



## MORE CHILDREN WILL SUFFER UNDER 'UNJUST' JOBSEEKER PAYMENT

**19 March 2021**

Catholic Social Service Australia has denounced the Government's JobSeeker legislation, which will set the JobSeeker payment at just \$44 a day from next week, saying it will push families into poverty.

"More than three million people are affected by this decision, which will see almost one million children condemned to living below the poverty line," said CSSA chief executive officer Ursula Stephens.

"This short-sighted and unjust decision will have long-term impacts across society."

Dr Stephens said more than 250,000 people who have been receiving JobKeeper income support will be shifted to JobSeeker at the end of March.

"These people will be caught up in the myriad of requirements and conditions imposed on longer-term JobSeeker recipients, and will have to navigate a system that is impenetrable for many," she said.

"This is a false economy. Reducing the payment to just \$44 a day has the perverse effect of preventing people from being able to pursue work."

Dr Stephens said people from every sector across the country have called for a reasonable increase in JobSeeker, formerly known as Newstart. That reasonable increase would allow people to live with some dignity.

"But those calls have been ignored," she lamented.

"As a result, our Catholic social service providers are bracing for a surge in requests for assistance once the payments are cut on March 28.

"Our 2020 research *Mapping the Potential* highlighted the impact of entrenched disadvantage on life changes and identified the strong links between poverty and the social determinants of health. That disadvantage is set to become more prevalent in our country."

Catholic Social Services Australia has called for major reform to the social welfare payments system, including for an independent review of all payments to simplify the system. It has also advocated for the creation of a job guarantee program to replace the current Work for the Dole program.

"CSSA will continue to push for change and for support for those most vulnerable in our community," Dr Stephens said.

"They do not deserve to be abandoned in this way. We will not abandon them."

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