



IF A FULLTIME WORKER CAN'T AFFORD TO FEED AND CLOTHE A FAMILY WE ARE REGRESSING AS A NATION

8 November 2017

Catholic Social Services Australia's is calling for Australia's political leaders to acknowledge that our economic system has lost its way, giving preference to the purity of market without due regard for the society in which it operates.

Fr Frank Brennan SJ AO, will give a major speech on the 110 year anniversary of the Harvester decision tonight, calling on Australia's political leaders to decide whether to continue down a path of growing inequality and exclusion or to ensure that a life of frugal dignity is within the grasp of all citizens.

Quotes attributable to Fr Frank Brennan, CEO of Catholic Social Services Australia:

"There can be no sustainable 'Budget repair' without ensuring a robust safety net and an assured leg up for those missing out through no fault of their own.

"Trickledown economics, by its very title is a top down approach to wealth distribution. It has failed those at the bottom of the pyramid.

"We need to develop a 'bottom up' approach to sharing our nation's resources, first ensuring that we have an adequate safety net for those who cannot participate in the workforce.

"Australia's current unprecedented wealth gives us a one off opportunity to break the cycle of poverty, through education and lifelong support, which we must take, because we cannot afford to leave anyone behind who is able and willing to contribute.

"Deliberately placing some citizens beyond the reach of a dignified life of frugal dimensions is not an option.

"It is legitimate for government to provide incentives for people to access the labour market, including social security payments lower than those payable to persons who have no prospect of accessing the labour market whether because of age or disability. But it is just wrong for governments to keep payments such as Newstart and the Youth Allowance at abysmally low levels, in the name of 'Budget repair' when there are insufficient jobs available and no realistic prospect of employment, training or education.

"We need a reliable, independent means for determining what is sufficient to live a dignified life in a civilised community and to set the minimum wage and income support payments accordingly.

"Continuing with the same economic and social policy settings will exacerbate the already growing divide between the rich and the poor and eventually damage the economy to such an extent that it has a detrimental effect on everyone.

Media contact: Lil Bryant-Johnson. Ph 0450 30 20 20