



*families*  
australia

**Submission to  
The Reference Group on Welfare  
Reform to the  
Minister of Social Services**

**In response to the Interim Report  
'*A New System for Better  
Employment and Social Outcomes*'**

**August 2014**

## About Families Australia

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Families Australia is a national peak, not for profit organisation which strives to improve the wellbeing of all Australian families. Families Australia focuses especially on seeking policy solutions to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised families and individuals.

Families Australia's 750 member organisations operate across Australia in a diverse range of social support services, such as family support, early childhood care, counselling, youth work, mental health and disability support.

As part of its work Families Australia coordinates the Coalition of Organisations Committed to the Safety and Wellbeing of Australia's Children, which is working with Australian governments to implement the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020.

In addition, Families Australia has auspiced the Alliance for Forgotten Australians (AFA) since its inception in 2007. AFA is a national group which represents the interests of the estimated 500,000 people across Australia who as children experienced serious abuse and exploitation in children's homes, orphanages, and other out-of home care settings.

In all matters, Families Australia works to promote a national public policy environment in which the needs and interests of families, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised, are heard and addressed.

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## Introduction

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Families Australia appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Interim Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform to the Minister for Social Services.

We welcome the review of Australia's social support system of payments and services, with its focus on fundamental systemic reform aiming to identify improvements to ensure that the system is effective, coherent and sustainable.

The growing complexity of the architecture of the system of payments and supplements has meant that many people find it increasingly difficult to navigate the system, with some missing out on much needed support, both financial and non-financial.

Current payment rates, particularly Newstart and Youth Allowance, are insufficient to keep individuals and families with children out of poverty, and can thereby act as a hindrance to successful job-seeking activity.

It is of grave concern to us that an increasing proportion of Australia's children are growing up in poverty (Wilkins, 2013). Adequate income support payments would help to address this.

Families Australia believes that the essential principles of any welfare reform must be that:

1. income support payments are fair and adequate, and
2. the potential for deleterious effects on family stability and child wellbeing are considered in relation to the level and security of payments, the imposition of participation requirements, limits on access to payments and/or other sanctions.

While we broadly support the four pillars of reform, we have concerns about some possible unintended consequences in their implementation for relatively small groups of very vulnerable people and families at serious risk of intergenerational disadvantage. These concerns are discussed below in responses to those questions from the Interim Report which are most relevant to policy areas in which Families Australia works.

## Pillar 1 Simpler and sustainable income support system

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Families Australia supports the rationale as outlined on page 5 of the Executive Summary of the Interim Report, and endorses as the underlying principles for any proposed reform that the income support system should:

- 'have adequate payments based on need',
- 'encourage people to prepare for and seek work where it is reasonable to do so',
- 'support people who are unable to work', and
- 'feature requirements for participating in the workforce that are individualised, and support services that build individual and family capability.'

### ***What is the preferred architecture of the payment system?***

We support simplifying the system by reducing the number of primary payments, but recommend a single working age payment with supplements for additional costs where relevant (e.g. costs of disability, rent, job search), rather than the proposed four-tiered system. This is in keeping with the report's recognition of the unfairness in the existing gaps in the differing payment rates, and the desired future direction outlined in the report of achieving 'a fair rate structure' (Executive Summary, *A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes*, p 5). Likewise, we support the simplification of payments to families through the introduction of a single child payment which increases with the age of the children.

Consistent with the report's prevailing theme of the need for greater flexibility and more individualised approaches, we caution against the imposition of arbitrary limits on access to income support, such as limits based on age, work history or location. Rather, we advocate maintaining a secure income support safety net for those affected by unemployment.

### ***How can we better support families with the cost of children and young people to ensure they complete their education and transition to work?***

Adequate support, both financial and non-financial, at key life transition stages is critical to maximising educational, employment and social participation. We believe that a single-tiered payment to people of working age will more adequately and fairly help to provide this support. It is at key life transitions - such as when children start school, when a carer's role changes, when a young person finishes school, when a person with a disability is transitioning into employment - that families need stronger, not lesser, support. A multi-tiered payment system, with people moving from a higher to a lower rate, runs counter to this principle, and would see people receiving decreased support at a time when they need it the most, and when it is most likely to be effective in assisting individuals into educational, employment or social participation.

