



Anti-Poverty Week Media Highlights 2021 – summary by theme, 17/2/21

We campaigned with our partners for solutions to unlocking poverty for all affected by poverty by raising income support about the poverty line and investment in social housing. We drew particular attention to

- the inadequacy of JobSeeker especially in the run up to the ending of the Coronavirus Supplement and 2021 pandemic lockdowns;
- families and children living in poverty (nationally, by State and within Federal electorates);
- the links between financial hardship and women trying to escape violence; and
- the unfolding housing affordability crisis, particularly in regional Australia.

These themes were all covered in the Executive Director's address to the **National Press Club Speech** on 17/11/21 which was broadcast live on ABC TV plus on iView and then [YouTube](#). It was live blogged by Guardian Australia and then covered by News Limited in The Australian, [Aussies in poverty tipped to rise, advocate warns](#), 17/11/21 and online [Aussies in poverty tipped to rise, advocate warns](#), 17/11/21, also [Cairns Post, 17/11/21](#).

Over **11.3 million Australians read or heard about poverty during APW** - at least 627 media items over 10 days, 16-25 October 2021. Radio= 278 (44%) 57% ABC and a very strong presence on regional radio; Online = 212 (34%) 19% News Corp; TV = 32 (5%) >50% commercial; Print = 29 (5%) 14 of 29 were News Corp.; Social = 76 (12%). This (>300 items). ABC Radio Adelaide devoted a slot in its afternoon show [Afternoons with Sonya Feldhoff](#) each day featuring a different aspect of poverty during APW and at least five Op Eds were published during the Week itself across multiple publications. [ABC Media Watch 25/10/21](#) also gave extensive coverage to APW. A round-up of APW featuring people directly affected by poverty speaking out and key themes and solutions was published by Women's Agenda, [This Anti-Poverty Week we saluted the brave voices of poverty](#), 5/11/21 and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Journal (ANMJ), [Raising income support and investing in social housing and rent assistance are the keys to unlocking poverty](#), 11 November.

Our work went beyond Anti-Poverty Week itself and throughout the year our media coverage did as well. Here is a selection of our coverage throughout 2021:

Inadequacy of JobSeeker especially in the 2021 lockdowns

- **ABC 7.30**, Laura Tingle, [What are the issues as Federal Parliament resumes tomorrow?](#), 1/2/21 cites data from DSS and Anti-Poverty Week: *"While job numbers have grown, the number of people receiving unemployment and other benefits has barely budged. By December, they stood at levels more than double a year earlier. In the PM's own electorate, for example, there were around 2,700 people on different kinds of income support before the pandemic. There are now more than 7,000. In other words, there's a whole lot of people, even in a comfortably middle-class place like the Shire, who face a rude shock at the end of March when they are suddenly finding themselves living on just \$40 a day. Perhaps this is why the*

PM was today leaving open the possibility of extending the payments even longer.” (Note [577,000 viewers](#) across 5 major capital cities.)

