

CSSA WELCOMES ASPECTS OF THE BUDGET, BUT MORE IS NEEDED

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Ahead of the 2024 Federal Budget, Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) called for a significant boost to the rate of JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, and related payments to help hundreds of thousands of Australians escape poverty and severe economic hardship. While the Government implemented several significant and worthy measures, the modest increases to payments aimed at alleviating poverty and housing instability fell far short of what's required.

This week is National Families Week, and around 600 social advocates and social service providers are gathered in Melbourne for the Family Relationship Services Australia (FRSA) annual conference. Attendees are discussing and presenting on the significant work being done by the sector to address major issues facing our nation, including the family and domestic violence crisis and the persistent gap in outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

"Many of the complex social issues we are collectively working to solve have their roots in poverty and the disadvantage and dysfunction it creates," said Monique Earsman, Executive Director of CSSA.

"There are 3 million Australians, including over 750,000 children, living below the poverty line. By not providing an adequate social safety net, we are trapping people in poverty. We are allowing and enabling the most vulnerable in our community to be subjected to trauma and remain in crisis."

CSSA commends a number of measures announced in Tuesday's Budget, including funding for women and children escaping violence in the home and support for people experiencing homelessness. However, as many in the Church and the sector have said before, we need to intervene far earlier through an adequate social safety net system and early intervention family supports to help people avoid crisis in the first place.

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Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) advocates for the Church's social service ministry. It is the national peak body for Catholic social service providers. The CSSA's network operates across all Australian States and Territories and has a combined total of over 700 sites.

The national network of Catholic social services