

6 April 2016

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The Honourable Christian Porter MP  
Minister for Social Services  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

**By email:** [Christian.porter.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:Christian.porter.mp@aph.gov.au)

Dear Minister

**RE: Low Levels of Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance, Austudy and Abstudy**

The AASW is greatly concerned about the ongoing problem of the low levels of Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance, Austudy and Abstudy.

The AASW believes that the low levels of payments have economic as well as social consequences.

In summary the low levels of payments are:

1. reducing the ability of job seekers to look for work
2. reducing the ability of up to 30% of students to work to capacity at the courses within which they are enrolled.

At a broader level the low levels of payments is contributing to the consolidation of an underclass that will ultimately undermine the security and fabric of our society.

The AASW, which represents over 9,500 professional social workers ask that you consider raising Newstart and related allowances to 90% of the pension rate, up from the lows of between 55% and 66% of the pension rate to which they have fallen.

Such is the importance of this matter that the AASW is keen to make a personal representation to you or your staff on this matter. We believe input from social work experts would be of assistance in advancing family values in this difficult and complex field.

Yours sincerely



**Professor Karen Healy AM**  
National President