



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Divisive Federal Budget hits most vulnerable

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The 2014 Federal Budget will deepen the divide between rich and poor, and the greatest burden will fall on those who are young, on families, and on those already struggling to find work, the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council and Catholic Social Services Australia have said in a joint statement.

“This Budget will make life even harder for those Australians who are least able to look after themselves”, said the Chairman of the ACSJC, Bishop Christopher Saunders. “It actually punishes individuals and families who look to Government for financial support and drives division and alienation in our Australian community.”

“I am particularly concerned about the Budget’s impact on Indigenous families and young people, many of whom already face deprivation and marginalisation and confront enormous barriers in finding work”, Bishop Saunders said.

Mrs Jackie Brady, Acting Executive Director of Catholic Social Services Australia, said: “The time-limited welfare payments for young people unveiled in the Federal Budget will not see the Federal Government live up to its pre-election promise to ‘not leave anyone behind’.”

“Without an adequate safety net, young people up to 30 years of age are being set up to fail. That is especially so when the Government is pulling back on programs such as Youth Connections, which we know are successful in helping young people make the move from school to work or further education.

“This particular budget initiative will no doubt save the Federal Government dollars – but at what cost to young people, their families, friends and the broader community?” said Mrs Brady.

“It is no surprise public surveys post-Budget are showing people are concerned,” said Mrs Brady. “This budget presents savings to the Federal Budget that have a domino effect on the household income – from cuts to the family tax benefit thresholds, the introduction of Medicare co-payments and changes to indexation rates for some payments and allowances. Many people are already surviving with limited means and have limited flexibility to absorb additional costs so it is inevitable that low to middle income households will suffer the most.”

‘If the government really wants us all to make a contribution, then it should be empowering those who are struggling – not punishing them’, Bishop Saunders said.

CONTACTS: Bishop Christopher Saunders, Chairman, ACSJC: 0418 260 155
Jackie Brady: 02 6285 1366 / 0417 220 779
Dr David Brennan, Acting National Executive Officer, ACSJC 02 8306 3499