

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **BUDGET FAILS THOSE LIVING IN ENTRENCHED POVERTY**

The 2019 Federal Budget delivers a surplus. But, what does a surplus mean to the everyday life of the growing number of families and single people who are, right now, living in entrenched poverty?

The St Vincent de Paul Society National Council welcomed announcements of additional funding commitments for domestic violence programs and aged care, along with a small boost in mental health services, education and support programs for newly arrived migrants. These initiatives will help close some of the access gaps low income families and disengaged people presently face when trying to access essential services. We support efforts to build tomorrow's workforce through further training program initiatives.

However, the Society's National President, Ms Claire Victory, expressed concern that this year's Federal Budget continues to ignore the plight of the most disadvantaged Australians. It fails to address two dominant drivers of poverty and disadvantage in Australia – the soaring costs of basic housing and below-poverty-level income support payments. We are worried about what appears to be an ongoing meanness in the context of 'personal responsibility'.

"The continuing refusal to address the low level of support for people on Newstart is harsh. The Government's 'commitment to fairness' does not deliver one cent of the one-off energy assistance cash payment to Newstart recipients. This is a poor reflection of Australians' commitment to giving everyone 'a fair-go'. The Society will continue to offer help and hope to these families and individuals.

"We are disappointed this Budget neglects the urgent need for a comprehensive and long-term strategy that will tackle the ballooning problems of homelessness and housing for low-income earners, including a much needed increased investment in social housing" she said.

"Although homelessness in Australia continues to rise, the Budget offers no solution to putting a roof over the head of the more than 116,000 people experiencing homelessness and those on low incomes suffering severe rental stress," said Ms Victory.

"The Treasurer says a strong economy is the key to delivering better government services. Yet instead of investing in essential social security payments, social housing, and community services, this Budget squanders an opportunity to balance the benefits of lifting household income delivered through tax cuts against giving a hand up to our most disadvantaged citizens who continue to be excluded from participation in the life of their community due to lack of money in their pockets," said Ms Victory.

The Society will continue to work towards a fairer society in Australia.

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