



Catholic Social Services
Australia

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People need more than \$35 a day to live on

Catholic Social Services Australia has reiterated their call for Newstart and Youth Allowance to be increased as part of their Pre-Budget submission lodged with government in recent weeks.

Catholic Social Services Australia has been particularly vocal about the inadequacy of allowances over several years. It has been calling for the establishment of an independent Entitlements Commission to assess and set the appropriate standard of basic financial support. This would be similar in principle to the Remuneration Tribunal, which independently sets salaries for parliamentarians and judges.

“It is widely recognised that \$35 a day is not enough for essentials, including rent” said Executive Director of Catholic Social Services Australia, Mr Paul O’Callaghan. “We join with other community sector peak bodies to call for an immediate increase to the rate of Newstart and Youth Allowance.”

“It was refreshing to see that a number of ALP Caucus members were so concerned about the current low rate of the Newstart Allowance that they raised it with the Prime Minister in yesterday’s caucus meeting,” he said.

“These voices join with a number of other prominent people in business and academia, such as Dr Ken Henry, Dr Ian Harper, Ms Judith Sloan, Ms Heather Ridout – who are calling for this unreasonably low level of allowances to be rectified.”

“We recognise that, where jobs can be found, that is the best solution. However, there are legitimate reasons why that is hard to achieve for some,” said Mr O’Callaghan.

“What does it say about us as a nation if we continue to allow more than 300,000 people who have been unemployed for over 12 months to struggle on an allowance level which can even hamper their capacity to undertake effective job searching?” he concluded.

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