

2 August 2012

Committee Secretary
Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Submission to the Senate Inquiry into the adequacy of allowance payments for job seekers and others.

I have been a case manager for a number of years, working with men and women who are homeless and/or have recently been provided with social housing.

I agree with Homelessness Australia's statement that "allowance payments are woefully inadequate; [such payments] do not enable people to meet the costs of living and place people in housing crisis and at risk of homelessness."

NewStart payments are way too low and should be immediately increased. I have had clients, in social housing, who are under a lot of stress, living on charity, eating at places such as Matthew Talbot Homeless Services, and on many occasions travelling without a fare as they cannot afford it. This is disgraceful and denigrating. People should not have to be placed under such traumatic circumstances.

Australian economists believe that we must have a minimum of 3.5 percent unemployment. I find this preposterous. I believe every human being who wishes and is able to work should have the opportunity to do so. If the Australian government is unable to provide employment for all job-seekers, then the government should provide a decent allowance, so people can live decently and not be forced to seeking charity.

Therefore, I also join with Homelessness Australian in their call for "an immediate increase in allowance payments of \$50 per week and for payments to be indexed using the same formula as is applied to pension payments to prevent the scenario outlined in the Henry Tax Review from coming to fruition."

Yours faithfully