

BOOST JOBSEEKER IN UPCOMING BUDGET TO UPHOLD HUMAN DIGNITY

8 May 2024

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) urges the Federal Government to use the upcoming Budget to raise the rate of social safety net payments and strengthen support systems to improve the lives of our nation's most vulnerable people.

In making this call, CSSA stands in solidarity with the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS), Catholic and other faith-based social service providers, and the Federal Government's Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee (EIAC).

Monique Earsman, Executive Director of Catholic Social Services Australia, stated, "In recent years, the Government has made incremental improvements to working-age payments, but it hasn't been enough. We must raise the rate of JobSeeker to at least \$80 a day to enable people to live with dignity and to better position themselves to find employment."

"Many might not realise that JobSeeker recipients receive only 69%¹ of what pensioners are entitled to and just 43% of the minimum full-time wage."

More than 3 million Australians struggle to afford basic necessities like food, medicine, rent, and electricity due to the rising cost of living. This issue is compounded by family and domestic violence, disproportionately affecting women and children. This enduring hardship traps individuals and families in a cycle of poverty, severely limiting their ability to thrive and contribute meaningfully to society.

"Charities, including CSSA members, are overwhelmed by the demand for assistance from individuals and families struggling to bridge the gap," added Ms Earsman.

The [CSSA Pre-Budget Submission](#) recommends raising these payments to a sufficient level that ensures recipients and their families can meet basic living costs and escape poverty. This amount is estimated to be around \$80 per day.

"By failing to support our most vulnerable, we perpetuate their ongoing economic and social exclusion, which benefits none of us," Ms Earsman concluded.

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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 700 sites.

¹ \$258 per fortnight less than a pensioner in basic payments, and \$345 per fortnight less than a pensioner on payments including supplements.