

As a single parent on PPS and FTB A & B, this income is what I rely on to live day to day for myself & two children, Their father is not in the picture although he is finally paying Child Support even if he is still in 2K of debt owing to my children. He doesn't want anything to do with them as he is selfish and has mental problems. My children rely on ME and me alone to raise them. I am lucky that I have support from my family when needed but my parents are not going to be around forever. Child Care costs if I use any, would be eaten up due to the high cost of using such services. As it is with the cost of food, electricity, gas etc rising and set to rise further, it will mean something has to give and that will more than likely be the only after school activity my children engage in, swimming.

My income consists of half of it going to rent, another quarter going on bills and the rest, which is about \$300 going on food. That is per FORTNIGHT. We have no luxuries, we don't go out, we don't eat takeaway, we don't go do things in school holidays because we just cant afford it. To be put onto Newstart means losing the amount of income that would cover my food every fortnight, so how is that fair? Do we live on a few loaves of bread, some vegemite and potatoes like the good ol' days??

Being "made" to do something that some of us just don't want to do, by the government, is a breach of our basic human rights as people. How can the government tell us, as an individual person, that you HAVE to go and do something ... don't we have a choice?? Isn't that OUR choice to make?? I have a small disability that does not allow me to stand for long periods of time, sit for long periods of time or walk for long periods of time, can the government find me a position that lets me sit down, get up, move around every 15 minutes without being penalised? Can they find me a family friendly position that allows me to leave if my child is hurt, sick or injured? Can they find a job (of which there are little atm) that lets me work between 9.30am (after school drop off) and 2.30pm (enough time to pick them up after school)??

Losing so much money who is going to pay for necessities like school uniforms, school shoes, school hats, socks, jumpers, underwear?? It certainly wont be me as my income will not stretch that far on newstart and that would mean my children will be missing out. But its not All about the money, its about common sense – I would like to see a politician live on \$500 a week (below the poverty line for some) and see how they manage to do it.

Please re-think this compulsory stage, it is just beyond common sense on so many levels.