



## Cashless Welfare Card Does Not Fix the Problem

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The expansion of the cashless welfare card trial to Kalgoorlie was announced on 12 February 2018 when the amendment to the *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999* passed the Senate. This is despite the lack of conclusive empirical data to support the conclusion that the program will solve the issues claimed to be associated with welfare dependence. The legislation passed the Senate regardless of growing community criticism from all demographics and opposition from many not-for-profit, non-government and community support organisations.

Cash management does not transform welfare dependence. If anything, it deepens the stigma and frustrates the options available for people.

The fundamental issue that the government should focus on is the weak economic environment in the locations where the trials are taking place. Small business development and secure commercial/industrial projects that stimulate employment and provide a dignified approach to self-reliance is a more difficult and complex issue to address, with solutions requiring a time-line that does not fit within government cycles.

YMAC has received direct feedback from the community that it serves. In particular, it is clear that the people of the Pilbara do not support this program. In fact, the Councillors of the Town of Port Hedland recently voted against the expansion of the cashless welfare card to its area. The Councillors listened to the concerns raised by the Aboriginal community, those most vulnerable and most likely to be impacted by the program. This courageous leadership act of local government should be taken as an example by our Federal politicians.

*All quotes to be attributed to Mr Simon Hawkins, CEO Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation.*

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### **About Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation**

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) is the native title representative body for the Pilbara, Murchison, Mid-West and Gascoyne regions of Western Australia. YMAC has a representative area of over one-third of WA and represents over 24 native title claims, all with their own language, culture and traditions. YMAC is a not-for-profit organisation run by an Aboriginal Board of Directors and provides a range of services to its members including claim and future-act representation, heritage protection services, community and economic development and natural resource management.

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