Families Australia suggests that an area requiring further consideration is that of **grandparent and kinship carers**. These are the many thousands of people providing full-time care of a child or children due to family break-up, illness, or a range of other factors that contribute to parents not being able to care for their children. Grandparent care covers a variety of formal and informal arrangements. A 2013 study by the Social Policy Research Centre at University of New South Wales shows that more than one half of children and young people placed in home-based care under care and protection orders are with relatives, mainly grandparents. That is, over 20,000 children. There is another group of grandparents caring for children under Family or Magistrates court orders because the children's parents are unable or unwilling to care for the children adequately. In addition, there are thousands more grandparent and kinship carers in that role through informal, non-statutory arrangements (Brennan et al, 2013).

Grandparent and kinship care is a growing trend in Australia; it is the fast growing form of out-of-home care in all Australian jurisdictions (Brennan et al, 2013). National recognition of the importance of improving support for grandparent and kinship carers is such that it was made a priority of the first action plan of the National Framework for Protecting Australia's

Children 2009-2020 (Australian Government Department of Social Services, 2009). There remains, however, relatively little public recognition of the very significant role played by grandparent and kinship carers in Australia, and few support services directed to assisting them.

Key findings from the three-year ARC research study of grandparents as primary carers of their grandchildren (Brennan et al, 2013) found that grandparent carers are:

- financially disadvantaged compared with other families raising children, with two-thirds of grandparent carers relying on a government benefit, pension or allowance as their main source of income,
- commonly forced to change their employment arrangements because of their caring responsibilities, either reducing their work hours or ceasing paid employment,
- having difficulties with accessing Centrelink and/or state and territory support,
- experiencing serious additional financial hardship with the expense of having to change their housing because of their caring responsibilities, either move to another house that is bigger, closer to children's school, or modify their existing house to suit a larger family or a child/children with disabilities, and
- living with significant health problems, with over half of grandparent carers having long-term illness or disability, and reporting a deterioration in their health since assuming their caring role.

In relation to income support to grandparent and kinship carers, there is an urgent need for a nationally consistent carer allowance for grandparent and kinship carers which is not dependant on the legal status of the carer. That is, it should be available to grandparent and kinship carers whether or not they have formal custody of the child. In addition, it is critical that emergency or discretionary payments be available to assist grandparent and kinship carers in cases when children are placed at short notice.

Another critical element in relation to government income support for grandparents is the issue of contested entitlement to a government parental payment, in cases where parents refuse to relinquish a parental payment when it is grandparents who are actually caring for the child/children. There should be the means for the transfer of that entitlement to grandparents, with Centrelink support for grandparents through that process, and the transition of the parent/s to appropriate alternative income support.

Currently, the financial support to carers varies among States and Territories. Most State and Territories do not provide financial support in the form of allowances to *informal* carers, and there is a large variation among jurisdictions in financial support provided to *formal* carers (McHugh and Valentine, 2011). Research shows that financial support to grandparent and kinship carers is critical for stability of the placement. A 2013 study done by the Social Policy Research Centre of the University of New South Wales into the stability of foster and kinship care concluded that: "The importance of ongoing financial support for all carers, but particularly kinship carers, cannot be overemphasised." (McHugh, 2013).

The Australian Parliament Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs is currently conducting an Inquiry into *Grandparents who take primary responsibility for raising their grandchildren*. It has received 174 submissions, is holding public hearings across the country, and is due to report on 30 September 2014. One of the common themes in the

submissions is the extreme financial stress and insecurity experienced by many grandparent carers.

([http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Community\\_Affairs/Grandparent\\_Carers](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/Grandparent_Carers))

In order for grandparent and kinship carers to continue to play this important role, it is critical that support services designed to meet their particular needs are maintained and enhanced. Among non-financial support for grandparent and kinship carers, the most urgent need is for improved systems to disseminate information about the payments and services that are available to grandparent and kinship carers. It is widely accepted that many grandparent and kinship carers are not receiving payments and benefits to which they are entitled simply because they do not know about them.

Many grandparent and kinship carers report that they had little or no knowledge of available payments or services, even after having contact with Centrelink or other government and non-government agencies. A dedicated national information hotline or website would help make this information more readily available. However, information must be available in a range of formats and languages, at places where grandparents and kinship carers are likely to access it, not just on the internet or through a hotline. It is noted that the placement of Grandparent/kinship Advisers in some Centrelink offices has been found to be successful. The submission of Grandparents Australia, the national body which promotes the role and needs of grandparents and grandchildren, to the current Senate Inquiry describes Centrelink's Grandparent Advisers as "The single most successful strategy.....[which has] changed the lives of many carers simply by reviewing their cases and ensuring that they are on the correct schedule of payments." (Grandparents Australia, Grandparents Victoria, and Kinship Care Victoria, submission #83 to Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs Inquiry into Grandparents who take primary responsibility for raising their grandchildren March 2014 2014).

