



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Cost of living intensifies need for rate rise

In recent months Australians have seen the cost of even the most basic necessities rise, meaning for many people, the ability to cover their living expenses is quickly evaporating. Mallee Family Care is experiencing increasing demand for assistance and Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Teresa Jayet, says now more than ever, the Government needs to lift the rate of support payments.

“The reality is that back in 2019, payments such as JobSeeker were inadequate. After essentials were covered, people were almost \$20 short at the end of each week.

“Fast forward to 2022 and fuel is over \$2 a litre, and living costs like groceries and rent are rapidly climbing, along with interest rates. However, government support payments are failing to keep pace with the economic pressures.”

In his victory speech, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese assured the country that under his Government ‘no-one would be left behind’ and Ms. Jayet says that raising the rate of support payments is a critical component of the Prime Minister’s commitment.

“What we need now, what our communities need now, is a significant shift in policy. The Prime Minister, who has lived experience of the support system, understands the impact it can have on people’s lives and he has an opportunity to drive generational change.

“We’re calling on the Prime Minister to raise the rate of support payments in line with inflation and to increase Commonwealth Rental Assistance to a point that ensures we don’t see a tidal wave of homelessness and entrenched poverty across this country.”

Among the rising costs Australians are confronting is an average mortgage hike of over \$400 per month and this increase will be passed on to rental tenants. We’ve also been warned to brace for rising utility costs, with some states fearing a doubling of charges. Couple this with higher supermarket, medical and fuel costs and even those with a stable income will struggle to make ends meet.

Ms. Jayet says that the 2021 Census Data demonstrates the hardship that is being experienced around the country and that raising payments will benefit the recipients and the broader community.

“When people have adequate funds they purchase goods, they pay their bills and rent. All these things help stimulate the economy, keeping small and medium businesses viable.”



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Mallee Family Care is among countless agencies lobbying government for rate increases, arguing that the COVID-19 supplementary payments proved the value of an increased rate.

“During the peak of COVID-19, what we actually saw was a decline in the number of people living in poverty, as a result of the former Government’s responsive supplementary payments.”

Ms. Jayet says a rate increase of up to at least \$70 per day, along with an increase in Commonwealth Rental Assistance and access to other supports will help to manage the impact of rising living costs.

“We’re heading into the perfect storm and to do nothing is to condemn vulnerable Australians to a life of stress and uncertainty and to remove hope and opportunity from the lives of their children.”

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