



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE
Senate Community Affairs References Committee

Senate inquiry into Newstart and related payments

Opportunities to speak to the committee

Issue date: 21 October 2019

The Senate Community Affairs References Committee would like to hear from people who have experience of receiving income support payments, including Newstart, Youth Allowance and Austudy.

The committee is examining the current approach to setting income support payments in Australia and its impacts on all people affected by the process and on local and domestic economies.

The Chair of the Committee, Senator Siewert said 'it is very important for all members of parliament to listen to the lived experiences of those on income support'. 'The committee is making time available so people can tell us about their experiences,' Senator Siewert said.

When and where are the hearings?

- Elizabeth – 30 October
- Alice Springs – 1 November
- Perth – 6 November
- Launceston – 8 November
- Geelong – 20 November

How to register your interest in speaking to the committee:

If you, or someone you know, would like to speak to the committee, please email the following information to the committee as soon as possible to register your interest

(community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au):

- your name;
- a telephone number and email address so that we can contact you; and
- the hearing location at which you would like to speak to the committee.

What happens next

One of the committee's staff will contact you to arrange a time for you to speak to the committee. They will also provide you with information about what to expect on the day of the hearing.

Requests to speak to the committee will be processed in the order in which they are received. If all of the time available at the hearing you would like to attend has been allocated, the committee's staff will

DATE REFERRED

25 July 2019

SUBMISSIONS CLOSE

30 September 2019

NEXT HEARINGS

30 October – Elizabeth

1 November – Alice Springs

6 November – Perth

8 November – Launceston

20 November – Geelong

REPORTING DATE

27 March 2020

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Senator Rachel Siewert (Chair)

Senator Wendy Askew
(Deputy Chair)

Senator Hollie Hughes

Senator Malarndirri McCarthy

Senator Deborah O'Neill

Senator Anne Urquhart

CONTACT THE COMMITTEE

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on Community Affairs

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contact you to let you know this. You can still attend the hearing and listen to what is being said.

Further information

Further information about the inquiry, including published submissions and hearing programs, is available on the committee website: www.aph.gov.au/senate_ca.

Media enquiries: Office of Senator Rachel Siewert, Committee Chair on (02) 6277 3587.

For background information: contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 3515 or community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au.

Inquiry Terms of Reference

The adequacy of Newstart and related payments and alternative mechanisms to determine the level of income support payments in Australia, with specific reference to:

- (a) consideration of what constitutes an acceptable standard of living in Australia, including the cost of safe and secure housing;
- (b) the labour market, unemployment and under-employment in Australia, including the structural causes of long term unemployment and long term reliance on Newstart;
- (c) the changing nature of work and insecure work in Australia;
- (d) the appropriateness of current arrangements for supporting those experiencing insecure employment, inconsistent employment and precarious hours in the workforce;
- (e) the current approach to setting income support payments in Australia;
- (f) the impact of the current approach to setting income support payments on older unemployed workers, families, single parents, people with disability, jobseekers, students, First Nations peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people living in regional and remote areas, and any others affected by the process;
- (g) the impact of geography, age and other characteristics on the number of people receiving payments, long term unemployment and poverty;
- (h) the adequacy of income support payments in Australia and whether they allow people to maintain an acceptable standard of living in line with community expectations and fulfil job search activities (where relevant) and secure employment and training;
- (i) the economic cost of long-term unemployment, underemployment, poverty, inequality and inadequate income support payments;
- (j) the economic benefits – including job creation, locally and nationally – of increasing and improving income support payments and supports, and decreasing poverty and inequality;
- (k) the relationship between income support payment levels, minimum wages and wage stagnation in Australia and other comparable economies;
- (l) the interactions with other payments and services, including the loss of any increased payments through higher rents and costs;
- (m) the cost and fiscal sustainability of any changes;
- (n) the relative merits of alternative investments in health, education, housing and other programs to improve outcomes;
- (o) other countries' approaches to setting income support payments, minimum wages and awards;
- (p) other bodies that set payments, minimum wages and awards in Australia;
- (q) the role of independent and expert decision-making in setting payments; and
- (r) any other related matters.