

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **WHILE THE BATTLE OVER TAX CUTS BEGINS, WE ARE LOSING THE WAR ON POVERTY**

In response to the Opposition's Budget reply speech, the St Vincent de Paul Society National Council has welcomed Labor's decision to prioritise essential services over tax cuts for high-income earners, but remains concerned that both major parties are ignoring the plight of people on Newstart.

"We welcome Labor's focus on fairness and equity and its commitment to fund the NDIS, support people fighting cancer, and provide additional investment in childcare, TAFE and apprentices," said Claire Victory, President of the St Vincent de Paul Society National Council.

"However, the needs of those on the lowest incomes continue to be overlooked. While we welcome the Opposition's commitment to remove the Government's tax cuts for higher-income earners, people on Newstart and Youth Allowance continue to be ignored.

"You can't be taken seriously about tackling inequality without providing relief to people who have the very least."

While the ALP has pledged to undertake a review of the rate of Newstart, they not committed to raising the rate of the payment.

"With more than 3 million people living in poverty in Australia, including 739,000 children, the first call on public revenue should be to lift the lowest incomes," said Ms Victory.

With the federal election imminent, the Society urged all parties to commit to address this deep flaw in our social security system.

"Fixing Newstart is a moral challenge for our democracy. We are one of the wealthiest nations in the world and no one should live in poverty, whether they have paid work or not," said Ms Victory.

The Society also welcomed Labor's renewed commitment to reform negative gearing and capital gains tax, but noted greater public investment in social housing was vital to tackle the housing crisis for people on the lowest incomes.

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