- Briefing for [What will be the economic fallout of cutting JobKeeper and JobSeeker](#), 4/2/21
Tingle: “At the peak of the crisis last year around one million extra people were getting government income support and there were almost one million businesses receiving JobKeeper.... The first is that while more people are being hired, the number of people on income support has barely shifted. Many of these people are on government support for the first time in their lives. If the government doesn't change its mind and increase the dole, they will find themselves on the old rate of \$40 a day at the end of next month. PHILIP LOWE: For me it's not really kind of a macro-economic management issue, it's a kind of fairness issue.”
- Age/SMH, Shane Wright and Jennifer Duke, [Bernie Fraser hits back at MPs criticising RBA boss' call to raise JobSeeker](#), 4/2/21 “Anti-Poverty Week, whose sponsors include universities, social services groups and some unions, emailed all Coalition MPs this week with figures showing more than 2 million Australians are receiving the supplement. The briefing included how many voters in each of their electorates are relying on the payment.”
- Fran Kelly RN Breakfast [We are better than this." Unemployment subsidy drops to \\$44 a day](#), 23/2/21
- ABC Insiders, 25/7/21; 3/10/21 and 23/10/21 – mentions Anti-Poverty Week analysis of people receiving Covid Disaster payments
- News Limited online, including Herald Sun, [Thousands seek aid from Foodbank as lockdowns plunge families into poverty](#), 27/7/21
- Laura Tingle's column Saturday “[As Gladys Berejiklian fell from the top of the power list, Scott Morrison literally raced out ahead of her with his own agenda](#),” 2/10/21 “According to data compiled by Anti-Poverty Week, there are currently 1.906 million people receiving disaster payments or boosted welfare payments, and 1,050,000 of them are in NSW.”
- ACOSS/UNSW report on the widening inequality gap between the wealthiest and those on the lowest incomes – covered by AAP newswire “Poor being left behind as nation surges ahead” in [Canberra Times](#), 1/10/21. Also ran in the [Western Advocate](#), The Daily Mail, The Examiner, Sunraysia Daily, Northern Beaches Review and The Border Mail.
- Vinnies says renters on JobSeeker are struggling to pay the rent and survive The Daily Telegraph – 19 October 2021, 1:00am AEDT by Caitlan Charles
- [Why Vinnies says JobSeeker increase will keep families from homelessness](#), Courier Mail, 21 October, Heidi Petith

Anglicare Australia report – supported coverage by liaising with ACOSS to provide access to people with lived experience of long-term unemployment for interviews:

- The [Australian Long term unemployed being left behind, Anglicare Australia report finds](#), 21/10/21 by Stephen Lunn

- ABC [The jobs market has improved, but thousands still locked out of work](#), finds Anglicare, Gareth Hutchens. Report release also covered by 7 News and the Canberra Times.
- Anti-Poverty Week | [How Australia can build a better system to beat poverty](#) The Newcastle Herald – 20 October 2021, Kelly Hansen and Brad Webb

Families and children living in poverty (nationally, by State and within Federal electorates)

- Life Course Centre Anti-Poverty Week Podcast, released 17/10/21, [“Anti-Poverty Week: Who experiences poverty in Australia and what can we do about it?”](#)
- Op Ed Sunday Territorian, *One in three NT kids in poverty*, Sally Sievers, NT A/Children’s Commissioner & Noelene Swanson, Save the Children NT & WA Director
- [Homeless tsunami: One in five kids living in poorest families](#), Sunday Mail, 17/10/21. Syndicated online in Adelaide Now, Cairns Post, Geelong Advertiser, Gold Coast Bulletin, Herald Sun.
- [ABC TV](#), 17/10/21 (go to 17:30 minute mark)
- [Paulene struggles to pay the bills each week and new research finds she's not alone](#), ABC online, 18/10/21
- [Poor Mums Go Without](#), Courier Mail, 18/10/21, page 8 (see attached) and online. Syndicated online throughout Australia: Daily Telegraph (NSW); Herald Sun (VIC); Geelong Advertiser (VIC); AdelaideNow(Advertiser)(SA); Cairns Post (QLD); Gold Coast Bulletin (QLD); Chronicle (Toowoomba) (QLD); Townsville Bulletin (QLD); Mercury (Hobart).
- WA report ABC online 18/10/21, [More than 94,000 WA children living in poverty, report finds, sparking calls for early intervention](#)
- [Now is the time to tackle child poverty as a national priority](#), Op Ed by The Smith Family CEO in Pro Bono, 20/10/21
- [How the Federal government abuses disadvantaged families and children](#), Croakey, 20/10/21 (coverage of BSL APW webinar)
- [More than 1 million children went hungry last year, report suggests](#), Guardian, 20/10/21. Other Foodbank Hunger Report 2021 coverage included: [ABC News Breakfast interview](#), ABC Radio National live interview (syndicated nationally), [The Two Murrays](#) (Syndicated to 2GB, 4BC and 3AW), News Corp Article by Di Jenkins, syndicated to the following: [News.com.au](#), [The Daily Telegraph](#), The Courier Mail, Adelaide Now, Gold Coast Bulletin, Townsville Bulletin, The Mercury, Toowoomba Chronicle, Geelong Advertiser, Northern Territory News, Herald Sun, Adelaide Advertiser. [SBS online](#), [Food and Drink Business](#), [The National Tribune](#), [Mirage News](#), [Retail World Magazine](#), [Convenience World Magazine](#), [Australian News Review](#), [Sight Magazine](#)
- ABC feature [Grandparents informal kinship carers fall through support gaps](#), 5/11/21 (also ran as AM national radio story same day), based on APW webinar hosted by QLD PeakCare in APW.
- CEDA, [Let’s Learn from the pandemic and choose to reduce child poverty in Australia](#), Toni Wren & Dr Andrew Charlton, 6/12/21

