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New support payment review panel game changer for people living below poverty line

One of Australia's leading social service networks has welcomed Federal Government plans to establish an independent panel to annually review support payments — such as JobSeeker and parenting payments — ahead of each Federal Budget.

The new Panel is part of a deal with independent senator David Pocock to support the Government's industrial relations bill and will establish an "economic inclusion advisory committee" to review welfare payments and provide advice to the Government as it formulates its annual May budgets.

Francis Sullivan, Chair of Catholic Social Services Australia, said the review panel could be a game changer for low-income earners and people on support payments.

"This is a historic approach to support payments that we have been calling for some time and will be of huge benefit for millions of people around Australia," Mr Sullivan said.

"It marks a clear approach to ensuring support payment kept pace with the cost of living and inflation pressures and will be a huge boost for some five million people living in entrenched poverty and disadvantage.

"For years, advocacy groups, including CSSA, have been calling for a process that regularly reviews support payments.

"For too long, Australia's most disadvantaged have been going without food, medicines, struggling to pay rent and to meet basic needs as they try to survive on \$48 a day.

"This announcement provides some hope that they will be better off in the years to come," Mr Sullivan said.

The Economic Inclusion Advisory Panel will be led by the Treasurer and Social Services Minister and bring together experts, advocacy groups and peak bodies.

The Panel's advice to the Government will be published at least a fortnight before the Budget is handed down each year.

CSSA and its members look forward to working with the Government to develop the Panel and to providing advice ahead of each Federal Budget into the future.

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