

## PROGRESS AND PITFALLS: THE 2026 BUDGET'S IMPACT ON HOUSING, DISABILITY, AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT.

12 May 2026

Tonight's Federal Budget delivers a mix of welcome progress alongside missed opportunity and concerning measures that risk deepening hardship for Australia's most vulnerable.

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) acknowledges the Government's efforts to pursue a fiscally responsible budget focused on resilience and reform, a necessary step to control inflation and protect those who can least afford rising living costs.

"In a time of global uncertainty and economic shocks, this Budget takes important steps to build resilience and reform the economy, but more targeted support is needed to ensure no one is left behind. Total savings of \$63.8 billion is ambitious and commendable."

"Maintaining fiscal discipline is essential to bringing inflation under control, but inflation is not evenly spread, hitting the most vulnerable the hardest, and deepening existing hardships," Dr Jerry Nockles, CEO of CSSA said. "Fiscal restraint must be pursued with wisdom and compassion, not wielded as a blunt instrument. Budgets are moral statements, and how a government allocates resources reveals their values."

### A Step Forward for Youth Housing

We welcome the Government's \$60 million Youth Housing Supplement, which will remove rental barriers for thousands of young people seeking social housing support to escape homelessness.

"This is so much more than a supplement," Dr Nockles said. "It is a commitment to help break the cycle of homelessness through ensuring safe and secure housing that helps young people transition to the independent future every young Australian deserves."

The new \$2 billion Local Infrastructure Fund, aimed at delivering essential roads, sewers, and power lines to support housing developments, is also a positive investment that will help unlock stalled projects and increase housing supply.

## Sustained Focus on Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Support Needed

While violence against women and children was notably absent from the Budget, prevention must remain a national priority. This includes the timely finalisation of the Second Action Plan under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children* in 2026 and implementation of the *Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence 2026–2036*.

“These issues are particularly acute outside metropolitan centres and must be addressed as a priority,” Dr Nockles emphasised. “Without adequate crisis accommodation, victim-survivors face unacceptable barriers to safety and recovery.”

## Concerns Over NDIS Reforms

CSSA acknowledges the need for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to be sustainable but warns that reforms must prioritise the dignity, agency, and wellbeing of people living with disability.

CSSA Director of Policy and Advocacy, Ms Carmel Sefian, highlighted the tension between controlling costs and preserving the Scheme’s core principles of choice and inclusion.

“For many, losing NDIS support means losing essential assistance that enable daily living, communication, work, learning, and social connection,” Ms Sefian said. “This can lead to increased isolation and greater strain on families.”

CSSA calls on the Government to provide clear details on how reforms will be implemented and to ensure safeguards protect those currently relying on support. “People deserve certainty and reassurance that their dignity and wellbeing will be upheld,” Ms Sefian said.

## Social Cohesion and Shared Challenges

In responding to housing and economic challenges, it is vital that government policy and public discourse do not pit generations against each other. Such division risks undermining social cohesion and obscuring the shared struggles faced by Australians of all ages.

Older Australians, particularly older single women, are among the fastest growing cohorts experiencing homelessness. Many have faced stable housing for decades but are pushed into insecurity by life shocks such as illness, relationship breakdown, or job loss. Structural inequalities, including gendered workforce participation and retirement savings gaps, compound their vulnerability.

“It is inappropriate and unhelpful to foster division between generations for political or electoral advantage,” Dr Nockles said. “We must recognise that Australians of all ages face housing insecurity and financial hardship. Our policies must promote solidarity and the dignity of every person, reflecting the Catholic Social Teaching principle of the common good.”

## Looking Ahead

CSSA calls on the Government to build on its fiscal discipline by pursuing more targeted and effective support for vulnerable Australians, enabling them to flourish and lead fulfilling lives.

“We urge policymakers to remember that behind every statistic is a person – a family – struggling to make ends meet,”

Dr Nockles concluded. “Budgets must be about more than numbers; they must be about real people and real lives. Fiscal responsibility and social justice are not competing values but complementary imperatives.”

## ENDS

### About CSSA

CSSA is the national peak body for Catholic social service providers. CSSA’s network of forty-two member agencies runs across all Australian States and Territories with a combined total of over seven hundred sites, delivering essential services to vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians.

Media Contact | Carmel Sefian | 02 6285 1366 | [carmel.sefian@cssa.org.au](mailto:carmel.sefian@cssa.org.au)