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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

For immediate release



### **Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service calls for human rights scrutiny on income management national rollout**

The Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) has called on Attorney-General Nicola Roxon to refer the Stronger Futures and Social Security Legislation Amendment Bills to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights.

With both Bills expected to pass through the Senate today, VALS CEO, Wayne Muir, is concerned that without the Committee's application of human rights scrutiny to these Bills, the measures contained within them are destined to fail Government and the community.

"Today represents a missed opportunity for Government to display strong commitment to human rights in Australia. VALS has joined others in calling on the Attorney-General to utilise her powers of referral to the Committee. Those calls have gone unanswered," said Mr Muir.

In correspondence with the Attorney-General, Mr Muir has also noted the lack of evidence warranting the nation-wide rollout of income management.

"We are concerned that income management will exert significant control over people's everyday lives. Given this intervention, a clear, comprehensive, independent and verifiable evidence base must exist in order to justify the passing and implementation of such policy. To date such evidence does not exist.

"Without this evidence, the rollout of income management to Greater Shepparton and other trial sites is unwarranted, unjustified and is imposed as a one-size-fits-all approach that does not act to address the underlying cause of vulnerability and disadvantage," said Mr Muir.

VALS correspondence with the Attorney-General echoes the call of the regional representative for the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Matilda Bogner, who has also called for the Bills to be put before the Committee.

If passed, the Social Security Legislation Amendment Act will enable income management to apply in five trial sites as of 1 July 2012.

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