

CSSA FEDERAL PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION CALLS FOR ECONOMIC REFORM

25 March 2024

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) stands in solidarity with social service providers and advocates, urging the Federal Government to use the 2024-25 Budget to strengthen our social safety net.

CSSA is calling on the Government to increase the rate of JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, and related payments to at least the rate of the Age Pension, which is just under \$80 per day.

While CSSA acknowledges the Government's recent initiatives to alleviate cost of living pressures, including the restructuring of the Stage 3 Tax Cuts to enhance fairness, there remains an urgent need for targeted relief for those on the lowest incomes.

Monique Earsman, Executive Director of CSSA, said, "Over 3 million Australians, including over 760,000 children, live on incomes below the poverty line. The inadequacy of our social safety net is forcing these individuals and families into severe and lasting disadvantage.

"While raising the rate of social security payments is costly, the alternative—relegating people to a lifetime of poverty and disengagement—is far more costly."

The upcoming Federal Budget is expected to introduce measures to enhance Rent Assistance and increase subsidies for electricity and childcare costs. These changes are intended to alleviate cost-of-living pressures, at least in the short term.

In addition to these measures, CSSA calls on the Government to address the root causes of poverty and inequity. In its [pre-budget submission to Treasury](#), CSSA outlined 5 key areas for reform:

- 1) Substantially augment overall funding for community services and reform flawed Government funding formulae to mitigate ongoing funding and indexation shortfalls faced by the not-for-profit sector in delivering vital services.
- 2) Introduce a more progressive and efficient system of public revenue collection.
- 3) Boost welfare payments to build a stronger safety net that lifts people out of poverty and enables them to lead lives of dignity.
- 4) Introduce policies to make residential land much more accessible and affordable for home buyers.
- 5) Substantially increase the resources devoted to improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and achieving the objectives set out in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

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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 over 900 sites.

The national network of Catholic social services

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