

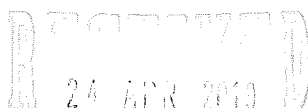


Australian Government

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

ANDREW FISHER BUILDING
ONE NATIONAL CIRCUIT
BARTON

Reference: MC19-019527



BY:

Ms Kasy Chambers
Executive Director
Anglicare Australia
PO Box 4093
AINSLIE ACT 2602

Dear Ms Chambers

Thank you for your letter dated 20 March 2019 to the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, regarding poverty in Australia. I am replying on behalf of the Prime Minister as the Government is now in a caretaker role pending the outcome of the federal election on 18 May 2019.

The Government's employment services reforms is designed to provide better services to job seekers, with the most disadvantaged job seekers receiving more intensive, targeted and tailored face-to-face service to help them prepare for and find work. The new model will be piloted in two locations before the national rollout in July 2022.

For people who are unable to support themselves through substantial paid employment, a range of income support payments and supplements are provided to assist individuals with the cost of living. This includes Rent Assistance, which is paid to eligible recipients who rent in the private rental market or community housing, and Family Tax Benefit, which helps parents with the costs of raising children.

Payments including the Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance are also indexed twice yearly, in March and September, to reflect movements in the Consumer Price Index and ensure that payment rates keep pace with price changes.

Additionally, as announced in the 2019-20 Budget, the Government will provide welfare recipients with a one-off Energy Assistance Payment of \$75 for singles and \$62.50 for each eligible member of a couple, to assist with cost of living pressures, including those resulting from increased energy costs. The Energy Assistance Payment will be paid to recipients of a range of welfare payments, including the Age Pension, Disability Support Pension, Carer Payment, Parenting Payment, Newstart Allowance, and Youth Allowance.

The National Housing and Homelessness Agreement, which is an agreement between the Commonwealth and States and Territories to improve housing and homelessness outcomes, took effect on 1 July 2018 and provides \$7.8 billion in funding over five years from 2018-19. This includes \$620 million in homelessness funding, which is ongoing and indexed for the first time.

The Government also established the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC), which commenced operations on 30 June 2018. NHFIC operates a \$1 billion National Housing Infrastructure Facility that will provide finance for infrastructure to unlock new housing supply and an affordable housing bond aggregator with the aim of providing cheaper, long-term finance for registered community housing providers.

I hope the information is of assistance and thank you again for writing to the Prime Minister.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cain Beckett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Cain Beckett
Assistant Secretary, Social Services, Human Services and Veterans' Affairs Branch

16 / 04 / 2019