Families Australia recommends that this practice be extended to all major Centrelink offices to help grandparent and kinship carers access Centrelink payments and services, and to provide referrals to other relevant services. Peer support is well-established as a valuable resource for carers in providing them with social and emotional support and disseminating information. An enhanced network of community-based, facilitated peer support groups, such as MyTime for Grandparents, would enable more grandparent and kinship carers to avail themselves of this valuable service. There is also a need for specialised counselling services to help with handling the often very complex, conflicted family relationships which grandparent and kinship carers must negotiate.

Another pressing issue in relation to support services for grandparent carers is that of the need for equal access to services, such as respite and crisis support by informal carers, often deemed not eligible because they are not the legal holder of custody of the child/children or for other reasons.

***In what circumstances should young people be able to access income support in their own right?***

Access to income support should be based on need. Another of the vulnerable groups about whom we have concerns in relation to falling through the social safety net is **young people leaving out-of-home care**. These young people, already severely disadvantaged by a childhood of insecurity, neglect and/or abuse, find themselves transitioning to adulthood and independence, often at an age as young as 15 or 16, without any practical, emotional or financial support from family. It is well-recognised that many young people leave care with significant health, educational, and social deficits which can have long term impact on their life outcomes. They are more likely than other young people to experience homelessness, to become parents at a young age, and to be involved in the justice system as adults. Their employment outcomes are particularly poor, many developing reliance on income support payments (Mendes, 2009).

Studies show that up to 56% of young people transitioning from out-of-home care are not in employment, training or education (Morgan Disney, 2006). It is acknowledged that “Young people leaving care are at risk of poor long term outcomes if adequate support is not provided at the time of transition.” (Australian Government Department of Social Services website: *Transition to Independent Living Allowance*). Research demonstrates that there would be significant economic and social benefits if young people leaving care were better supported at the time of transition to avoid the likelihood of their progression into long term dependence on government income support and high cost social support services (Morgan Disney, 2006). It is clearly a case of short term investment reaping long term benefits. The support required is both financial and non-financial. One form of financial support is the Transition to Independence Allowance (TILA), a one-off payment of up to \$1500 to help meet some of the expenses of moving to independent living.

While TILA is an important tool to address some of the disadvantage experienced by young care-leavers, there are some concerns about the scheme. One key issue regards access to TILA. Some young people report that they do not have information about their eligibility to apply for TILA at the time they are exiting care. Others report that the application process is unduly complex. This notion is reinforced by service providers who also find the process, and all its registration requirements, to be complex and burdensome. An increase in the amount of the payment from the current \$1500 would be more accurately reflective of real costs associated with moving into independent living in today's economy.

Young people leaving out-of-home care are, as a matter of course, extremely financially disadvantaged. It is crucial that financial support be available to them to help them successfully transition into employment or further education or training. They are desperate to develop their skills and get an opportunity to enter the workforce in order to achieve some stability in their life and hope for their future. To in any way limit their access to payments and employment services would be highly counterproductive, putting them on downward spiral into poverty and homelessness and making it even harder for them to gain employment. With the national youth unemployment rate at around 12%, and as high as 20% in some parts of the country, young people who are unable to enter the job market,

need financial support, real incentives, and training and employment support programs that are effective.

National recognition of the importance of increasing support for young people leaving out-of-home care is such that it was made a priority of the Action Plan of COAG's National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 (Australian Government Department of Social Services, 2009). It is critical that the implementation of any reforms effecting young care-leavers be assessed for coherence with the following priority actions being undertaken under the National Framework:

- Integrate support for young people leaving care that is tailored to their individual needs and builds on a lifespan approach, including the Transition to Independent Living Allowance and State and Territory leaving care packages for care leavers
- Provide support and incentives that sustain engagement in school, and for young people leaving care, to help them overcome barriers to engaging in further education, employment and training
- Continue to implement practical mechanisms to ensure that there are appropriate housing options and supports for young people leaving care
- Explore options for community mentoring programs for children and young people who are soon to be transitioning from out-of-home care to build enduring support bases and facilitate ongoing positive engagement in the community.

