

Inflation: The Crushing Weight on the Shoulders of Australia's Most Disadvantaged

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Dr Jerry Nockles, CEO of Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA), today expressed serious concern following the release of Australia's latest inflation figures, which show inflation—however measured, including headline CPI, trimmed mean, and underlying inflation—is moving in the wrong direction.

"Inflation is not just an economic statistic – it is a crushing weight on the shoulders of those already struggling to make ends meet," said Dr Nockles.

"For many Australians we accompany, the rising cost of essentials like energy, food, and housing is no longer manageable. This crisis threatens their dignity and wellbeing."

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that annual headline inflation rose to 3.8 per cent in October 2025, up from 3.6 per cent in September. Housing costs increased by 5.9 per cent, while electricity prices surged by 37.1 per cent over the past year. Food and non-alcoholic beverages rose by 3.2 per cent, with notable increases in meat and seafood prices. Rent inflation accelerated to 4.2 per cent annually, with low-income households spending over 30 per cent of their disposable income on housing.

Over the last 4-5 years, electricity prices have nearly doubled, rising by approximately 90 per cent, while food prices have increased by around 20 per cent, and rents have grown by 25-30 per cent. These cumulative increases compound the daily financial pressures faced by vulnerable Australians.

"These price rises are not abstract numbers – they translate into real hardship," Dr Nockles said. "Many families are forced to skip meals, delay medical care, or face housing insecurity. We remain deeply concerned about the impact of these pressures on single parents, people with disabilities, First Nations communities, refugees, older Australians on fixed incomes, and unemployed people."

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"This moment is a clear reminder that policies from all political parties and the advice of the bureaucracy must be firmly in pursuit of the common good, not the narrow interests of particular groups. Chasing sectional interests only deepens division and leaves the most vulnerable behind."

Dr Nockles urged governments and policymakers to be vigilant about inflationary spending measures and their unintended consequences on vulnerable communities.

"Inflation is not just a number—it is a daily struggle for dignity for Australia's most vulnerable. Our policies must rise above sectional interests and champion the common good, ensuring no one is left behind in the cost-of-living crisis."

"I encourage all Members and Senators, as they return to their electorates and States in the lead-up to Christmas, to engage with their local Catholic social service providers to hear firsthand the impact inflation is having on vulnerable communities," Dr Nockles said.

CSSA calls on all political leaders and decision-makers to prioritise policies that protect and empower those most at risk, ensuring no Australian is left behind in the face of rising costs.

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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 seven hundred sites.

References

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