We worked with Flinders University on the media release of their research on poor kids missing out on extra-curricular activities during APW:

- The Conversation, [The kids who'd get the most out of extracurricular activities are missing out – here's how to improve access](#) by [Alexander William O'Donnell](#), Flinders University and [Gerry Redmond](#), Flinders University
- The Guardian story on Redmond research [Extracurricular activities benefit kids from poorer families most but access a problem Australian study finds](#)
- ABC RN Life Matters Wed 20 Oct 2021 – 20min [Extracurricular activities most beneficial for those least able to afford them](#) –Dr Alex O'Donnell, Research Associate Flinders University; Ali Elder, Manager Playford 10, parent and [Facebook post](#), generating 68 comments.

The links between financial hardship and women trying to escape violence

Opinion piece by Exec Director on ABC online on day of Women's Marches 4 Justice:

- ABC analysis online [Women's March 4 Justice and JobSeeker changes may seem worlds apart — but they're linked, 15/3/21](#)

[Media Release](#) of our [Fast Fact: Women, Violence and Poverty](#) ahead of the Women's Safety Summit:

- RN Breakfast, [The shocking link between poverty and family violence](#), 2/9/21
- The Australian, [Young domestic violence victims suffer financial hardship](#), 3/9/21

3/9/21/ stories and grabs run on: Macquarie National News - 2GB, 2UE and stations in each capital city; 2SM - and their 35 AM and FM radio stations; [National Public Radio News](#) - the national news service for more than 100 public radio stations across Australia.

Unfolding housing affordability crisis, particularly in regional Australia.

- [Anti-poverty organisations seek to support those living below the poverty line](#), Launceston Examiner, 4/10/21
- 11/10 Sent out joint media release - [Solving the housing crisis and lifting income support will alleviate crushing poverty](#) including quotes from Everybody's Home Campaign Director Kate Colvin, ACOSS Program Director and Raise the Rate for Good spokesperson Charmaine Crowe, APW Ed Toni Wren and lived experience spokesperson Ashlie Stevenson.
- This resulted in ABC RN Breakfast booking in Toni Wren for an interview at the start of APW on [Monday 18 October](#)
- Anti-Poverty Week nationally worked with [Radio Release](#) to create media stories for regional radio, based off the following [People on low incomes hit hard by skyrocketing regional rents](#), 18/10/21. This resulted in >300 items recorded: 96 QLD, 92 NSW, 77 VIC, 19 SA, 12 TAS, 6 WA, 3 each in ACT and NT. Also three Queensland ABC extended radio interviews:
 - [ABC Capricornia Morning Show](#) with Paul Culliver at 8.35am AEST (Toni Wren), 18/10/21 (starts at 2 hour mark);
 - [ABC Sunshine Coast Mornings](#) radio program with Sheridan Stewart (Toni Wren local NGO social housing provider [Coast2Bay](#)), 20/10/21 (listen from 20 mins in);
 - ABC Gold Coast Morning with Matt Webber (pre-recorded news feature with Toni Wren and a local Mission Australia program manager), 25/10/21 and this online story: [Rental squeeze means hundreds of teenagers need housing support on Gold Coast](#), 24/10/21
- [ABC News](#), NSW, NCOS report on women and need for social housing, 19/10/21.

