was passed with the support of the Greens and ALP Councillors on Marrickville Council.

A copy of the Notice of Motion is attached for your information.

Yours sincerely



Sylvie Ellsmore
Greens Councillor for North Ward – Wali
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MARRICKVILLE council

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Notice of Motion – Solidarity with Bankstown No Income Management Campaign

That Marrickville Council:

1. Congratulates the Public Service Association members at the Bankstown, Lakemba and Fairfield Community Service Centres for successful work bans against the implementation of Income Management.
2. Recognises that due to the actions of workers, unions and a coalition of community organisations, including a number of community organisations which operate in the Marrickville Local Government Area, no referrals for Income Management have been made through Child Protection in the Bankstown LGA (and therefore in NSW) to date.
3. Recognises that these actions have played an important role in highlighting the punitive and discriminatory nature of Income Management policies, which dis-empower marginalised communities and redirect significant resources which should be used to offer genuine family and community support.
4. Commits to work with PSA members and local community organisations that stand opposed to Income Management and its expansion into the Marrickville Local Government Area.

Background

Income Management is a Federal Government policy which quarantines 50-70% of a person's Centrelink income (and 100% of any advance and any lump sum payments received), usually onto a 'BasicsCard'. This card can only be used to buy 'priority items' at Government-approved stores. The policy was originally introduced as part of the Northern Territory Intervention. It was extended in July 2012 by the current Federal Government through the "Stronger Futures" package of legislation.

Stronger Futures extended Income Management into five "trial sites" – Bankstown in NSW, Greater Shepparton in Victoria, Logan and Rockhampton in Queensland and Playford in South Australia. The trial is targeted to "disadvantaged and vulnerable Australians" (as defined by the Act) in order to "encourage socially responsible behaviour", with a broad range of agencies given the power to refer a person onto Involuntary Income Management.

Involuntary Income Management in Bankstown applies to "disadvantaged and vulnerable Australians". People can be referred by agencies, with a broadening of which agencies have the power to refer someone for income management. Reasons that a person can be referred onto income management is that they are not financially secure. Given that the amount of the dole is significantly below what is required for a person or family to live above the poverty line, this potentially captures all persons on substantial welfare benefits.

The policy was previously found to be racially discriminatory by the United Nations. Reports on the implementation on Income Management and the NT Intervention have found a decrease in school attendance, increase in suicide rates by Aboriginal youth and an increase in Aboriginal incarceration. The Federal Government has spent more than \$500 million on the system to date, which is the equivalent of about \$5000 per person per year.

The Public Service Association (PSA), who represent Child Protection workers, have voted to ban income management and have made no referrals to income management in the NSW trial site of Bankstown. Their campaign is supported by a coalition against the expansion of Income Management in Bankstown and other areas, which includes:

- Arab Council Australia Inc • Association of Bhanin El-Minieh • Australian Arab Business Network • Australian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Alliance • Australian Services Union • Australian Workers Union • Australian Workers Union, Port Kembla Branch • Bankstown Area Multicultural Network • Bankstown Community Resource Group • Bankstown Women's Health Centre • Cabramatta Community Centre • CatholicCare • Combined Pensioners and Superannuants of NSW • Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union, NSW Branch • Council of Social Service of NSW • Darug Tribal Aboriginal Corporation • Ethnic Child Care Family and Community Services Co-op • Ethnic Communities Council of NSW • Finance Sector Union NSW/ACT Branch • Fairfield Local Aboriginal Access Group • Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia • Gandangara Local Aboriginal Council • Granville Multicultural Community Centre • Greek Orthodox Community of NSW • Greenacre Area Neighbourhood Centre Inc • Green Left Weekly • Immigration Advocacy and Services Network • Inner South-West Community Development Organisation Ltd • Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, Research Unit (UTS) • Lebanese Community Council of NSW • Lebanese Moslem Association • Maritime Union of Australia, Sydney Branch • Metro Migrant Resource Centre • National Association of Community Legal Centres Inc • National Tertiary Education Union, NSW • National Union of Workers • Network of Immigrant and Refugee Women of Australia Inc • NSW Nurses Association • NSW Women's Refuge Movement • Olivetree Women's Network • Pacific Island Women Advisory Support Service • Presentation Sisters Queensland • Public Service Association NSW • Reconciliation for Western Sydney • Search Foundation • St Vincent De Paul National Council of Australia • Sisters of St Joseph SA Reconciliation Circle • Society of Australian Presentation Sisters' Justice group • South West Community Legal Centre • Stop the Intervention Collective • Tenants Union of NSW • Tri Community Exchange • United Muslim Women Association • United Services Union • UnitedVoice • UnitingCare NSW.ACT • Unions NSW • Welfare Rights Centre, Sydney • Western Sydney Community Forum • Western Sydney Regional Information & Research Service (WESTIR) • Woodville Community Services • Women's Electoral Lobby (NSW) Inc. • Working Group for Aboriginal Rights, Canberra

The Greens have been actively campaigning against the Intervention since its introduction in 2007, as well as against related measures such as welfare quarantining, on the basis that they are discriminatory, expensive, ineffective and

The NSW ALP Conference in July 2012 unanimously carried a call on the Federal Labor government to halt compulsory income management, revise the Stronger Futures Legislation and redirect funds into social services and job creation.