New Conditionality in Australia

Paper presented to the International Conference on Welfare Reform
Meeting the Policy Challenges of Change?

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Outline

1. Defining new conditionality
2. Examples
   • Immunisation
   • School attendance
   • Income Management
3. Conclusion and lessons for future policy
“New Conditionality”

• Conditionality has always been part of welfare

• “New conditionality” distinguished by three features:
  • Seeks to change behaviour
  • Paternalistic
  • Punitive

• A product of:
  • Historical trends: a return to a system of “control”
  • International recognition of CCT programmes
Examples

1. Maternity Immunisation Allowance (MIA)
2. Improving School Enrolment and Attendance (through Welfare) Measure (SEAM)
3. Compulsory Income Management (CIM)
Conclusions

• Have these policies improved child wellbeing?
  – Immunisation policies largely successful
  – School attendance and income management measures appear to be largely ineffective (costly, increasing welfare dependence)

• Future of these policies and possible extension being actively debated in Australia (& elsewhere)
Issues to consider

• Potential impacts being subject to multiple conditionalities
• Role or non-government professionals in sanctions
• Stigmatisation (particularly given geographic targeting)
• Effectiveness of “stick” versus “carrot”
• Can policies change social norms
• Vulnerable disengaging from social security system
• Implications of different social security rules according to locations
• Implications of “new conditionality” for how “entitlements” are now viewed
• How to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of any new regime?
• Are they necessary or can other policies be more effective?