

ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK SOUTH AUSTRALIA



MEDIA RELEASE: Federal Budget Another Wasted Opportunity To Tackle Poverty, Women's Safety

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For immediate release

Tonight's Federal Budget is another wasted opportunity to tackle poverty, and women's safety -- deeply connected issues. There cannot be any commitment to women's safety, without a commitment to lifting women out of poverty.

"As long as hundreds of thousands of single mothers and other women on JobSeeker and Parenting Payment are forced to survive on incomes drastically below the poverty-line, their ability to leave unsafe relationships and be economically independent, as many experts on domestic violence have argued, will be limited", Anti-Poverty Network SA spokesperson Rita Sacchetta said.

"Single mothers and other women on JobSeeker and Parenting Payment have lost \$250 a week since late September.

The Government might think its work on JobSeeker and Parenting Payment is done, with its paltry, insulting \$4 a day (\$25 a week) raise from the starvation-level COVID rate, but we hear every day from people who are struggling to keep a roof over their head and put food on the table.

We have returned to pre-COVID levels of deprivation for job-seekers, sole parents, students, and others on Government payments.

Indeed, according to recent analysis by SACOSS (South Australian Council of Social Service), \$11 of the \$25 a week increase simply catches up on inadequate indexation over the last 20 years, so is not really an increase at all. A household struggling to pay energy bills will have just an extra \$1.50 per week to spend on energy.

We have also seen little investment into public and community housing, and nothing that

reverses the billions of dollars of combined cuts to homelessness, domestic violence, community legal, and other support services, since the election of the Abbott Government in 2013.

While the extra funding for mental health, aged care, and the NDIS, is welcome, we know the level of need is vast -- there will remain significant gaps.

We can afford to do more -- we can afford to lift all Australians out of poverty. The Government could cancel its future tax cuts for upper-income earners, and crack down on the 700 Australian companies that pay no tax. Last year, while most of us went through hard times during COVID, the wealth of billionaires increased by 50 percent.

Anti-Poverty Network SA will continue to fight for JobSeeker, Parenting Payment, and other payments to be lifted to \$80 a day/\$550 a week -- the COVID rate -- lifting millions of people out of poverty, and ensuring all can live with dignity, be safe, and care for our health."

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