



Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs  
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Friday 5 March 2021

To Whom It May Concern

**Re: Social Services Legislation Amendment (Strengthening Income Support) Bill 2021**

Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW) thanks the Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs for the opportunity to provide a submission to the inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Strengthening Income Support) Bill 2021. Please accept this letter as DVNSW's submission.

DVNSW is the peak body for specialist domestic and family violence services in NSW, providing a representative and advocacy function for over 80 specialist domestic and family violence services across NSW, and the women, families and communities they support.

DVNSW and its member organisations are concerned the Australian Government has not yet committed to an **adequate, permanent increase to income support** when the Coronavirus Supplement ends in March 2021.

Our member services saw first-hand the positive effects of higher income support in their communities, including the ability for clients to cover basic costs. Now that the Coronavirus Supplement is being reduced, our member services are seeing people in need again, unable to cover food, housing and other essentials. DVNSW believes that everyone should be able to cover the cost of healthcare, put food on the table, and keep a secure roof over their head.

DVNSW understands that the Australian Government hasn't ruled out a return to the former Newstart rate of \$40 a day. The Australian Government needs to commit to a **permanent increase** so that all Australians can afford the basics and rebuild their lives.

The NCOSS report *A Wave of Disadvantage* outlines the impact of rising unemployment. By June 2021, when JobKeeper has ceased and if JobSeeker returns to its previous rate, NCOSS found that:

- The number of 20-24 year olds in NSW experiencing high or very high **mental distress will increase by up to 16.8 per cent.**
- Higher unemployment alone will lead to rates of **domestic violence increasing by up to 5.5 per cent in some regions of NSW, with COVID-19 lockdowns already having caused alarming spikes in reports to police.**
- More than **9,000 more people in NSW will be homeless** – a rise of 24.0 per cent in the homeless population. **Some regions will see a 40.5 per cent increase in homelessness.**
- The number of **NSW families experiencing housing stress will increase by more than 88,000** or 24.3 per cent.
- There will be **27,447 more children at risk of neglect across NSW**, a 24.5 per cent rise due to increased unemployment.

You can read the full report [here](#).

Millions of people need these payments as a lifeline. DVNSW urges the Australian Government to not leave vulnerable Australians behind, especially when there is just one job available for every nine people looking for one or more hours.

We are relying on the Australian Government to commit to an **adequate, permanent increase to income support** when the Coronavirus Supplement ends in March 2021.

Yours sincerely



Delia Donovan  
Chief Executive Officer, DVNSW