

Australian Labor Party Senators' Dissenting Report

1.1 Labor Senators on this committee reject the recommendations contained in the majority report.

1.2 The measures in this Bill have previously been considered through this Committee's inquiries into:

- the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Fair and Sustainable Pensions) Bill 2015;
- the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Youth Employment and Other Measures) Bill 2015;
- the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 1) Bill 2014 and the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 2) Bill 2014; and
- the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Budget Repair) Bill 2015.

1.3 Labor Senators' Dissenting Reports on each of these inquiries outline the conclusive and near unanimous evidence provided to the Committee rejecting the measures.

1.4 Evidence provided to this inquiry has reiterated the damaging impacts of these measures for the most vulnerable in our community and confirms Labor's position that the Bill should be rejected.

1.5 To recommend passage of these measures would be to recommend the imposition of harsh and unfair cuts to low and middle income individuals and families.

1.6 This legislation makes it harder for migrant pensioners to continue to receive their pension while they are overseas. This is a cruel and unfair cut. There are many older Australians who left family or fled conflict on the other side of the world to build a better life in our country.

1.7 They have spent decades working hard, paying taxes, raising families and making Australia a better place. They deserve the pension, just like any other eligible older Australian.

1.8 This legislation will also remove important supports for pensioners and other low-income Australians who are seeking to improve their opportunity in life by getting an education, and meeting the associated costs.

1.9 These measures will have significant impacts on low-income households.

1.10 It is clear that these measures do not carry the support of the vast majority of the submissions made to this inquiry.

1.11 The submitters' comments outlined in the majority report are unequivocal: these measures are fundamentally unfair. They should not be supported.

1.12 Labor Senators see no reason to repeat that evidence again. It is unfortunate that the majority members of the Committee have chosen to dismiss that evidence so comprehensively.

1.13 Labor Senators strongly agree with the weight of evidence presented through the course of this Inquiry, that the Bill be rejected.

Recommendation 1

1.14 Labor Senators recommend that the Senate reject the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Budget Repair) Bill 2016.

Senator Murray Watt

Senator the Hon. Don Farrell