# Welfare Review Submission Template

## Pillar One: Simpler and sustainable income support system

Changes to Australia’s income support system over time have resulted in unintended complexities, inconsistencies and disincentives for some people to work. Achieving a simpler and sustainable income support system should involve a simpler architecture, a fair rate structure, a common approach to adjusting payments, a new approach to support for families with children and young people, effective rent assistance, and rewards for work and targeting assistance to need.

### Simpler architecture

**Page 42 to 52** of the Interim Report considers the need for a simpler architecture for the income support system. The Reference Group proposes four primary payment types and fewer supplements. The primary payment types proposed are: a Disability Support Pension for people with a permanent impairment and no capacity to work; a tiered working age payment for people with some capacity to work now or in the future, including independent young people; a child payment for dependent children and young people; and an age pension for people above the age at which they are generally expected to work.

In shaping the future directions for a simpler architecture the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* What is the preferred architecture of the payment system?
* Should people with a permanent impairment and no capacity to work receive a separate payment from other working age recipients?
* How could supplements be simplified? What should they be?
* What are the incremental steps to a new architecture?

| *Denying access to Disability Support Pensions to all but the most severely disabled is bound to cause extreme hardship and poverty. Most people with disability want to work but face practical barriers to employment e.g. transport availability; discrimination and lack of job availability. COMMENTS FROM PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY: “People with disability want to work”. “I’m proud of the work i do but i don’t get paid”. “by the time I pay rent there isn’t much left”. “when government work out payments there has to be a good mobility allowance”. “The (payment system) will only work if there is more money – some days I don’t get out of bed because I can’t turn the heater on cos I can’t afford the bill”.* |
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### Fair rate structure

**Page 55 to 60** of the Interim Report considers changes that could be considered to rates of payment for different groups. In shaping the future directions for a fairer rate structure the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* How should rates be set, taking into account circumstances such as age, capacity to work, single/couple status, living arrangements and/or parental responsibilities?

| *COMMENTS FROM PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY: “I’ve got a bad back and can’t work”. “I’ve got arthritis in my back. I can’t work anymore. The Government needs to make payments flexible for when we get older.” “What happens if you are young and have a disability? If they can’t live at home what do they do?”* |
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### Common approach to adjusting payments

**Page 60 to 64** of the Interim Report considers a common approach to adjusting payments to ensure a more coherent social support system over time. In shaping the future directions for a common approach to maintaining adequacy the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* What might be the basis for a common approach to adjusting payments for changes in costs of living and community living standards?

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### Support for families with children and young people

**Page 65 to 68** of the Interim Report considers how the payments could be changed to improve support to families with children and young people. In shaping the future directions for support for families with children and young people the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* How can we better support families with the costs of children and young people to ensure they complete their education and transition to work?
* In what circumstances should young people be able to access income support in their own right?

| *COMMENTS FROM PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY: “I had to decide between going to the doctor and buying the liquid for head lice. I bought the liquid because the kids need to go to school and the school won’t have them with nits”.* |
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### Effective rent assistance

**Page 68 to 71** of the Interim Report considers Rent Assistance and suggests a review to determine the appropriate level of assistance and the best mechanism for adjusting assistance levels over time. In shaping the future directions for Rent Assistance the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* How could Rent Assistance be better targeted to meet the needs of people in public or private rental housing?

| *COMMENTS FROM PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY: “Rent needs to be cheaper. I pay rent and I’m out of pocket all the time”. “We need more help with housing”. “Make sure there is money for modifications like extra rails on the stairs – you have to wait too long for the money to be available”. “People do up houses near the city so you move further out to get a place you can afford. Then there is no transport and you can’t get home from work – so then you can’t work”.* |
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### Rewards for work and targeting assistance to need

**Page 72 to 78** of the Interim Report considers changes to means testing for improved targeting to need and better integration of the administration of the tax and transfers systems to improve incentives to work. In shaping the future directions for rewards for work and targeting assistance to need the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* How should means testing be designed to allow an appropriate reward for work?
* At what income should income support cease?
* What would be a simpler, more consistent approach to means testing income and assets?

| *COMMENTS FROM PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY: “I work at XXX. When I started I got $1.10 an hour. Now I get $7 something. My wage should be higher. There are staff that don’t have a disability and get paid more money than me”. “My Mum and Dad worked hard to bank money to help when they were gone. They knew getting work for me would be hard”.* |
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## Pillar Two: Strengthening individual and family capability

Reforms are needed to improve lifetime wellbeing by equipping people with skills for employment and increasing their self-reliance. To strengthen individual and family capability changes are proposed in the areas of mutual obligation, early intervention, education and training, improving individual and family functioning and evaluating outcomes.

