



AASW

Australian Association
of Social Workers

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

NATIONAL POLICY PLATFORM - INCOME SUPPORT

Federal Election 2022

INCOME SUPPORT PORTFOLIO

We advocate for:

Justice and social fairness, by acting to reduce barriers and to expand choice and potential for all persons, with special regard for those who are disadvantaged, vulnerable, isolated, oppressed or have exceptional needs.

Social justice is a core principle that we promote and uphold for society in general and for the people with whom we work.

This includes recognising and adopting policies which respond to the social and environmental determinants of health, that is, the non-medical factors which influence health outcomes such as income and social protection, employment, education, housing, social inclusion and non-discrimination, and, access to affordable health services of decent quality.

Yet many Australians in the community face housing insecurity, instability, and/or homelessness. Many in the community are dependent on government support payments- which are too low to live a healthy or dignified life. Many experience intergenerational unemployment and this, combined with low income support creates additional barriers to entering employment or pursuing education.

We believe this can be advanced by:

Fixing our social security system so that it keeps people out of poverty, enables people to maintain a minimum standard of dignity and health and enables people to find work.

To do this the Australian Government must:

1. Raise the Rate of income support including:

- a) Permanently increase the JobSeeker Payment to at least \$70 a day so everyone can cover the cost of the basics;
- b) Index payments in line with wage movements at least twice per year;
- c) Introduce a \$50 a week Disability and Illness Supplement;
- d) Establish a Single Parent Supplement that recognises the additional costs of single parenthood;
- e) Establish a Social Security Commission to advise the Parliament on the ongoing adequacy of income support payments; and,
- f) f. Institute a work or training guarantee to provide individualised assistance.

2. Discontinue All Trials of Cashless Debit Cards

This punitive and discriminatory policy has prohibited vulnerable Australians, in particular, First Nations Peoples, from achieving community self-determination, without having any positive impact on their capacity for financial management.

3. Supporting People with Disability

Amending the eligibility rules for, and removing the barriers to the Disability Support Pension, so that all people who should be receiving it do so, instead of being forced into the arbitrary and punitive compliance regime of JobSeeker.

AASW MEMBER RESPONSES

WHAT IS YOUR TOP FEDERAL 2022 BUDGET AND ELECTION PRIORITY?

"The low Centrelink rates are not only detrimental to the recipients, they affect communities where there are high levels of Centrelink payment recipients and create entrenched inequality that becomes hard to shift. It is not only socially irresponsible, it is economically short sighted as these communities also have higher birth rates and thus more children growing up in poverty."

"Jobseeker's - below average to survive: need to be increased."

"Increase levels of homelessness, increased levels of service dependency due to income support being so low for singles and individuals with no children."

"More should be invested in this unique way of working. Increase income/welfare supports This goes without saying. The cost of living increases whilst incomes stay dormant or increased years later but does not reflect the cost of living. Thus, we are always playing catch up! The pandemic has also contributed to the economic disaster, higher unemployment rates, etc. This area needs a thorough review with the outcome being increased wages and support!"

"New programs are needed. People on Centrelink benefits need to be lifted out of poverty."

"Increased Centrelink payments especially for New Start and Student payments."

"Improved income support - raise job seeker payments Increased employment support services - provide integrated and wrap around psychosocial, health and employment skills acquisition, in a local community context Reduce punitive mutual obligation requirements and stop cashless debit trials in poor communities."

"Liveable wage for all on Centrelink (job seeking and disability)."

"There needs to be some form of right to a minimum income in Australia - and it needs to be on/above the poverty line."

"Wealth inequality is increasing in Australia. As such, this needs to be addressed by allocating more resources for those at the bottom through income and welfare support."

"Support for the most disadvantaged in our communities."

"I haven't heard anyone speak of a good experience at Centrelink - not one. I find this concerning."

© Australian Association of Social Workers

Melbourne office

Level 7, 14-20 Blackwood St
NORTH MELBOURNE 3051
PO Box 2008
Royal Melbourne Hospital VIC 3050

ACN 008 576 010
ABN 93 008 576 010

T: 03 9320 1000
W: www.aasw.asn.au
For general enquiries please contact:
social.policy@aasw.asn.au

For enquiries relating to the
Policy Platform, please contact:
Rachel Reilly
Manager, Social Policy and Advocacy
rachel.reilly@aasw.asn.au

