



MEDIA RELEASE

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Government unravelling universal safety net for asylum seekers

Cuts to the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS) Payments are leaving people seeking asylum destitute.

Today the St Vincent de Paul Society National Council released a [briefing paper](#) to alert the community to the seriousness of the problem.

Dr John Falzon, CEO of the St Vincent de Paul Society National Council, has called on the Government to stop harassing the men, women and children seeking asylum in our community.

“We are seeing people living on the streets, young people forced out of education, and people going hungry, all because of mean-spirited government policy,” Dr Falzon said.

“When you cut essential payments you’re cutting down the safety net and when you cut down the safety net disaster will follow,” he said.

“These cuts are hurting ordinary people in our community. This systematic degradation of some of us is a degradation of all of us.”

The St Vincent de Paul Society National Council has called for some immediate changes of Government policy. These include:

- All people seeking asylum in Australia be issued with bridging visas with the right to work, the right to study, access to income support and Medicare.
- That SRSS payments be paid on the basis of need to all those awaiting assessments or review of their claims for protection, including claims before the Courts.
- The eligibility criteria for SRSS payments be clearly set out in a public document that is published on the Department of Human Services website.
- That the practice of denying SRSS payments to persons because they are studying or otherwise deemed eligible to work be discontinued. The criteria for the denial of the payment should be if the person is working and their income reaches a level which would exclude them if they were receiving Newstart Allowance.
- That SRSS payments be increased to the level of the Newstart Allowance.

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