This is a policy area where it is vital that the “social support system should work in tandem with the income support system to assist those most in need. This includes well-functioning employment services, housing assistance, child care, and early intervention and integrated services for people and families with complex needs, such as homelessness, mental health conditions and people with disability” (Ref: p 4, Executive Summary, *A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes*)).

It is essential that youth support services be easily accessible, flexible and tailored to individual needs, particularly in the case of vulnerable young people leaving care. The strengthening and expansion of school-to-work transition programs, such as Youth Connections, as well as support to remain in education would be very beneficial. Research indicates that other areas where additional support is most needed are: 1) independent living skills, especially budgeting, and 2) housing (Mendes, 2009).

As with all other groups likely to be effected by reforms to Australia's income support system, stable accommodation is a crucial prerequisite for better employment and social outcomes for young people. The issue of Rent Assistance and affordable housing must be addressed as part of a comprehensive long term national affordable housing strategy.

## **Pillar II Strengthen Individual and Family Capability**

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Families Australia endorses as the underlying principles for any proposed reform that:

- “Reforms are needed to improve lifetime wellbeing by equipping people with skills for employment and increasing self-reliance.”

- “The social support system should help people build the capacity they need to participate economically and socially, to the extent they are able.”
- The social support system should include “integrated models of support and employment assistance that are effective for people with complex needs.” (Executive Summary, *A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes*, p 9.)

### ***How should participation requirements be better matched to individual circumstances?***

Participation requirements should always be reasonable, meaningful, genuinely contribute to an individual's capability to gain employment, and be backed up by support services, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in the labour market. An **individual's role and responsibilities as a parent** must be considered, along with potential impact on children in the family. This is particularly so in relation to the application of any sanctions or restricted access to income support payments. The interests and needs of the children must always be paramount in the consideration of any mutual obligation requirements regarding parenting practices, such as enrolling children in early childhood programs.

Great care must be taken that an **individual's role as a carer** informs the application of any participation requirements. There is a risk of unintended adverse effects, with participation requirements interfering with a person's capacity to continue in their carer role. It should be noted that there are many carers in the Australian community who, for a variety of reasons, are not eligible for Carer's Payment, but who are on Newstart Allowance. This would include many informal carers, such as grandparent and kinship carers of children at risk, discussed under Pillar I above. Carers are an integral part of Australia's aged, disability and community care system. Access Economics estimated in 2010 that carers provided 1.32 billion hours of unpaid care each year and estimated that it would cost \$40.9 billion to the Australian economy to replace their care with formal care services.” (Carers Australia, 2014).

In relation to participation requirements and impact on carers, it should be recognised that the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is unlikely to have a significant impact on carers' availability to enter the paid workforce. Families and informal carers provide the bulk of assistance to the 4.2 million people with disabilities in Australia. The NDIS may alter the balance slightly, but is unlikely to fundamentally change this fact. The NDIS will not cover all people with disability, nor those with chronic illness, or anyone over 65 years of age. Care of these people will continue to be provided by family and informal carers. NDIS packaged support is expected to cover 460,000 people when fully rolled out, and even in these instances, it is unlikely that the need for all informal care will be replaced with paid support (Carers Australia, 2014). Carers play a vital role in our community; due care and consideration must be taken to ensure that nothing jeopardises their security in that role.

Families Australia encourages the Reference Group to further consider the role of volunteering in the concept of mutual obligation and to introduce greater flexibility in its recognition as fulfilling participation requirements. Both income support recipients and organisations providing volunteer opportunities report that the system is currently overly rigid in relation to what voluntary work is accepted as fulfilling participation requirements.

### ***In what circumstances should income management be applied?***

In general, the way to build individual and community capability is by nurturing skills and capacity, encouraging leadership and initiative, not by curtailing individual or community autonomy. Furthermore, there is potential for serious harm in taking away the rights and ability of individuals and communities to make their own decisions.

The findings of evaluations of income management programs in Australia, as well as a Senate Inquiry, are mixed, and inconclusive at best. Broader and sounder evaluation framework and methodology are required to assess the long term effectiveness in improving the lives of people subject to income management (Parliament of Australia, 2012). Some individuals and communities have reported positive results from their experience of income management. There is no clear evidence, however, that compulsory income management is effective in improving lives on a range of health and welfare indicators, or reducing unemployment or long-term reliance on government benefits, yet it is extremely costly to administer.

