



HCASA Calls for a Raise in Newstart

The Newstart unemployment allowance has not changed in 25 years terms of its purchasing power. Over that period the cost of living has steadily risen. Newstart recipients get just \$38 a day - a level that is simply not viable. Not only does it force people on the allowance to struggle simply to survive, it is a real barrier to getting out to find and secure employment.

HCASA is proud to join with leading social advocacy bodies and business organisations including the Consumers Health Forum, SACOSS and ACOSS and The Business Council of Australia in calling on the Australian Government to raise the rate by \$75 a week. Doing so will yield widespread health benefits for disadvantaged South Australians. This is supported in the Government's own publication, "Australia's health 2018", which states that action on social determinants of health such as socio-economic status, 'is an appropriate way to tackle unfair and avoidable health inequalities'. The report cites one study's estimate that if action were taken on social determinants --- and the health gaps between the most and least disadvantaged closed -0.5 million Australians could be spared chronic illness, \$2.3 billion in annual hospital costs could be saved, and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme prescription numbers cut by 5.3 million (Brown et al.2012).

The World Health Organisation's "Commission on the Social Determinants of Health" concluded that;

"People with lower incomes typically have less money to spend taking care of themselves, whether paying for visits to the doctor, medicine, or healthy food. Stress associated with a lower income, especially during childhood, increases risk for heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes."

Raising the rate by \$75 a week for the 68,000 people receiving Newstart in SA would have a big positive impact on health and wellbeing and help contain demand on health care services over the longer term.