- [Adelaide Advertiser, Op Ed](#), Steve Bevington, *Virus relief proved we can beat poverty*, 20/10/21
- [Social housing a priority this Anti-Poverty Week](#), by Dr Paul Royce, Katherine Times, 21/10/21

Thousands seek aid from Foodbank as lockdowns plunge families into poverty

NATASHA BITA, National Social Affairs Editor, News Corp Australia Network

July 27, 2021 10:13am

Lockdowns are forcing the pandemic poor to ask for food as charities struggle with soaring demand for help.

Foodbank has a backlog of more than 10,000 requests for food relief in NSW alone, while online searches for financial assistance through Infoxchange have surged 76 per cent in Victoria.

International students, who rely on casual work and get no welfare payments, have made 20,000 requests for food hampers since the start of the lockdown in Sydney.

Fifty-year-old single mother Clare, from locked-down Bankstown in western Sydney, can barely afford to buy food after losing two of her three part-time jobs, and is selling her own clothing and children's toys online to raise cash.

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Clare, who did not want to be identified, said she had lost part-time work in a factory, and then in a creche inside a gym, as a result of lockdowns and now survives on JobSeeker.

Working part-time for a food charity, she has \$200 a week to spend on food, electricity, transport and medical bills after paying \$450 a week on her mortgage, which was paused during last year's lockdown.

"Groceries and petrol have increased so much over the last year, I used to be able to feed us for \$50 a week but it is easily double that now," she said.

"I'm trying to find things I can sell in the house - kids' toys and clothes and personal belongings."



Clare takes leftover vegetables from her bare fridge.

Clare and her 10-year-old daughter, who has autism, eat cheap cuts of meat a couple of times a week, and often just steamed potatoes for lunch.

“If I lose another job I don’t know how I’m going to buy potatoes,” she said.

Clare, who does not qualify for any federal government disaster payments despite losing work, said she wished people would “stop being so judgemental”.

“People really need help,” she said.

“There are plenty of people who cannot work from home.”

Australians on social security payments such as JobSeeker do not qualify for any Covid-19 disaster payments, even if they have lost the casual work they relied on to top up welfare payments.

Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) chief executive Cassandra Goldie said charities were struggling with a “huge surge in financial distress” among people in lockdowns.

She urged the federal government to lift payments for all people without work to \$600 per week, and to reintroduce a targeted JobKeeper payment for industries hardest hit by lockdowns.

“There are now one million people in lockdown receiving social security payments such as JobSeeker or Youth Allowance,” she said.

“Many have lost part-time work that they relied on to supplement the paltry social security payments due to the lockdown.”



Foodbank volunteers Zoe Templeton and Anthony Deamon prepare hampers for the poor. Photo: Annette Dew

Foodbank Australia chief executive Brianna Casey said 10,000 residents were on a waiting list for free food in Sydney, the Central coast and Wollongong, where more than 12,000 hampers had been distributed this month.

“We are seeing a new working poor,” she said.

“We have people who have worked really hard all their lives suddenly finding themselves in need of food relief.

“When you are living from paycheck to paycheck, it only takes one missing paycheck before you find yourself in financial distress.

“People are choosing between heating and eating.”



Dr

Cassandra Goldie is the CEO of ACOSS. Picture: Supplied

Ms Casey said single parents, international students, temporary visa holders and welfare recipients – as well as people in quarantine – were all struggling to pay bills as lockdowns stopped them working.

“They’ve had their casual employment dry up,” she said.

“We’re seeing a lot of families with young children, and particularly single parent households.

