

POVERTY



It is time to address the poverty and financial hardship that single mothers contend with on a daily basis.

NCSMC calls for.....

1. Newstart allowance to be abolished and reinstate Parenting Payment Single for all sole parent families. Financial hardship does not provide incentive it increases distress.
2. Parenting Payment Single to be comparable to the Age Pension Single .
3. Principle carers to receive an allowance when they undertake a combined 15 hours of participation per week, similar to the mobility allowance which is available for claimants of the Disability Support Pension. The allowance would acknowledge the additional barriers, and cost associated for single mothers as they fulfill their caring responsibilities and undertake participation obligations.
4. Compulsory income management to cease. Quarantining 50 -70% of an inadequate income only compounds financial hardship and stigmatizes claimants.

Poverty Facts:

Single Mothers

- ⇒ 34 % sole parent families with dependent children were unable to pay utility bills on time compared to 12% of couple families.
- ⇒ Inability to pay rent leads to loss of housing, couch-surfing, shared accommodation, sleeping in a car or shelters.
- ⇒ Children accompanying homeless parents are the largest group turned away from emergency housing - domestic violence is the greatest cause.
- ⇒ Inability to participate in the community due to lack of private transport, poor public transport and the difficulty of using public transport with young children.
- ⇒ 38% of sole parent households with dependent children in 2006 were at risk of not being able to raise \$2,000 in emergency compared to 11%

Child Poverty

- ⇒ The current child poverty rate in Australia is 11%. A child in a sole parent family is three times more likely to live in poverty.
- ⇒ 6% of one parent families with dependent children went without meals compared to 1% of couple families with children .
- ⇒ Inability to purchase prescribed and pharmacy medicines. Children's illnesses and chronic health problems go untreated.

“ Children are vulnerable and dependant, and the effects and impacts of poverty can so easily stultify and distort their future lives by robbing them of opportunities to develop their potential.” (McClelland 2000)

Poor outcomes are not a forgone conclusion if policy and support responses are well targeted.