



## Election win paves the way for a fairer society

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St Vincent de Paul Society Australia congratulates the Australian Labor Party on its success in the federal election and looks forward to working with the new Government in providing greater support for the many struggling Australians, particularly those 1.3 million people living under the poverty line.

'We acknowledge that over the past three years the Albanese Labor government has implemented significant reforms aimed at improving people's lives, especially those doing it tough, but more needs to be done,' said the Society's National President, Mark Gaetani.

'The positive reforms include a commitment to build more social and affordable housing, increasing the JobSeeker payment by \$40 per fortnight, upping Commonwealth Rent Assistance, an expanded eligibility for Parenting Payment Single until a youngest child turns 14, up from 8 years, major boosts to the Urgent Care Clinics program and a proposed cap on the cost of PBS medicines.

'We welcome such measures and so, it seems, does the bulk of Australians who have chosen to re-elect the Government. However, a range of other important reforms needs to be enacted, and the Government now has the opportunity to do this work.'

Mr Gaetani said the Society is particularly concerned about the inadequacy of income support payments, notably **JobSeeker**, which is well below the pension rate.

A Foodbank Australia study shows that 3.4 million households ran out of food in the past year. One-in-six children is deemed to be living in poverty and relying on inadequate social security for income.

'The **cost-of-living crisis** impacts disproportionately on people with low incomes, whether they are relying on welfare payments or working for minimal wages. The independent Economic

Inclusion Advisory Committee, which reports to Parliament, has called these support payments “seriously inadequate”.

‘In three successive yearly reports it has asked for increases and the Society agrees this should be a priority.’

Mr Gaetani said other issues that deserve urgent attention include the housing rental market, which received little attention during the election campaign.

‘There should be nationwide implementation of the **Better Deal for Renters** policy platform, which seeks to harmonise and strengthen renters’ rights across the country. Renters are one-in-three Australians, and too many are in insecure and often unaffordable housing.

‘A thorough **appraisal of the broader taxation system** is needed, and courageous attention paid to the scourge of **online gambling**, which was the subject of a major parliamentary report that recommended much tighter controls. Gambling losses are impacting on the livelihood of many families, with young people being enticed into the gambling culture through their phones.’

Mr Gaetani said other policy areas deserving prompt attention were the wellbeing of **First Nations Australians**, whose disadvantage is highlighted by the Closing the Gap statistics, and the treatment of many **asylum seekers and refugees**, both those detained offshore and those whose status in Australia prevents them working and claiming basic entitlements.

‘The Society welcomes the ALP’s response to our Justice & Compassion policies, saying it is “committed to a strong and sustainable safety net that provides support to those most in need”.

‘We hope this commitment will be front and centre in the Government’s domestic decision making in its coming time in office.’

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