

Call for cross-party commitment to dismantle ParentsNext

In response to the Report of the Senate Inquiry into *ParentsNext*, including its trial and subsequent broader rollout, a broad coalition of service providers, human rights bodies, peak bodies, researchers and advocates today calls time on ParentsNext.

One in five parents have had their payments suspended, which rises to 27 per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Compliance is onerous and the penalties are severe, often leaving families with babies and young children unable to make ends meet. Parents subject to the program are mostly mums providing care for a young family, with many experiencing financial insecurity in the wake of escaping family violence. The harsh reality of this program is completely out of step with the needs of struggling families and community expectations.

This week, the Federal Government signed up to a landmark United Nations agreement committing to promoting the rights of women.¹ The Government agreed that social security programs should not discriminate against women, including by adding to women's unpaid work; reinforcing gender stereotypes; or disproportionately punishing women, such as through financial sanctions. The ParentsNext program fails in all respects.

It is time to honour the commitments made on the world stage back home in Australia. We call on all parties to repeal the legislative instrument that allows the Government to enforce discriminatory compliance requirements and payment suspensions onto some of Australia's most financially disadvantaged families.

We call for a commitment to listen to the voices of single mothers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who are the primary targets of this program. Backed with evidence collected through 73 submissions and testimony to the Senate Inquiry, it is incumbent on all parties to demonstrate their commitment to gender equality and treating **all** families fairly.

Signed

National Council of Single Mothers and their Children

Council of Single Mothers and their Children

Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand

National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum

St Vincent de Paul Society National Council

Australian Council of Social Service

Human Rights Law Centre

Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare

FamilyCare Shepparton

Associate Professor Beth Goldblatt, University of Technology Sydney

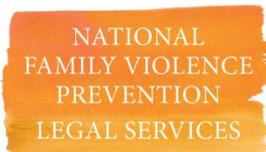
Equality Rights Alliance

National Foundation for Australian Women

Domestic Violence Victoria

Ella Buckland

¹ The sixty-third Commission on the Status of Women's Agreed Conclusions.



Media contacts

Jenny Davidson, CEO, Council of Single Mothers and their Children

ceo@csmc.org.au | 0407 697 976

Terese Edwards, CEO, National Council of Single Mothers and their Children

terese@ncsmc.org.au | 0439 211 493

Monique Vandeleur, Director of Media and Communications, ACOSS

Monique@ACOSS.org.au | 0419 626 155

Ethnè Pfeiffer, Communications Manager, Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand

ethne.pfeiffer@goodshp.org.au | 0411 478 111

David Tennant, CEO, FamilyCare

DTennant@familycare.net.au | 0419 876 421