### Mutual obligation

**Page 80 to 85** of the Interim Report considers more tailored and broadening of mutual obligation and the role of income management. In shaping the future directions for mutual obligation the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* How should participation requirements be better matched to individual circumstances?
* How can carers be better supported to maintain labour market attachment and access employment?
* What is the best way of ensuring that people on income support meet their obligations?
* In what circumstances should income management be applied?

| *COMMENTS FROM PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY: “Don’t discriminate against people with disability when they want to work”. “Some people can’t work because there is a lack of transport in their area or no jobs”. “Not everyone is able to work. I can do a couple of days at the Community House. I can’t lift heavy things and they know that. I want the Government to take this into account”. “Let people with disability decide when they work and where they work cos they know what they can do”.*  |
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### Early intervention

**Page 85 to 88** of the Interim Report considers risked based analysis to target early intervention and investment and targeting policies and programmes to children at risk. In shaping the future directions for early intervention the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* How can programmes similar to the New Zealand investment model be adapted and implemented in Australia?
* How can the social support system better deliver early intervention for children at risk?

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### Education and Training

**Page 89 to 90** of the Interim Report considers the need for a stronger focus on foundation skills in both schools and vocational education and training, and on transitions from school to work. In shaping the future directions for education and training the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* What can be done to improve access to literacy, numeracy and job relevant training for young people at risk of unemployment?
* How can early intervention and prevention programmes more effectively improve skills for young people?
* How can a focus on ‘earn or learn’ for young Australians be enhanced?

| *COMMENTS FROM PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY: “We have the right to learn about work. There should be better education about work. We should learn about work at school. More employment skills should be taught to people with disability. how can we think about people finding jobs when we need more education?” “I’ve done lots of training – I’ve got three Certificate 3s, a Certificate 1; and 2 Certificate 2s. I still can’t get work. I keep doing training cos I want a job but it doesn’t make a difference”. “I’m worried about being punished if I can’t find a job. You can’t work if there isn’t a job. you can’t apply for jobs if there aren’t any”.* |
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### Improving individual and family functioning

**Page 90 to 93** of the Interim Report considers cost effective approaches that support employment outcomes by improving family functioning and the provision of services especially to people with mental health conditions to assist them to stabilise their lives and engage in education, work and social activities. In shaping the future directions for improving individual and family functioning, the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* How can services enhance family functioning to improve employment outcomes?
* How can services be improved to achieve employment and social participation for people with complex needs?

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### Evaluating outcomes

**Page 93** of the Interim Report considers improved monitoring and evaluation of programmes aimed at increasing individual and family capability to focus on whether outcomes are being achieved for the most disadvantaged. In shaping the future directions for evaluating outcomes the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* How can government funding of programmes developing individual and family capabilities be more effectively evaluated to determine outcomes?

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## Pillar Three: Engaging with employers

Employers play a key role in improving outcomes for people on income support by providing jobs. Reforms are needed to ensure that the social support system effectively engages with employers and has an employment focus. These reforms include making jobs available, improving pathways to employment and supporting employers.

