



MEDIA RELEASE

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Raise the rate now to lift more children out of poverty

Reducing child poverty is not only a moral imperative; research shows it's a sound economic investment, the St Vincent de Paul Society says this Anti-Poverty Week, 12-18 October 2025.

'Children growing up in poverty have higher risks of poor health, lower educational outcomes, and are three times more likely to experience disadvantage as adults,' said the Society's National President, Mark Gaetani. 'Each year of inaction robs children of the opportunity to thrive, costing the nation billions now and into the future.'

'This is why the Society has called on the federal government to appoint a Minister for Children and to halve child poverty by 2030,' Mr Gaetani said. 'That's just five years off, but action cannot be postponed until the next election; it's already too late for thousands of vulnerable families who are suffering today.'

Alarming figures from [NSW Council of Social Service](#) show child poverty imposes an estimated annual economic cost of nearly \$60 billion in NSW alone, undermining productivity, increasing health and welfare expenditure, and perpetuating cycles of disadvantage. Around one in six Australian children and one in seven adults live in poverty.

'Failing to address poverty leaves the nation paying dearly for lost opportunities, increased health and welfare spending, and ever-growing demand on overstretched crisis services such as those our organisation provides around Australia,' Mr Gaetani said. 'Over the past year, the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW has seen a 13 per cent increase in demand for Vinnies Vans across the state, with 115,000 people supported. One in three of the people seeking our help in NSW are coming to us for the first time.'

Mr Gaetani said the data shows that the assistance our Members provide just to keep people afloat is filling the gap between the rate of JobSeeker and the poverty line (the poverty gap). Meanwhile, rising demand for poverty relief is matched by the increasing dollar-value and complexity of each case.

‘A modest increase in working age welfare payments, as proposed in the ANU’s [A Fairer Tax and Welfare System for Australia](#) paper commissioned by the Society, would help ease the poverty crisis,’ he said.

The Albanese Government’s own [Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee \(EIAC\) 2025 Report](#) recommends increasing the base rates of JobSeeker and related working age payments to 90 per cent of the Age Pension, as the top priority for social and economic reform. Modelling commissioned by the EIAC shows that raising these payments would deliver a return of \$1.24 for every dollar invested, through a healthier, more productive community and reduced demand on overwhelmed crisis services.

‘We see every day the impact of poverty on children and families who seek our help,’ Mr Gaetani said. ‘No child should have to go hungry in a country as wealthy as ours. Lifting income support will give families the dignity and security they deserve and would mean fewer Australians in desperate need of our help. It will also deliver measurable economic returns and a brighter future for all.’

[Anti-Poverty Week 2025 in Australia runs 12-18 October](#); antipovertyweek.org.au. To find out more, visit vinnies.org.au/national-council/advocacy/children

If you need help, call 13 18 12 or visit vinnies.org.au

Background

A Fairer Tax and Welfare System for Australia

Advocacy is a core value of the St Vincent de Paul Society and our main goal is to change the root causes of poverty. For this reason, the Society’s National Council contracted ANU’s Centre for Social Policy Research to review Australia’s welfare and taxation system to reduce poverty and increase equity.

The most recent report, *A Fairer Tax and Welfare System*, is available at vinnies.org.au/national-council/advocacy/a-fairer-tax-and-welfare-system

‘This report shows that small changes to our taxation system could make a big difference to the welfare of many. One million people could be lifted out of poverty and the superannuation of lower- and middle-income households could be improved.’ - Mark Gaetani, National President St Vincent de Paul Society.

The after-housing poverty rate in Australia is 14.2% of households or 3.93 million people for July 2025.

** Photo of National President, Mr Mark Gaetani, is available on request.*

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia consists of 45,000 members and volunteers who operate on the ground through over 1,000 groups located in local communities across the country.