

CSSA: FISCAL REFORM MUST PRIORITISE SOCIETY'S MOST VULNERABLE

17 Sep 2025

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) responds with interest and guarded optimism to Opposition Leader Sussan Ley's address to the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) today, which outlined a principled approach to fiscal management while maintaining support for vulnerable Australians.

Dr Jerry Nockles, Chief Executive Officer of CSSA, commented on the Opposition Leader's commitment to ensuring the safety net remains strong and focused on genuine need.

"We welcome the Opposition Leader's clear articulation that Australia will always support those who fall on hard times, those who are vulnerable, and those who cannot support themselves," said Dr Nockles.

"Ms Ley's emphasis on targeting assistance to the vulnerable while ensuring fiscal sustainability reflects an important balance that aligns with our mission to uphold human dignity while securing long-term support for those most in need."

Dr Nockles noted the Opposition Leader's recognition that responsible budget management is not an end in itself, but a means to strengthen the economy and preserve capacity to help those truly in need.

"While we appreciate Ms Ley's distinction between a safety net and a hammock, we view this framework through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching's preferential option for the poor. This principle guides us to ensure the safety net is strong enough to provide genuine support while also creating pathways to independence and participation.

"We look forward to working with Ms Ley to ensure this balance always prioritises the dignity and needs of our most vulnerable community members," Dr Nockles said.

CSSA emphasises the importance of collaboration between government, civil society, and the private sector in developing reforms that serve the common good.

"We appreciate Ms Ley's commitment to proper consultation on reforms and her recognition that the measure of good policy is how it affects the most vulnerable in our society," said Dr Nockles.

MEDIA RELEASE



"CSSA member organisations are at the forefront of empowering families and individuals, providing essential services across over 600 locations such as family and relationship support services, children's services, aged care, disability services, youth work, financial counselling, homelessness services and emergency relief.

"We invite the Opposition Leader to engage directly with our network regarding social services policy and support a sustainable, life-giving community sector," said Dr Nockles.

"As we continue national conversations about fiscal sustainability, we look forward to working constructively with all sides of politics to ensure that vulnerable Australians can access the services they need to overcome barriers and pursue fulfilling lives."

CSSA reaffirms its commitment to working with all political parties to develop policies that advance social justice, reduce inequality, and create a more inclusive Australia.

ENDS

Media Contact | Tania Ladyzhynsky | 02 6285 1366

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 a combined total of over 700 sites.

The national network of Catholic social services

ABN 49 061 834 197

PO Box 6067, O'Connor ACT 2602. Level 1, 3 Sargood Street, O'Connor ACT 2602. **T** 02 6285 1366 **E** admin@cssa.org.au **www.cssa.org.au**

