

From:
To: [Community Affairs, Committee \(SEN\)](#)
Subject: SUBMISSION: Social Services Legislation Amendment (Strengthening Income Support) Bill 2021
Date: Friday, 26 February 2021 5:54:08 AM

To whom it may concern,

I would like to make a submission regarding the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Strengthening Income Support) Bill 2021.

I am a retired grandmother providing moral and financial support to a Jobseeker and living in the community with other Jobseekers.

I have first hand experience of seeing the effects of living below the poverty line. The isolation and drop in self confidence and self esteem is insidious and unrelenting. It is impossible to remain socially engaged for fear of an unexpected financial cost you can't meet. Any cost, no matter how small, can tip the balance between financial survival and the complete breakdown of your world, including possible eviction.

Living is on a knife edge when every cent is accounted for from every pay.

Without the capacity to save a buffer, the anxiety caused by the possibility that your payment may not arrive on the exact date or be suspended for some reason, you are unaware of, is almost a constant terror.

It is a fact that there have been major increases in the cost of rents and living expenses that had not been provided for in the pre COVID rate of Jobseeker payment.

There are not now enough jobs for all the unemployed. The most vulnerable are the least likely to find employment, so some proportion of those vulnerable unemployed will become reliant long term on benefits.

The proposed increase of just over \$43 a day will not provide subsistence. The maximum amount of Rent Assistance is almost farcical in relation to actual rental costs. Medical or dental expenses, even subsidised amounts cannot be met when you are below the poverty line long term and don't even imagine accessing mental health treatment unless you breakdown completely from the constant stress.

I urge the Senate to bring some common sense to this issue. Australia is a rich country. Jobseeker payments must be at least over the poverty line.

Thank you for your attention.