



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE  
Senate Community Affairs References Committee

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## Senate inquiry into Newstart and related payments

Issue date: 26 July 2019

The Senate Community Affairs References Committee is conducting an inquiry into the adequacy of Newstart and related payments and alternative mechanisms to determine the level of income support payments in Australia.

The committee will be 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 'this inquiry will also look into a wide range of issues that interact with Newstart and other income support payments including impacts of the current approach, the changing nature of work, mechanisms that set payments, as well as the role of independent and expert decision-making in setting payments'.

### Call for submissions

The committee is seeking submissions from a wide range of people, including recipients of Newstart and other income support payments. The committee has requested that submissions be received by 13 September 2019.

The committee welcomes submissions from people receiving income support payments or others affected by the payments system, however, we would like to note that the committee does not have the ability to advise on, advocate for, or take action on individual cases.

If you would like to make a submission you may find it helpful to read the guide to making a submission available on the Senate website: [Preparing a submission to an inquiry](#).

If you have questions, or need more time to write your submission, please contact the Community Affairs secretariat.

Further information about the inquiry, including published submissions and hearing programs, is available on the committee website: [www.aph.gov.au/senate\\_ca](http://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.

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**DATE REFERRED**  
25 July 2019

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**SUBMISSIONS CLOSE**  
13 September 2019

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**NEXT HEARINGS**  
To be advised

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**REPORTING DATE**  
27 March 2020

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**  
Senator Rachel Siewert  
(Chair)  
Senator Wendy Askew  
(Deputy Chair)  
Senator Hollie Hughes  
Senator Malarndirri  
McCarthy  
Senator Deborah O'Neill  
Senator Anne Urquhart

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## **Attending a public hearing**

Most committee hearings are held in public and anyone is welcome to come and listen. The audio and video of each hearing will also be broadcast live on the internet:

[www.aph.gov.au/News\\_and\\_Events/Watch\\_Parliament](http://www.aph.gov.au/News_and_Events/Watch_Parliament)

Further information about what to expect when attending a Senate committee hearings is available on the Senate website: [Attending a public hearing](#)

## **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.