“What breaks my heart is that we find there are mums out there who have waited days because they were so ashamed asking for help to get food for their children.”

Foodbank is now processing up to 3500 food hampers a day in NSW – as many as it used to process in an entire week before the pandemic hit.

Terese Edwards, CEO, National Council of Single Mothers and their Children, said single parents were overwhelmed with home schooling while trying to earn a living.



Many

families left jobless through lockdowns can't afford to pay basic bills. Photo: iStock

Anti-Poverty Week executive director Toni Wren said one in six Australian children were living in poverty, and families reliant on welfare were struggling with rent, food and home schooling during lockdowns.

“Too many may not even be able to afford the internet access, others may have multiple children sharing a single device,” she said.

Justice Connect chief executive Chris Povey said some elderly Australians were suffering abuse in lockdown, and families too poor to pay rent were being evicted into homelessness.

“We see many struggling to pay the rent, unable to put food on the table and missing out on essential health care needs,” he said.



Every day 1128 children in the NT do not have somewhere safe to sleep. Picture: iStock

One in three NT kids in poverty



SUNDAY marks the start of Anti-Poverty Week, a time to ask ourselves if we are willing to accept the staggering rates of poverty in our communities. Right now in Australia, one of the wealthiest nations in the world, more than three million people live in poverty.

Australia was shocked during Covid-19 by queues of people outside Centrelink needing assistance, highlighting how easy it can be to lose stable employment and slip into poverty.

With wages not growing at the same rate as the soaring costs of living, a severe shortage of affordable housing and no significant raise in social support payments, more and more Australian families and children are finding themselves trapped below the poverty line.

More than 17 per cent of Australian children live in poverty. In the Territory that rate is even higher, with more than 15,000 children and young people affected. It means almost one in three children in the NT is living in poverty, feeling the effects across every aspect of their lives and often into adulthood.

Families are finding themselves forced into impossible decisions. Children not telling their parents about after-school activities and excursions because they know they cannot afford them. Families choosing between new school uniforms and food on the table. Parents forced to skip important

medications or fixing their car, further restricting their work options. Examples such as these show that for a child, experiencing poverty is so much more than monetary need.

Research shows that children living in poverty eat fewer fruit and vegetables, and have poorer mental and physical health. They attend school less frequently and have difficulties learning at home.

Financial strains on their household mean children can be denied healthy relationships with their family and friends, and become more isolated as a result. Ultimately they are more likely to leave school early and have difficulty transitioning from education to work.

By the time they reach adulthood they are far more likely to self-harm, commit crime, or to suffer adult poverty than a child who grew up in a "never poor" household.

The good news is that none of this is inevitable. We know the solutions, and know how effective they can be. If Covid-19 served to highlight how easily people could fall into hardship, it also demonstrated how clearly public policy and intervention can empower communities and help them out of poverty with income supplements and employment supports.

It meant families had enough to cover the basics, such as healthy food, clothing and after-school

activities for the kids. Importantly, it gave children and parents a break from the mental and physical stress that increases hardship. For some, it provided the means to escape violence that they had not had before.

These solutions are critical for the NT.

Every day 1128 children in the Territory do not have somewhere safe to sleep. Securing affordable homes in the form of more available housing and increased rent assistance must be a priority. Permanently increasing social security payments will help to shield families from falling into poverty when they cannot secure employment. Living on \$40 a day (the basic rate of Youth Allowance) while trying to pay rent and study is a denial of basic human rights and dignity for the members of our community most at need. A recent survey of young people on Youth Allowance found nine in 10 skip meals and one in three has withdrawn from studies because of a lack of funds.

We also need to set serious goals for full employment, with a map of how to get there. Flexible employment and training opportunities that are lasting, meaningful and appropriate for NT communities are needed in order to give Territorians the tools to permanently pull themselves above the poverty line.

