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UnitingCare Australia echoes calls for permanent increase to JobSeeker

UnitingCare Australia joins Anglicare Australia, Catholic Social Services Australia, and the Salvation Army in again calling for a permanent increase to the rate of JobSeeker.

We know that reverting back to the base rate of JobSeeker and Youth Allowance, without the temporary Coronavirus Supplement, will condemn many people to poverty and hardship.

"The Coronavirus Supplement has lifted people out of poverty and allowed them to meet their most basic needs, many for the first time," said National Director, Ms Claerwen Little.

"Our services report countless stories of families being able to afford fresh fruit and vegetables, and people being able to access medication and health services.

"Yet our services are now bracing for an escalation in need when the Coronavirus Supplement is wound back. We have grave concerns about the escalation in housing stress, food insecurity, debt and hardship that many households will face if payments revert back to pre-COVID rates.

"These concerns are further supported by a report released earlier this week by Anglicare Australia which found that over a third of recipients are left with as little as \$7 a day after meeting basic living costs.

"These survey results are nothing short of alarming. Before the Coronavirus Supplement was introduced, 72% of people surveyed were regularly skipping meals, usually 3-4 meals per week" said National Director, Ms Claerwen Little.

"Of particular concern are the implications for more than one million children who are living in homes that will be impacted by the cut to the Coronavirus Supplement at the end of December. This Christmas is going to be incredibly tough for those families who will be going into 2021 without enough to get by.

"Unless there is a permanent increase to income support payments, Australia faces the prospect of deepening inequality and an increase in poverty and hardship" said Ms Little.

"A strong social security safety net is an integral part of achieving more than just an inclusive society."

UnitingCare Australia is a national body for the Uniting Church's community services network in Australia, supporting 1.4 million people each year across urban, rural and remote communities.

The UnitingCare network is one of the largest networks of social services providers in Australia, supporting 1.4 million people every year across urban, rural and remote communities and powered by over 50,000 staff and 30,000 volunteers.

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