



Josephite
Justice Network

WHAT KIND OF AUSTRALIA DO WE WANT? Some give, some take, in a budget for challenging times!

March 28, 2025

There is much in this budget that will ease cost of living pressures for many Australians. There is also much, however, that fails to address the urgent needs of those who are most vulnerable in our country and world.

While the Josephite Justice Network (JJN) recognises that the 2025 budget has been constrained by the political complexity of the upcoming election, we are deeply concerned that it represents a missed opportunity for Australian political leadership to deliver real and meaningful support for the most vulnerable communities in our nation. At a time when our country faces significant social and economic challenges, the Government's budget and the Opposition's response both fall short in addressing the needs of people living below the poverty line, as well as those seeking asylum in this country.

Jan Barnett, Co-ordinator of JJN, said: "This budget is a stark reminder of how political leadership can either uphold or neglect the dignity of those most vulnerable in our society. Both Labor and the Coalition have used this budget time as a pre-election tool, rather than an opportunity to create transformative change, especially in the areas of climate change and cost of living expenses for those most in need."

JJN does welcome several budget announcements delivered on Tuesday night, including:

1. An increase in funding for Homelessness and Housing peak bodies of [\\$6.2million over 3 years](#), enabling organisations to continue working toward an end to poverty in Australia
2. [\\$1billion investment](#) for crisis and transitional housing for young people experiencing homelessness as well as women and children escaping violence
3. A funding commitment [of \\$44.5million over 5 years](#) to programs that support refugee settlement and multicultural settlement
4. An increase in funding to the [Administrative Review Tribunal \(ART\) and Federal Courts](#) to meet the rising demands of immigration and legal review cases
5. An increase of [overseas aid and development](#) spending by \$136 million.
6. An investment of \$8.5 billion in [Medicare](#)

What remains clear, however, is that this budget does not adequately acknowledge the true systemic injustice faced by people who are living in poverty or those who are refugees and asylum seekers. It represents a missed opportunity to act as a catalyst of change in the lives of those who are most vulnerable in our country.

Emilia Nicholas, a Team Leader in JJJ, highlighted JJJ concerns, stressing the long-term impacts of a lack of political leadership of both major parties, when it comes to meeting the needs of those most vulnerable in our society.

“When a federal budget ignores those living on the edges of our society it deepens inequality and eradicates any chance of hope for a brighter future. Future generations of Australians, especially those living in poverty, and people who are refugees and asylum seekers, are entitled to sustainable policies that will provide them with a solid foundation to live a life of value and dignity. Both Labor and the Coalition have failed to deliver sustainable policies. Raising Offshore Processing spending to \$13.35billion while failing to increase Jobseeker payments to at least \$82 a day, or provide protection for people seeking asylum, will only exacerbate the already uncertain futures of many people facing these crises.”

JJJ calls for an approach that goes beyond temporary fixes and addresses the root causes of inequality. We seek lasting solutions to the poverty, housing insecurity and challenges faced by those living below the poverty line and refugees and people seeking asylum.

Emilia Nicholas concluded: “We urge the Australian Government to reassess its priorities and to lead with compassion and justice. Government leadership will determine the futures of many. Our leaders must put people before politics, they must see the human faces behind the statistics and enact lasting systemic change.”

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