



PRIME MINISTER DISMISSES SOCIAL SECURITY PORTFOLIO AS SOMETHING 'THAT CAN BE DEALT WITH' LATER

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Prime Minister Morrison has today given the clearest indication yet of how little the Coalition cares for Australia's marginalised and disadvantaged when he dismissed the Social Services portfolio as secondary to Defence, Treasury, Finance, Foreign Affairs and Health.

This afternoon, Mr Morrison made the comments when he announced current Families and Social Services Minister, Anne Ruston, will replace retiring Health Minister, Greg Hunt, if the Coalition wins the May election.

Chair of Catholic Social Services Australia, Francis Sullivan, said the decision by the Prime Minister not to announce who will fill the Social Services portfolio until after 21 May shows how little concern the Coalition has for the more than 3 million Australians living on or below the poverty line.

"This is typical of a Government that has for almost a decade paid lip service to the poor and disadvantaged in our community.

"For years, we have watched as the real value of social security benefits have fallen to well below the poverty line.

"In a society where the rich continue to get richer, the Coalition has made no real effort to address a huge underclass of single mothers, people living with disabilities, marginalised Indigenous communities and the unemployed.

Mr Morrison defended his decision on the grounds that it's more important for voters to know who will run the defence, treasury, finance, foreign affairs and health portfolios rather than the Social Service portfolio.

"The great news about [social services] is I have such a fantastic team that there are many people that could [fill that role]," Mr Morrison said.

Francis Sullivan said that as long as the election campaign continues to be seen as a beauty contest, the people concerned about the widening gap between the haves and the have nots are left shaking their heads.

Media Contact: Michael Salmon | 0417 495 018