

MEDIA RELEASE

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‘Responsible’ Federal Budget 2024/25 provides some cost-of-living relief: Jesuit Social Services

Last night’s Federal Budget 2024/25 makes some modest investments to help marginalised people and communities, and provides some temporary cost-of-living relief for Australian households. However, by failing to make significant increases to the Jobseeker and related income support payments, too many Australians are again limited from living with dignity, says Jesuit Social Services.

“Treasurer Jim Chalmers describes this as ‘a responsible Budget that helps people under pressure today’ and this is welcome - we are in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis and many people are struggling to make ends meet. This is particularly true of many of the people Jesuit Social Services works with who face barriers to social and economic participation,” says Jesuit Social Services Acting CEO Stephen Ward.

“We appreciate that this Budget contains a number of measures aimed to alleviate cost-of-living pressures, including a \$1.9b investment into increasing Commonwealth Rent Assistance payments which will benefit younger people and renters, energy bill relief for every household and the implementation of the stage three tax cuts.”

Housing is a key focus of this year’s Budget, with a doubling of dedicated funding for homelessness services and funding for a new five year National Agreement on Social Housing with states and territories. Additionally, \$1b has been allocated from the National Housing Infrastructure Facility to support young people experiencing homelessness as well as women and children escaping violence.

“Too many people, including those on low incomes and with complex needs, find it challenging to access safe, affordable and sustainable housing. While much more is needed to ensure that all Australians have a secure roof over their heads, such as a genuine increase in the supply of public housing, we welcome these measures and the Government’s commitment to addressing the country’s inadequate housing system.”

Jesuit Social Services also welcomes funding for pilot programs to connect job seekers experiencing barriers to work with new opportunities, funding to improve transport and infrastructure in Western Sydney and the first national strategy aiming to achieve gender equality, Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality.

Mr Ward says it is deeply disappointing that the Government has again failed to raise the rate of Jobseeker and related payments to allow recipients to live with dignity.

“The Federal Government’s own Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee recently recommended a significant rise in these payments, finding that lifting the Jobseeker rate to \$72 a day would enable people to lead more positive and fulfilling lives, and not having to choose between essential medication and supplies or putting a roof over their heads.”

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