It therefore seems appropriate that income management be available to individuals and communities who request it, but that it not be compulsorily applied. In all cases, it is essential that income management be accompanied by adequate support services to enhance capability and build self-reliance in order to restore autonomy as soon as possible. The types of services that are most relevant are financial counselling and money management services to improve financial literacy; however, broad family support services are also essential to enhancing family and community functioning.

### **How can services be improved to achieve employment and social participation for people with complex needs?**

In order to maximise the benefit derived by individuals, especially those with complex needs, from our social support system, it is essential that the system is understood and accessed effectively by those in need. To that end, the aim of these welfare reforms of creating a simpler income support system which is “easy to access and understand and able to be delivered efficiently and effectively” (*A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes*, Executive Summary p.5) should also apply to strengthening the service sector. The acknowledged complexity of the income support and service systems is a serious hindrance to their effectiveness. These systems, and how to access them, are not easily understood, especially by people experiencing a complex range of support and income needs. It cannot be assumed that people eligible for support are aware of what is available or how to access it. In order to achieve the goal of delivering individualised support that builds individual and community capacity, it is imperative that the available supports, both financial and non-financial, be known, understood and used. With the development and introduction of new or changed income or service arrangements, it is urged that a comprehensive analysis and review of information strategies and access processes be an integral element of any reforms.

## Pillar III Engaging with Employers

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Families Australia endorses as the underlying principles of any reform that:

- “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” (p 12, Executive Summary, *A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes*).

### ***How can transition pathways for disadvantaged job seekers, including young people, be enhanced?***

Transition pathways can be enhanced by ensuring that job seekers have secure, adequate financial support while they are unemployed, and individualised support services to help them find and remain in appropriate employment.

The cooperation of employers is central to supporting disadvantaged people into the workforce and long term employment. Further support for employers to improve their understanding of barriers to workforce participation within their workplaces, such as discrimination, the need for flexible work arrangements or for long term 1-1 support in the workplace could assist in making more jobs available for people with complex needs.

Among disadvantaged job seekers, two groups are of particular concern. One group is **young people transitioning to independence**, discussed under Pillar I. Real work experience placements, tailored to their skills and interests, are enormously beneficial to them. Programs such as the School Business Community Partnerships Brokers have been very successful in brokering agreements between employers, community organisations and schools to channel young people at risk of long term unemployment into, work experience, further education, training or employment. With a weak labour market, expansion of programs such as this and others which bring together all stakeholders in education and employment to improve the life prospects for disadvantaged young people is essential.

Another group severely disadvantaged in the labour market consists of the estimated 500,000 people across Australia, known as “**Forgotten Australians**”, who as children experienced serious abuse and exploitation in orphanages, children’s home and other out-of-home settings. Now older adults, many Forgotten Australians remain highly traumatised and live with a range of health and medical conditions as well as serious financial and social disadvantages resulting from the very limited education they received; many live in poverty and isolation.

Forgotten Australians have been recognised by the Australian government as a special needs group within the Aged Care Act. Many, however, are still of working age, but have limited work skills and employment opportunities. In a 2011 survey of Forgotten Australians conducted as part of a study of their needs, 60% of respondents said that the support they most needed was information about government entitlements and services. Around 65% of those aged between 50 and 69 wanted help with access to employment and/or education

(Watson, 2011). A Senate Inquiry and numerous reports have established that the Forgotten Australians are a distinct group in themselves, whose needs and history demand the provision of specialist services across a wide range of areas (Parliament of Australia, 2004). The availability of specialist support for job-seeking Forgotten Australians, and increased understanding of their history by employers is fundamental to any improvements in the employment and social outcomes for Forgotten Australians.

Models such as Individual Placement and Support that combine vocational rehabilitation and person support for people with mental health conditions could be adapted and expanded to suit the needs of care leavers, both Forgotten Australians and young people currently transitioning from out-of-home care.

## **Pillar IV Building Community Capacity**

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Families Australia endorses as the underlying principles for any proposed reform that:

- “Building community capacity is an effective force for positive change, especially for disadvantaged communities.”
- “Investments by government, business and civil society play an important role in strengthening communities” (Executive Summary, *A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes*, p 13).

### ***How can disadvantaged job seekers be encouraged to participate in their community to improve their employment outcomes?***

In order to increase social participation of disadvantaged job seekers, the structural barriers to participation must be acknowledged and addressed. These include such things as: the severe shortage of affordable housing, structural inadequacy of the labour market, poor public transport, and high cost of child care. Participation is not simply a matter of individual will or motivation.

