

2026 Budget must turn the tide of Australia's poverty crisis

The St Vincent de Paul Society is calling on the Federal Government to make the 2026–27 Budget a turning point for the millions of people in Australia, including 950,000 children, who are living below the poverty line.

As a partner of governments, the Society's charitable work couples with government assistance to promote resilience and unity in times of need. However, the Society reports a 15 per cent increase in people seeking help over the past year across Australia, reflecting the worsening cost-of-living and housing crises.

"Too many Australians cannot afford the basics such as food, rent and electricity," said National President Mark Gaetani. "Our Members are seeing more families, working people and young people coming to us for support, and their needs are becoming more complex. We can't keep going this way. The Federal Government must act now to address the root causes of poverty, not just its symptoms."

A recent national survey commissioned by the Society found that over half (53%) of Australians expect to experience financial stress this festive season, and one in three anticipate needing financial or community assistance. Alarming, one in three reported skipping meals in the past year just to afford essentials.

In its [Pre-Budget Submission 2026](#), the Society urges the Albanese Government to:

- Lift working age income support payments to 90% of the Age Pension immediately as recommended by the Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee
- Further increase and review Commonwealth Rent Assistance
- Boost funding of Specialist Homelessness Services by \$671 million
- Increase the Remote Area Allowance to reflect real living costs
- Restore support and work rights for people seeking asylum
- Expand the Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Program
- Fully implement the *Rebuilding Employment Services* reforms
- Target energy rebates and improve energy efficiency for low-income households
- Fund and roll out the *Not-for-Profit Sector Blueprint*, including a Digital Fund to defend charities from cyber threats and to enhance their capabilities.

[Research](#) commissioned by the Society with the Australian National University outlines four budget-neutral reforms to income support and tax settings that could lift up to one million people out of poverty.

"The solutions are clear and achievable," said Mr Gaetani. "We can ensure that every person in Australia has the opportunity to live with dignity and hope, but only if we make fair decisions without delay. More people – including almost 1 million children – are living in poverty than ever before and it's happening on our watch. The Society will hold the government to account on its actions, not its words."

You can read the *Pre-Budget Submission 2026* here: <https://vinnies.link/pre-budget-2026>

Media contact: 0475 068209 | E: media@svdp.org.au