CLP Leader Terry Mills today welcomed the Federal Government's intention to move towards a more hardline approach to welfare payments for indigenous Australians.

Mr Mills said that the direction had previously been called for by the CLP and a raft of Indigenous leaders across the country.

"Ending unconditional welfare is something that should be extended beyond indigenous communities," Mr Mills said.

Mr Mills offered the CLP's strong support to the necessary task of welfare reform.

"Our welfare system has been in place for thirty years and has failed to improve employment, health and educational outcomes for Aboriginal Australians. It takes courage to ask the hard questions and even greater courage to implement the necessary reforms. But it must be tackled," Mr Mills said.

"We all agree that the days of 'sit down' money must end. The purpose of welfare payments is to deliver welfare which then carries with it an obligation both on the provider and the recipient to change things.

"Mutual obligation demands that practical incentives must be provided to ensure children attend school regularly, such as linking family allowance to school attendance. Just as providing food vouchers or a smart card system instead of cash to ensure food is purchased rather than alcohol.

"Without the building blocks of school attendance and basic nutrition, the dream of jobs and economic engagement remain just wishful thinking.

"Typically activists who rail against such proposals offer no practical solutions. It is now time for practical solutions to turn this around. I will do my part to see health, education and job prospects improve for those trapped on passive welfare.

"I will continue to work to reform welfare delivery so that we can take advantage of short term work opportunities such as mango or grape picking which both
benefit the horticultural industry and provide a real work opportunity for welfare recipients.

Ends