

ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK SOUTH AUSTRALIA



MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

2024 Federal Budget – Widening The Gap Once More Between Rich And Poor

Two years into the Albanese Government, job-seekers, people in poverty are still left behind – the \$9 billion surplus is built on the backs of the poorest members of the country

The Albanese Government's second Federal Budget offers meagre relief to renters, and Australia's poorest citizens. Anthony Albanese and Jim Chalmers have once again chosen to prioritise a budget surplus, and maintaining huge tax breaks for the big end of town, over the urgent, substantial cost-of-living action that job-seekers and others desperately need.

The refusal to raise the JobSeeker rate – \$54-a-day, or \$32-a-day below the [Henderson poverty-line](#) – despite calls from the government's own Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee to significantly lift the payment, is staggeringly cruel, when there are vast numbers of job-seekers in crisis – particularly when a \$9 billion budget surplus has been announced.

The Rent Assistance increase, a \$9-a-week boost to the maximum rate, is laughable when renters are reporting massive rent increases of \$40 a week, \$50 a week, and more. According to [research by ACOSS](#), half of job-seekers experienced a rent increase of more than \$40-a-week.

Even the modest announcements around energy bills – what amounts to a \$6-a-week offset – and medicine prices simply do not match the scale of deep hardship being experienced by low-income people across the country.

Anti-Poverty Network SA spokesperson Jasmin Witham said: *"This budget is an insult to the poorest members of the community. The \$9 billion surplus could have made a profound difference to the quality of life of people on \$54-a-day.*

We could also have seen the tens of billions of dollars funnelled to the big end of town – such as the Capital Gains and Negative Gearing tax concessions for property investors (\$15 billion annually), and the subsidies for fossil fuels (\$15 billion annually) – redirected towards lifting hundreds of thousands of people out of poverty, and seriously tackling the national shortfall of 640,000 public homes.

Budgets are about choices. 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, along with other people living in poverty, and renters coping massive rises. JobSeeker remains hundreds of dollars below the poverty-line – \$224-a-week below – as it did under the Abbott, Turnbull, and Morrison governments.

Once again, they have received crumbs, while Australia's wealthiest companies and individuals get cake."

Further Info: Duncan Bainbridge on 0434 045 805, David Winderlich on 0401 380 782, Brendan Folwell on 0428 741 601, or info@apnsa.org.

Ph: (08) 8451 1589

W: apn-sa.org

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