

I am concerned at published comment arising hearings that constantly compares the SINGLES RATE for Newstart Allowance with the Minimum Wage earned by an individual.

This comparison ignores the fact that the minimum wage applicable to a single income family does not escalate in line with the number of dependants in that family but the Newstart Allowance does.

Whilst I have not got the contemporary details to hand I am reminded of a case brought to my attention whilst in office by the Police of a family whose numerous children were committing break and enter offences to obtain food when to quote the police officer the family welfare income was of the order of \$700 per week .

This contact was made in regards the intervention issue but highlights the fact that a family can receive much more in Newstart Allowance than the AFTER TAX INCOME of a single income family with a similar number of dependants. Whilst I recognize there may be other Government benefits available to that single income family the fact remains that it is unwise and wrong to make the simple comparison of single Newstart and the Minimum wage.

It was a common point of discussion in my electorate that certain highly employable individuals simply could not afford to go to work as their unemployment benefits far exceeded their personal net earning capacity.

I therefore submit that firstly the single unemployed person has plenty of employment opportunity especially when considering their mobility and a capacity to either live with their parents or enter cooperative rental arrangements. It is therefore a disincentive to their seeking employment if the minimum Newstart allowance is increased. Secondly the Newstart Allowance adjusted for dependants often exceeds the net salary available to single income families and therefore is also a disincentive to employment

Hon. Wilson Tuckey