

ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK SOUTH AUSTRALIA



MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

National JobSeeker Week Of Action Targets Social Services Minister Amanda Rishworth

'No One Left Behind' Must Include People In Poverty

What: National Week of Action (April 15-21): Grassroots anti-poverty groups and people on JobSeeker and other payments will be contacting and visiting their MPs to call for payments to be raised out of poverty in the May federal budget

Media Moment: Mini-rally outside office of Social Services Minister Amanda Rishworth on Friday April 19, 1pm, at 232 Main South Road, Morphett Vale, SA, with signs and props (packets of \$1 pasta, to symbolise the paltry 97-cents-a-day raise to JobSeeker in March)

Grassroots anti-poverty groups across the country, including Anti-Poverty Network SA, Australian Unemployed Workers' Union, Antipoverty Centre, and Anti-Poverty Network Qld, will be mobilising the community to pressure Labor MPs on the disgracefully-low rate of JobSeeker, as part of a national Week of Action from April 15-21.

The week of lobbying, which will include job-seekers and supporters contacting and visiting their MPs, will finish with an action outside the office of Social Services Minister, Amanda Rishworth, calling on her to ensure people in poverty are not left behind in next month's federal budget.

Quote from Anti-Poverty Network SA: *"Almost two years ago, the Albanese government was elected on a promise to 'Leave No One Behind', but people on JobSeeker have been largely forgotten."*

Last year's federal budget saw an insulting and miserable \$2.86-a-day rise to JobSeeker. And last month's pathetic indexation – a 97-cents-a-day increase – will do little for people struggling with skyrocketing rents, and other soaring living costs. JobSeeker, at \$54-a-day – \$375-a-week – will still be \$32-a-day – \$224-a-week – below the Henderson poverty-line of \$86-a-day.

The Albanese government is dreaming, if it thinks its work is done: this year's Federal Budget needs to finish the job, by lifting JobSeeker, and other payments, out of poverty."

Quote from Australian Unemployed Workers' Union: *"Since the last Budget's chaotic display, we have seen almost nothing of the Minister. Amanda Rishworth has remained hidden, shying away from the poverty crisis and offering no plan to meaningfully help those in poverty."*

This is an issue that needs a real solution, a significant raise to income support payments has long been accepted as necessary, if not inevitable. So where is the Minister's plan? Why, so far into this government's term, do we have no idea what Amanda Rishworth intends to do? In absence of any word from the Minister we have to assume the answer is nothing."

Quote from Antipoverty Centre: "The welfare system is killing people. Deepening poverty, punitive "mutual" obligations, Centrelink processing times and baseless so-called debts are destroying lives at the same time we are squeezed by landlords and cost of living hikes.

A budget that leaves people in poverty is not a responsible budget. The fastest and most effective thing the government can do to support the people who need it most is immediately increase Centrelink payments above the poverty line and stop "mutual" obligations. They have money to pay for tax cuts for the rich and weapons of war, there is no excuse for neglecting the poor."

Quote from the Anti-Poverty Network of Queensland: "This isn't even a debate anymore! We have known for years that Jobseeker as well as all other Centrelink payments are far below the poverty line.

Back in 2020 we saw how when they raised Jobseeker during the height of the pandemic many people's lives improved. They didn't have to choose between rent or medicine.

The fact that they then decreased it and has not been raised by any substantial figure shows that they are intentionally keeping people in poverty."

For further info, and to speak to people on JobSeeker: Brendan Folwell, Anti-Poverty Network SA (0428 741 601); Kristin O'Connell, Antipoverty Centre (0413 261 362); Catherine Caine, Australian Unemployed Workers' Union (0431 869 469); Jayden Oxtan-White, Anti-Poverty Network Qld (0448 875 043).