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Mallee Family Care calls for greater investment in vulnerable communities following 2025 Federal Budget

Vulnerable families and children in rural and regional communities have little to celebrate in this year's Federal Budget, according to Mallee Family Care (MFC).

Despite modest efforts to address cost-of-living pressures, through tax cuts, Medicare funding and energy rebates, the budget falls short on delivering meaningful support for those most in need, according to MFC CEO Teresa Jayet.

MFC's pre-budget submission called for action in four key priority areas to support vulnerable families and children: cost of living and financial security; supporting children at risk; addressing housing insecurity and building community sector capacity.

"We are disappointed that the government has made only piecemeal efforts to address housing insecurity and cost of living pressures, and ignored the need for a more comprehensive approach to reducing rural and regional disadvantage," Ms Jayet said.

"For example, there was no increase to Commonwealth Rent Assistance, which would have provided immediate relief to many vulnerable households in our region.

"When families don't have secure housing, the impacts ripple through all aspects of their lives – from children's education to parents' ability to maintain employment. A stronger commitment to affordable housing, particularly in regions like the Mallee where there is a critical housing shortage, is essential for building resilient communities.

"The \$7 billion allocated to tax cuts could also have made a significant difference if directed toward those experiencing poverty and disadvantage. It is a missed opportunity to invest in early intervention and targeted support which we know delivers long-term social and economic benefits to the whole community.

As the federal election approaches, MFC will continue to advocate for place-based, whole-of-community approaches to address the complex needs of vulnerable families and children in rural and regional areas.

"Regional communities remain the engine room of Australia's economy, yet they continue to face disproportionate challenges from cost-of-living pressures, housing stress, and service gaps. All of Australia benefits when our rural and regional communities are strong, resilient and productive," Ms Jayet concluded.



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About Mallee Family Care

Established in 1979, Mallee Family Care provides vital child, family, and community services across North West Victoria, Far West NSW, and South Australia's Riverland region. In 2023-24, MFC supported over 7,000 clients across regional communities, employed over 300 skilled professionals, and delivered more than 70 programs, covering over 776,000 kilometres to reach those in need.

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