Most job seekers express a strong desire to achieve positive employment and social outcomes in their lives. Many of them, however, face personal barriers such as homelessness, family breakdown, mental and physical health conditions, often compounded by extreme financial hardship. Unless adequately addressed, these impediments increase the likelihood of long-term reliance on income support, or cycling on and off it. Employment and greater self-reliance for these people is achievable with appropriate intervention and support. The Individual Placement and Support (IPS), for example, and other programs which integrate personal and vocational support could be expanded and adapted to enhance social participation.

The use of sanctions to ‘encourage’ participation is not recommended, as research has shown that individuals facing severe personal barriers are more likely to be unable to meet participation requirements, and when sanctioning takes place, the negative impacts are far greater for more disadvantaged job seekers (Perkins, 2007).

### ***What strategies help build community resilience, particularly in disadvantaged communities?***

Resilience must develop in healthy, functioning communities; it cannot be built in already seriously disadvantaged, dysfunctional communities. A comprehensive well-linked, well-resourced network of civil society organisations is the foundation stone of community resilience, and must be continually fostered and maintained.

To this end, it is critical that the role of volunteering is strongly supported in communities, as volunteering is crucial to the survival of important civil society groups such as charities, emergency services, sporting and service clubs. A strong, integrated community service sector is an essential element in community capacity building, and must be understood, valued and used to its full potential.

Other useful strategies for building community resilience include: leadership development and mentoring programs, and support of community-wide events which establish and maintain personal and organisational connections within the community.

## **Conclusion**

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Changes to Australia's income support system over time have resulted in a system that is now complex, inconsistent and difficult for many vulnerable individuals and families to access. The initiative to make fundamental reforms to the architecture of the system is welcomed, as is its commitment to achieving 'better employment and social outcomes' for individuals and communities.

Families Australia's view is that reform will most effectively be achieved through a system that provides fair and adequate income support payments, along with appropriate education, training and employment support services. Participation requirements for income support should be reasonable and relevant to employment. We caution against the use of arbitrary limits on access to income support or harsh sanctions, as these are not likely to positively affect an individual's long term employment prospects, and furthermore, are likely to contribute to a downward spiral into disadvantage.

## Summary of key points

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Families Australia recommends:

- An income support system that is fair and adequate, with a single-tiered payment for working age people with supplements for additional costs where relevant.
- Participation requirements which are reasonable, meaningful, and genuinely contribute to an individual's capability to gain employment.
- Participation requirements which take into consideration an individual's responsibilities as a parent and/or carer.
- An integrated system of support services that work in tandem with income support payments.
- A nationally consistent carer allowance for grandparent and kinship carers which is not dependant on the legal status of the carer.
- Improved information strategies about, and simplified application process, for payments and services for grandparent and kinship carers.
- The placement of Grandparent/kinship Advisers in all major Centrelink offices.
- Specialised counselling services for grandparent and kinship carers.
- Equal access to services, such as respite and crisis support, by informal carers.
- Enhancement of the network of community-based peer support services available to all grandparent/kinship carers throughout Australia.
- Improved information strategies about, and simplified application process for, payments and services for young people leaving out-of-home care.
- An increase in the amount of TILA from the current \$1500 to more accurately reflective of real costs associated with moving into independent living in today's economy.
- Strengthening and expansion of school-to-work transition programs, and support for young people to remain in education.
- Expansion of programs which bring together all stakeholders in education and employment to improve the life prospects for disadvantaged young people.
- That an individual's role and responsibilities as a parent, along with any potential impact on children informs the application of participation requirements, sanctions or restricted access to income support payments.
- That an individual's role as a carer informs the application of any participation requirements, sanctions or restricted access to income support payments.
- Recognition that the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is unlikely to have a significant impact on carers' availability to enter the paid workforce.
- Introduction of greater flexibility in the recognition of volunteering as fulfilment of participation requirements.
- That income management not be imposed, but should be available to individuals and communities who request it, and be accompanied by adequate support services to enhance capability and build self-reliance.
- Further support for employers to improve their understanding of barriers to workforce participation within their workplaces.
- Availability of specialist support for job-seeking Forgotten Australians, and increased understanding of their history by employers.

- Development of models that combine vocational rehabilitation and personal support to suit the needs of care leavers, both Forgotten Australians and young people currently transitioning from out-of-home care.
- Ongoing support for a comprehensive well-linked, well-resourced network of civil society organisations, and strong support for volunteering in communities.

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