

## **Most vulnerable hardest hit by pandemic**

Good Shepherd is joining the chorus of calls for urgent government action to improve the country's welfare safety net. Today's release of the *Inequality in Australia* report by ACOSS clearly demonstrates that women, young people and lower paid workers are bearing the greatest economic impact of the pandemic.

The CEO of Good Shepherd, Ms Stella Avramopoulos, said this important research demonstrates the most vulnerable are being hit hardest by the pandemic and there is a risk of others joining this growing group of people. .

"People are overwhelmed, they are distressed and unable to see a way out of their growing financial pressures," she said.

"We are calling for structural changes to the social welfare safety net, with new service models and cross-sector strategies to respond to the significant number of Australians now in financial distress. Job Seeker has been a critical aspect of this safety net and is needed to help build a financial wellbeing roadmap for Australians to recover.

"Good Shepherd's financial counsellors, family violence workers and other front-line staff have supported many thousands of people since this pandemic hit. People need to be safe and healthy in their communities, they are desperate for reliable information and support to help them navigate the multiple challenges they are facing," Ms Avramopoulos said.

Good Shepherd is supporting those experiencing financial distress due to the pandemic with a range of services providing people with access to financial information, help to navigate supports, financial counselling and **Household Relief Loans Without Interest**, which is supported by the Australian Government and National Australia Bank.

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