



THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP
Minister for Families and Social Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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Cashless Debit Card programs extended by 12 months

The Liberal-National Government has announced a 12-month extension of the Cashless Debit Card (CDC) and the Income Management program across existing sites, as part of an ongoing commitment to welfare quarantining.

The CDC and Income Management programs quarantine a percentage of a welfare recipient's payments to restrict the purchase of alcohol and gambling products and restricting access to cash that may be spent on illicit drugs.

Minister for Families and Social Services, Paul Fletcher, said the CDC was operating in the three sites - Ceduna (SA), the East Kimberley (WA), and the Goldfields (WA) - and will start in the Bundaberg-Hervey Bay region (QLD) next month.

The extension – being announced as a part of the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) - will continue the measures in all sites until 30 June 2020.

An evaluation of the CDC in Ceduna and East Kimberley has found it has had a “considerable positive impact” and has been linked to a reduction in violence and harm related to alcohol consumption, illegal drug use and gambling.

“This will give further certainty to communities about the CDC program that is yielding significant positive results,” Mr Fletcher said.

Further consultation with interested communities will also be undertaken, with the option to expand to a fifth site from mid-next year.

The Income Management program will also be extended for 12 months, providing ongoing assistance to approximately 25,000 people who are currently supported by the program which operates at 17 sites in five states, and the entire Northern Territory.

The [latest report into income management in Cape York](#) was released on December 3. It is part of a growing body of evidence that these programs “contribute to a reduction in alcohol, drugs, violence and crime”.

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