### Employment focus – making jobs available

**Page 95 to 100** of the Interim Report considers what initiatives result in businesses employing more disadvantaged job seekers. In shaping the future directions for making jobs available the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* How can business-led covenants be developed to generate employment for people with disability and mental health conditions?
* How can successful demand-led employment initiatives be replicated, such as those of social enterprises?

| *COMMENTS FROM PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY: “Why is it hard for employers to employ people with disability? It’s the employers who haven’t got the skills.” “They say you can’t work there for public liability reasons – you know – people with epilepsy can’t be employed”. “They (employer) asked me if I was happy with the wage I get. I said I am happy to get a wage!”* |
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### Improving pathways to employment

**Page 101 to 107** of the Interim Report considers the different pathways to employment for disadvantaged job seekers such as vocational education and training and mental health support models. In shaping the future directions for improving pathways to employment the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* How can transition pathways for disadvantaged job seekers, including young people, be enhanced?
* How can vocational education and training into real jobs be better targeted?
* How can approaches like Individual Placement and Support that combine vocational rehabilitation and personal support for people with mental health conditions be adapted and expanded?

| *COMMENTS FROM PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY: “The Disability Employment Service doesn’t work very well. It needs to be changed for people with intellectual disability.” “There needs to be planning from school – not waiting till year 11 or 12”. “There needs to be more training at tafe”. “I missed most of school in year 10 cos I was sick. I think I should have been able to stay at for school longer – like year 13”* |
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### Supporting employers

**Page 108 to 110** of the Interim Report considers what can be done to support employers employ more people that are on income support including better job matching, wage subsidies and less red tape. In shaping the future directions for supporting employers the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* How can an employment focus be embedded across all employment and support services?
* How can the job services system be improved to enhance job matching and effective assessment of income support recipients?
* How can the administrative burden on employers and job service providers be reduced?

| *COMMENTS FROM PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY: “It’s important to have help looking for work”. “The government should employ more people with disability”. “I worry if there are changes at work and my pay. I was so upset I threw up because I got in a muddle about my banking and pay and had the wrong day for Centrelink reporting”. “The Disability Employment Service doesn’t work very well. It needs to be changed for people with intellectual disability.”* |
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## Pillar Four: Building community capacity

Vibrant communities create employment and social participation for individuals, families and groups. Investments by government, business and civil society play an important role in strengthening communities. Also, access to technology and community resilience helps communities build capacity. Building community capacity is an effective force for positive change, especially for disadvantaged communities.

### Role of civil society

**Page 112 to 116** of the Interim Report considers the role of civil society in building community capacity. In shaping the future directions for the role of civil society the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* How can the expertise and resources of corporates and philanthropic investors drive innovative solutions for disadvantaged communities?
* How can the Community Business Partnership be leveraged to increase the rate of philanthropic giving of individuals and corporates?
* How can disadvantaged job seekers be encouraged to participate in their community to improve their employment outcomes?

| *COMMENTS FROM PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY: “I go to work every day but I don’t get paid – it’s unpaid work.” “I volunteered at XXX for 4 years but never got a job when it was advertised”.*  |
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### Role of government

**Page 116 to 120** of the Interim Report considers the role of government in building community capacity. In shaping the future directions for the role of government the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* How can community capacity building initiatives be evaluated to ensure they achieve desired outcomes?
* How can the income management model be developed to build community capacity?

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### Role of local business

**Page 121 to 123** of the Interim Report considers the role of local business in building community capacity. In shaping the future directions for the role of local business the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* How can communities generate opportunities for micro business to drive employment outcomes?
* How can mutuals and co-operatives assist in improving the outcomes for disadvantaged communities?

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### Access to technology

**Page 124 to 125** of the Interim Report considers access to affordable technology and its role in building community capacity. In shaping the future directions for access to technology the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* How can disadvantaged job seekers’ access to information and communication technology be improved?

| *COMMENTS FROM PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY: “I haven’t got the internet because I’ve got no money”. “I walk to the library to use the internet and print stuff out”. “I have prepaid (sometimes) but it is expensive – but prepaid is all i can get”. “There isn’t any mobile phone or internet where I live (10 mins from Burnie on the NW coast of Tasmania - area of extremely high unemployment)”* |
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### Community Resilience

**Page 125 to 126** of the Interim Report considers how community resilience can play a role in helping disadvantaged communities. In shaping the future directions for community resilience the Reference Group would like feedback on:

* What strategies help build community resilience, particularly in disadvantaged communities?
* How can innovative community models create incentives for self-sufficiency and employment?

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