



## Charities urge government to urgently increase income support

Seven of Australia's largest food and emergency relief providers have called on the Government to accept the overwhelming evidence of hardship in Australia and urgently increase the rate of JobSeeker and other working age payments.

In April 2024 the largest providers of food and emergency relief jointly wrote to the Treasurer and members of the Expenditure Review Committee to highlight the evidence and research each organisation has collected that demonstrates the acute need in our community for an increase to working age payments.

The government's own Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee has reinforced this research and recommends a major boost to payments.

The desperate need for increased income support is undeniable and the organisations who work to meet this need every day are urging the government to take action.

Kasy Chambers, Executive Director of Anglicare Australia said:

"JobSeeker has been stuck below the poverty line for decades. It's so low that it's trapping people in hardship and forcing parents to raise their children in poverty. This is not how anybody should have to live.

"We're calling on the Government to take action and lift hundreds of thousands of Australians out of poverty in next week's Budget."

Brianna Casey, CEO of Foodbank Australia said:

"We know that 3.7 million households struggled to put food on the table in the last 12 months. We are seeing an increasing number of households with two adults in full time employment needing food relief, the fact that we're seeing people in full time employment needing food relief gives an insight into just how difficult it is for those on the lowest incomes. Urgent action is needed from the Federal Government to increase the rate of these payments in the upcoming budget."



James Goth, CEO of OzHarvest said:

“Need across the country continues at an all-time high, the charities we serve are struggling to cope. Despite all our best efforts, we just can’t meet the demand.”

“Urgent action is required and OzHarvest joins our colleagues from across the emergency relief sector in calling on the government to lift income support payments to help people afford the basics such as food, shelter and medical care.”

Daniel Moorfield, CEO of Secondbite said:

Australians are changing the way they eat just to make ends meet. Nearly half of our population (48%) have cut back or skipped at least one meal a week due to financial reasons. People are making tough decisions to cover rent and other household bills in place of buying the food they need. Not surprisingly, parents are skipping meals so their children won’t go hungry. In the current cost of living crisis, they can no longer make their budget work to cover the necessities.

Mark Gaetani, National President of St Vincent de Paul Society Australia said:

The St Vincent de Paul Society has commissioned research by ANU that shows that if income support payments are increased to 90 per cent of the age pension, around 491,000 people would be lifted out of poverty. This would make a significant impact, not just in material terms but also with respect to health, housing, and social and community wellbeing. There is no need for a country as wealthy as Australia to condemn those who rely on income support to a life of poverty.

Jennifer Kirkaldy, General Manager Policy and Advocacy for The Salvation Army said:

Every day The Salvation Army is working with people who simply cannot make ends meet when relying on working age payments. In every community in Australia we are seeing people make impossible choices between food and rent, medication and warmth. The fact is, no matter how careful they are, an individual cannot budget away poverty – but the government can.



Claerwen Little, National Director of UnitingCare Australia said:

Almost one million Australian children - one in six - are being socially and economically excluded, and poverty is the driving factor. Early experiences of exclusion can perpetuate life-long cycles of disadvantage. Australia is raising a generation of children who are missing out on a fair start in life, which is why we need to urgently boost support not just for families trying to survive on JobSeeker, but for all Australians living below the poverty line.

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The above spokespeople are available for comment, please reach out directly:

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