

ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK SOUTH AUSTRALIA



MEDIA RELEASE – April 18, 2023

For Immediate Release

Government Decision Not To Raise Jobseeker Will Devastate People Already Drowning

Are Subs *Really* More Important Than People Being Able To Eat?

Anti Poverty Network SA is appalled at the Federal Government's decision to abandon Australia's most vulnerable – people on JobSeeker – at a time of unparalleled rises in living costs.

The decision by Treasurer, Jim Chalmers, and Social Services Minister, Amanda Rishworth, to go against advice released by the Interim Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee is unconscionable.

It is a telling indictment: this Government is not interested in protecting people trying to keep a roof over their head and put food on the table.

"People on JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, and other payments face some of the highest levels of not only financial stress but mental and physical strain."

"We regularly hear from members forced to make potentially life-changing decisions: to choose between paying for medicine, or for electricity bills, because they are forced to live below the poverty-line", said APNSA Coordinator Duncan Bainbridge.

He continued: *"Jobseekers are hurting, and the Government is not listening. The fact they will not raise JobSeeker, but are sticking with Stage 3 Tax Cuts, that will largely benefit the highest income-earners, and cost the Budget \$20 billion a year, shows their moral compass is broken."*

Dr Chalmers is quoted in the media release announcing the creation of the Economic Inclusion Committee, on November 28 last year, to have said: *"As a Labor Government, we will always work to support the most vulnerable in our society"*. This latest announcement shows that statement to be hollow.

To organise media interviews with APNSA spokespeople, or people on JobSeeker:

Call Duncan Bainbridge on 0434 045 805, David Winderlich on 0401 380 782, or Pas Forgione on

0402 681 352; or e-mail info@apnsa.org.

Further info:

A recent ACOSS Cost Of Living Survey of people on JobSeeker and other Centrelink payments highlighted the extent to which people already living in deep poverty have been affected by skyrocketing living costs:

- More than half (56%) reported paying more than 50% of their income on rent, with 93% reporting rental stress (paying 30% or more of their income in rent)
- 68% have had to eat less, or have had to skip meals
- 81% have had to cut back on meat, fresh fruit, and vegetables
- 54% have had to redirect money from other areas in their budget
- 65% have had to cut their use of heating and cooling

Currently a single person on JobSeeker receives up to \$347 a week, or \$49.50 per day.