The evidence is clear that by investing in children and families

**SALLY
SIEVERS
AND
NOELENE
SWANSON**

before they become entrenched in poverty, public costs are reduced in terms of healthcare, homelessness services, justice and unemployment. Put simply, we cannot afford not to.

So this Anti-Poverty Week show that you are not willing to accept poverty in our communities. Start the conversation with your friends, family, colleagues and politicians. Support community campaigns such as Raise the Rate and Everybody's Home.

It is time to treat all children fairly, and ensure they have enough to cover the basics and a roof over their head.

You can learn more about poverty in Australia today by going to antipovertyweek.org.au

SALLY SIEVERS IS THE ACTING NT CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER AND NOELENE SWANSON IS THE SAVE THE CHILDREN AUSTRALIA NT & WA DIRECTOR

Poor left behind as nation surges ahead

National



Research shows Australians doing it toughest have been held further behind over the past 20 years.

The financial gap between Australia's haves and have nots continues to widen, according to research tracking income support over the past two decades.

Australian Income Support Since 2000: Those Left Behind examines the prospects of people without paid work and sole parents compared to the wider community.

The study, which is being launched on Sunday to mark Anti-Poverty Week, notes median household incomes have grown 45 per cent since June 2000 with Age and Disability Support Pensions almost keeping pace.

However those receiving unemployment and single parent income support payments have been badly cast adrift, says ACOSS CEO Dr Cassandra Goldie.

"Those doing it toughest have been held further behind, making it that much harder to look after their health and families, as well as participate in the workforce," she said.

"Apart from the brief period when the coronavirus supplement was paid, the performance of the income support system during this period of robust economic growth has left whole groups of people further and further behind."

Professor Carla Treloar, who is director of the University of NSW Centre for Social Research in Health, says there's a clear discrepancy between different forms of income support.

"If it's good enough for the Age Pension to keep pace with broader income growth we need to ask why the same principle does not apply to support for the unemployed and sole parents," she said.

Since the turn of the century, Australia's minimum wage has risen 23.5 per cent while the single pension has gone up 52 per cent.

For sole parents with a child under eight, payments have risen 27.2 per cent but those with children over eight have received an increase of just 7.9 per cent over the past 20 years.

The unemployment payment rate has also fallen in comparison.

The percentage of people receiving lower payments who have a partial capacity to work has jumped from five per cent in 2007 to 33 per cent in 2021, while the percentage of sole parents on the lower JobSeeker unemployment payment has gone from zero to 28 per cent since 2000.

Australian Associated Press

Originally published as [Desperate Aussie mum can't feed kids on \\$50 a week](#)

Homeless tsunami: One in five kids living in poorest families

With Queensland's poorest families struggling to survive on welfare payments, thousands of children are at risk of homelessness.



Domanii Cameron state political reporter

@domaniicameron

October 17, 2021 - 12:00AM

The Sunday Mail (Qld)

QLD Politics

Thousands of Queensland children are at risk of becoming homeless because of a shortage of affordable housing, as concerning new figures reveal families are struggling to survive on welfare payments.

Over one in five kids are growing up in the poorest families across the state, with advocates warning the issue would only get worse if the State and Federal governments don't act now.

They've called for the State Government to produce a plan addressing poverty and more social housing ahead of Anti-Poverty Week that begins today.

Micah Projects CEO Karyn Walsh told *The Sunday-Mail* the growing issue wasn't being resolved.

"We see this every day at the moment – it's the consequences of the housing market and people taking rentals off to sell. They may or may not come back as rentals," she said.

"It's been going on for years, it's (poverty) just growing, it's not getting resolved."

Nearly 600,000 adults and children are struggling to survive on income payments that are "well below the poverty line" – equalling nearly one in nine Queenslanders – according to new data compiled by the country's peak advocates.

The bodies claim the Commonwealth's Rent Assistance hasn't had a real increase in over two decades, and only covers a third or a quarter of rent.

