



LABOR DECISION NOT TO REVIEW JOBSEEKER PAYMENTS DISAPPOINTING

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The decision by Labor not to review the JobSeeker payment ahead of its first budget if it wins the May federal election is disappointing, according to one of Australia's peak social services groups.

Francis Sullivan, Chair of Catholic Social Services Australia, said the decision is a real blow for 1.5 million people struggling to survive on JobSeeker and other income support payments.

Ahead of the 2019 election, Labor promised a review into the rate of what was then the Newstart payment, suggesting that it would be used to determine the rate of an increase to the unemployment benefit.

However, Labor's shadow assistant minister for the treasury, Andrew Leigh, confirmed earlier this week that this review into the Jobseeker rate will now not take place, saying Labor hasn't committed to an additional increase.

"Labor will now go to the election with a policy to keep the JobSeeker payment at \$642.70 a fortnight for a single person without children," Mr Sullivan said.

"Having just \$46 a day to pay rent and electricity, buy groceries, clothing, and fill the car is impossible and leaves families and vulnerable people living on or below the poverty line.

"There is no economic reason good enough to demand that people on the fringes of our communities should have to live like this," Mr Sullivan said.

Mr Sullivan said that despite both major parties having no plans to increase Jobseeker, both enthusiastically support the stage three tax cuts that will cost around \$16 billion a year and will mostly benefit men on higher incomes.

"These tax cuts will cost almost twice as much as lifting JobSeeker and other income supports to at least \$70 a day, a reform that would mostly benefit low-income women and their children," he said.

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