

3 March 2017

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Dear Secretary

Submission-in-brief to Omnibus Savings and Child Care Reform Bill 2017

Anglicare Australia welcomes the opportunity to reiterate our concerns with the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Omnibus Savings and Child Care Reform) Bill 2017.

Included as Appendix 1 to this submission in brief you will find Anglicare Australia's September 2016 submission regarding the *Jobs for Families Child Care Package Bill 2016* and the *Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures Bill 2016*.

Included as Appendix 2 is Anglicare Australia's February 2016 submission regarding the *Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No. 2) 2015*

Included as Appendix 3 is Anglicare Australia's January 2016 submission regarding the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Bill 2015*.

At the same time we draw the Committee's attention to recent research commissioned or conducted by the Anglicare Australia network which shows that:

1. Disadvantaged Job Seekers are excluded from the workforce ([Jobs Availability Snapshot, 2016](#))
2. People living on low incomes face real falls in their standard of living ([Living Standard Trends in Australia, NATSEM 2015](#))
3. Households relying on government income support are going backwards in terms of health, wealth and wellbeing ([Going Without, 2012](#))
4. The shortage of affordable and appropriate rental housing is at a critical level in both regional and metropolitan Australia, ([Rental Affordability Snapshot](#) series, 2010-2016)
5. People seeking emergency relief regularly go hungry in order to ensure their children can eat. ([When there's not enough to eat, 2012](#))

The key point we wish to emphasise here is that the linking of government funding or support for essential social services with cuts to support for the most disadvantaged, impoverished and excluded members of Australian society is both unacceptable and ultimately expensive.

Whatever rationale government may wish to proffer, cuts to income support of any kind – whether through the loss of allowances and supplements or changes to eligibility – will create ongoing distress and damage with lasting impact on the people affected and the wider society.

There is no shortage of equitable revenue raising propositions on the table that government could look to if it were serious about covering the cost of the child care package through a new initiative.

But it is clear from the public debate and the government's rationale that the Australian people are being asked to accept the notion that a greater investment in childcare – with all the social and economic benefits it will bring – must be a part of a zero sum game. And that those with the least means and resources behind them are destined to carry the can.

The most recent suggestion from government that future funding of the National Disability Insurance Scheme would be provisional on the passage of the income cutting measures sewn into this Bill was a particularly repugnant example of this approach.

Anglicare Australia cannot accept it. The idea that the interests of those with the least bargaining power should be pitched against each other is blinked and mean spirited. We look for a greater vision and ambition from our government.

Finally, the Bill in its present form will affect the wellbeing and living conditions of a large number, and a wide range of people. That includes families with teenage children, small children in families without work or education, young people seeking to enter the workforce. Our chief immediate concern is that the interests of one of these population groups, say young people in their early twenties, will again be traded off in order to protect the interest of others. We urge Senators to stand beside all those people targeted for reduced income and support by this Bill.

Yours sincerely



Kasy Chambers
Executive Director