It comes as rental prices have increased upwards of 33 per cent in some areas across Queensland.

Maddie Henaway, 25, has been living in social housing for three years and has experienced different forms of homelessness throughout her life.

The mother said she wanted to move out but the lack of affordable housing was holding her back.

“I don’t earn a great deal and I’m competing with couples who both work full-time and have pretty good incomes,” she said.

Ms Henaway said the Commonwealth needed to raise rental assistance while there also needed to be more affordable housing options.

Mums can't eat as bills pile up

Queensland mothers are pretending to have dinner to give their kids more in a shocking poverty crisis that is worsening due to inadequate rental assistance and growing living costs.



Jackie Sinnerton

@JSinnerton

October 18, 2021 - 12:00AM

QLD News

Queensland mothers are pretending to have already had dinner so their kids can eat in a shocking poverty crisis that is deepening due to rent assistance covering only one quarter of the actual rent bill.

More than one in five children or 212,300 of the state's children are raised in the poorest of homes and are on the precipice of homelessness.

"Poverty affects far too many Australian children and families, diminishing their lives now and in the future. As one of the wealthiest countries in the world, it's not right that one in five children grow up in poverty. Not having enough money to cover the necessities restricts daily life and crushes hope for the future." Anne Hodge, acting State director, Save the Children said.



Karyn Walsh, CEO of Micah Projects. Photo Steve Pohlner

“We hear shocking stories of mothers pretending they’ve eaten dinner while cooking when there’s not enough food to feed the whole family. We’ve also heard of children telling their younger siblings to drink less milk and not even telling their parents about after school activities and excursions because they know the family cannot afford them,” she said.

Over 380,000 households in Queensland are receiving inadequate Commonwealth Rent Assistance which hasn’t seen a real increase in 21 years and only covers a third or a quarter of actual rent paid.

“Raising income support above the poverty line and government investment in social housing are the keys to unlocking poverty this Anti-Poverty Week,” Karyn Walsh, chief executive of Micah Projects said.

“Children can thrive and be healthy when they have what they need to develop well. To treat all children in Australia fairly, we need to ensure every family has enough money to cover the basics and a secure roof over their head.

“The weekly asking rent for all houses in Brisbane and regional Queensland has increased exponentially during the last financial year.



Advocates say raising income support above the poverty line and investing in social housing will help Australian children get what they need.

“Even the Government’s own Treasury review concluded “The maximum value of Commonwealth Rent Assistance has not kept pace with market rents, especially for low-income renters,” she said.

Lindsay Wegener, executive director of PeakCare has called for Governments to unlock poverty for millions of Australians by raising income support above the poverty line and investing in social housing.

“To treat all Australian children fairly, we need to ensure every family has enough money to cover basics as well as a secure roof over their head,” he said.

Nationally, 2.65 million adults and children struggle to survive on income payments that are well below the poverty line with 940,000 children growing up in the poorest families.



Poor mums go without

Rent hikes drive poverty spike

JACKIE SINNERTON

QUEENSLAND mothers are pretending to have dinner so their kids can eat in a shocking poverty crisis that is deepening due to rent assistance covering only one-quarter of the actual rent bill.

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Concerns that ending COVID support payments will exacerbate rent stress

On RN Breakfast with Fran Kelly

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/13596840>

Millions of people in Victoria are looking forward to emerging from a long lockdown this week but there are warnings tens of thousands of people will be at risk of losing their accommodations.

Welfare advocates are warning that with COVID support payments being phased out, many workers will struggle to afford rent in the regions where rental prices continue to soar.

