

CSSA: Federal Budget 2025 Falls short of strong leadership required.

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Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) acknowledges the 2025 Federal Budget handed down by Treasurer Jim Chalmers, while emphasising the need for a more robust approach to addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality in Australia.

Dr Jerry Nockles, Executive Director of CSSA, offers a measured response to the budget:

"While we recognise the government's efforts to provide some relief in these challenging times, the budget falls short of the strong leadership needed to truly serve the common good.

CSSA acknowledges several initiatives announced in the budget, including:

1. Tax cuts for all Australians, albeit delayed until 1 July 2026.
2. An \$8.5 billion investment in Medicare over four years.
3. The allocation of \$644 million to fund fifty new urgent care clinics by mid-2026.
4. The commitment of \$689 million over four years to reduce the cost of medications listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).
5. Energy bill relief measures, extending the government's previous support.

However, CSSA maintains that these measures do not go far enough in addressing the systemic issues facing vulnerable Australians and reflect a piecemeal approach to policymaking.

"We had called for an increase in the rate of JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, and related payments," Dr Nockles states. "The absence of significant movement on income support in the budget is a missed opportunity to give millions of vulnerable Australians breathing space and demonstrates a failure to consider the broader implications of policy decisions on the entire community."

"While the budget includes measures to enhance Medicare accessibility and reduce medication costs, these are steps in the right direction but fall short of addressing the underlying issues of health inequality and affordability," Dr Nockles explains.

CSSA calls for an 'accord' approach to governance, which recognises that pursuing the common good requires collaborative effort from all sectors of society. This approach challenges the current trend of catering to sectional interests, which often results in fragmented policies that fail to serve the broader community.

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"Australia's disadvantaged and marginalised are not a constituency to be farmed for votes. They are people with inherent dignity: people who demand respect and who deserve an entry point to a happy and fulfilling life. When those votes are bought on credit from future generations, we exacerbate the problem."

CSSA notes with concern that the budget is forecast to remain in deficit for the next decade, with a projected \$26.9 billion deficit for the current financial year. This long-term fiscal outlook raises questions about the sustainability of current policies and the potential impact on future generations.

"While we appreciate the government's focus on cost-of-living relief, we urge a more comprehensive, long-term approach to economic management that prioritises sustainable growth and a focus on the common good," Dr Nockles adds.

CSSA remains committed to working with the government, civil society, and business sectors to achieve these goals and will continue to advocate for policies that prioritise the dignity and potential of every Australian, rather than catering to narrow sectional interests.

About Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA)

[Catholic Social Services Australia](#) (CSSA) advocates for the Church's social service ministry. It is the national peak body for Catholic social service providers. The CSSA's network operates across all Australian States and Territories and has over seven hundred sites.

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