

## MAY FEDERAL BUDGET A SOLID STEP UP FOR VULNERABLE AUSTRALIANS

10 May 2023

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) welcomes the social security and cost of living measures in last night's Federal Budget that will make life a little easier for vulnerable Australians.

CSSA also welcomes the additional \$4 billion over 4 years for the community services sector to help them meet the cost of inflation and enable them to increase the wages of their hard-working staff.

CSSA, together with other key advocates, has long highlighted the urgent need to raise social security payments to at least \$76 a day, which would just meet the poverty line. We welcome the increase of \$40 a fortnight this year and hope that the payments will be increased in future budgets.

Other payments, including Youth Allowance, Parenting Payment (Partnered), Austudy, ABSTUDY, Youth Disability Support Pension, Special Benefit, Farm Household Allowance, and the Self-Employment Allowance, will also rise by \$40 a fortnight from 20 September 2023, benefiting 1.1 million Australians.

The Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) will increase by 15% or \$31 per fortnight to support renters.

The Government is also expanding eligibility for the existing higher rate of JobSeeker to single recipients aged 55 and over who have been on income support for nine or more continuous months, which currently applies from age 60. Payments for those aged 55-59 years will rise by \$92.10 fortnightly. Many recipients who will benefit from the expanded Jobseeker eligibility are women, those who face more barriers to employment and are at risk of homelessness.

Minister for Social Services Amanda Rishworth said, "The Albanese Labor Government will always strive to do more to help Australians in need, and we will keep assessing income support budget-to-budget as we said we would."

Monique Earsman, Executive Director of CSSA said, "I recognise that solving persistent disadvantage is complex. We see hope, and this Budget signals that the Government is listening. We will continue to advocate for increased social security payments in future Budgets."

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*Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) advocates for the Church's social service ministry. It is the national peak body for Catholic social service providers. The CSSA's network operates across all Australian States and Territories and has a combined total of around 600 sites.*