



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Jenny Macklin MP

*Minister for Families, Housing,
Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*

Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig

Minister for Human Services

The Hon Warren Snowdon MP

Member for Lingjari

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BasicsCard roll out underway after successful launch – Alice Springs next

The Australian Government's BasicsCard is delivering a better system of Income Management, after a successful launch in the Northern Territory.

Details of the rollout have been released today by the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, and the Minister for Human Services, Senator Joe Ludwig.

Centrelink began issuing the EFTPOS-based, pin-protected card to people on Income Management in Katherine on September 8, and the rollout will expand to Alice Springs tomorrow.

The Rudd Government is committed to a child-centred approach to family policy.

"Income management is a crucial element in ensuring welfare payments are spent in the interests of children," Ms Macklin said.

"The BasicsCard will make it easier for people on income management to buy essential items."

"The launch of new BasicsCard in Katherine has been very successful, with the card winning strong support from customers and shop owners," Senator Ludwig said.

"It's easy to use and a much more flexible way of shopping and doing business under Income Management."

"About 650 customers have been issued cards so far and transactions have been running smoothly at local shops."

Local Member for Lingjari, Warren Snowdon, has welcomed the arrival of the BasicsCard in Alice Springs.

“The reports from Katherine about the BasicsCard are very positive,” Mr Snowdon said.

“It’s the practical solution smaller retailers and their customers have been crying out for and now it’s here and working well.”

Throughout the Northern Territory, there are about 125 shops approved to accept the card. They include supermarkets, butchers, clothing retailers and major national retailers.

The BasicsCard will be progressively introduced into the NT’s major urban centres, starting in Alice Springs tomorrow, with Darwin, Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy to follow.

“The BasicsCard is key to the Rudd Government’s commitment to strengthen community safety and improve the protection of children in the Northern Territory,” Ms Macklin said.

“The BasicsCard is an immediate, effective answer to the Income Management problems encountered by communities and shop owners,” Senator Ludwig said.

Any shop selling or providing priority goods and services can accept the BasicsCard once they apply and are approved. Shop owners must agree not to sell excluded goods such as alcohol, tobacco and pornography, or dispense cash, through the BasicsCard.

Important Centrelink Numbers:

Customer (for balances and lost/stolen cards)	13 2594
Merchant Helpdesk	1800 039 417

NOTE: Audio grabs of Senator Ludwig on this subject are posted and available to download at <http://www.mhs.gov.au/media/audio.html>

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