MEDIA RELEASE

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Australia needs more electoral focus on people in real need

While the budget strategies of the major parties mention the need to assist Australians doing it tough, neither contains enough detail about practical solutions to such crises as housing and homelessness, secure and properly paid work, and inadequate JobSeeker, DSP, Parenting Payment (Single).

Commenting on the Government’s Budget 2022 package and the reply by the Opposition Leader, SVDP National President Claire Victory welcomed Australia’s faster than expected economic recovery from COVID, the commitment to lifting wages and standards in aged care, additional funding for child care and efforts to address cost of living pressures.

‘However, we’re concerned about band-aid solutions that won’t lift 774,000 Australian kids out of poverty and won’t help struggling families. Housing is also a major issue - despite a $17.9 billion commitment to infrastructure there’s a lack of focus on the nation’s housing crisis, which the Government’s own National Infrastructure Plan 2021 identified as requiring significantly more investment.

‘As our members across Australia well know, cost of living pressures are rising rapidly. Affording healthy food, paying the rent and utility bills, and putting fuel in the car impact disproportionately on people who are already struggling day to day.

‘While politicians tell us the unemployment rate is low, let’s remember that employment is defined as working one hour or more in the reference week. Under-employment, job insecurity and low wages are a huge issue for everyday Australians. At Vinnies we continually see the hardships this causes.’

Ms Victory welcomed the support expressed for Constitutional Recognition of an Indigenous Voice to Parliament but raised concern about Australia’s commitment to meeting the 17 targets in Closing the Gap without appropriate funding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services.

She also welcomed the 16,500 additional humanitarian places for Afghan nationals recently announced.

‘However, 20,000 refugees in Australia are still on temporary visas after a decade and they can’t bring their families here. And hundreds of people, many of whom have been deemed refugees, remain in Australian immigration detention.

‘After the election is called, we look forward to a vigorous debate that will put more focus on the real challenges facing millions of Australians who are struggling in so many areas of their lives.

SVDP Media contact: 0475 068 209 / media@svdp.org.au