Guest: Toni Wren, Executive Director of Anti-Poverty Week

Producer:

Marina Freri

Duration: 8min 29sec

Broadcast: Mon 18 Oct 2021, 9:00am

Paulene struggles to pay the bills each week and new research finds she's not alone

By [Rachel McGhee](#)

Posted Mon 18 Oct 2021 at 7:46amMonday 18 Oct 2021 at 7:46am, updated Mon 18 Oct 2021 at 12:43pmMonday 18 Oct 2021 at 12:43pm



Paulene and her daughter, Tabitha, are exhausted from "just surviving". (ABC News: Rachel McGhee)

abc.net.au/news/queensland-600-000-queenslanders-living-in-poverty/100545918

Queensland single mother Paulene dreams of the day she can afford everything on her grocery list, but with rent to pay, a young mouth to feed and a casual retail job with uncertain hours, she is worried she never will.

Key points:

- Research shows one-in-five children in Queensland live in poverty
- Advocacy groups are calling on more investment in social housing and income support
- A survey finds only 44 rentals across the country were affordable for a single parent

"Some weeks you're just exhausted from surviving," she said.

Paulene and her 10-year-old daughter, Tabitha, are among nearly 600,000 Queenslanders living in poverty, according to new research released to mark Anti-Poverty Week.

"Nine times out of 10, by the time we get to the end of the week, I'm overdrawn by anywhere between \$20 to \$50 because the money just isn't there," Paulene said.

"It would be so nice to have a bill come in and be able to pay it."

For Tabitha, it's hard watching her mum struggle.

"It's really hard to watch her do all these things and [I] just can't do anything," Tabitha said.

"I wish I could actually have money but I can't because I'm a child."

Research shows one-in-five children in Queensland live in poverty, with many at risk of homelessness due to a shortage of affordable housing, according to PeakCare executive director Lindsay Wegener.

"That's simply appalling. We can't, in a wealthy country like Australia, tolerate that," Ms Wegener said.

"We need to ensure every family has enough money to cover basics as well as a secure roof over their heads."



It's not always obvious, but around 600,000 Queenslanders are living in poverty, new research shows. (ABC News: Liz Pickering)

Keys to unlocking poverty

Advocacy groups are calling on state and federal governments to invest more in social housing and income support.

Brisbane homelessness charity Micah Projects' chief executive Karyn Walsh said Federal Rent Assistance was not high enough for families to survive, only covering a third of rent.

"The weekly asking rents for all houses in Brisbane and regional Queensland has increased exponentially during the last financial year," Ms Walsh said.

"Raising income support above the poverty line and government investment in social housing are the keys to unlocking poverty."

Data from Anglicare's rental affordability snapshot surveyed more than 74,000 rentals across the country in March 2021.



Micah Projects chief executive Karyn Walsh says federal assistance is only covering a third of the rent.(ABC News: Baz Ruddick)

It found only 44 were affordable for a single parent with a child over eight years old receiving the single parenting payment.

A spokesperson for federal Social Services Minister Anne Ruston said released a statement.

"This government is providing record support for Australians doing it tough, such as our \$50-per-fortnight increase to the rate of JobSeeker and related payments, the single-largest increase in more than 30 years," the statement said.

"On top of that, we provided \$32 billion in emergency support payments to income support recipients during the height of the pandemic.

"Our focus is now firmly on reopening the economy because we know the best form of welfare is a job."

A departmental spokesperson for the Queensland Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy said it was investing billions in social housing.

"As part of this year's state budget, we committed a \$2.9 billion total housing investment, including the establishment of a \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund, to underpin the Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025," the spokesperson said.

"This is the largest concentrated investment in social housing in Queensland's history.

"The \$2.9 billion investment includes \$1.9 billion over four years under the Queensland Housing Investment Growth Initiative (QHIGI) to commence 7,400 new social and affordable homes, boost housing supply and increase housing and homelessness support across Queensland."

In 'survival mode'

For people like Paulene, it's not enough to pull her over the poverty line.

Paulene [spoke to the ABC in September 2020 about the relief she felt when the JobSeeker payment was doubled as a result of the pandemic.](#)

She said it granted her greater access to the basic necessities most Australians can afford. But that all disappeared when JobSeeker ended in March 2021.



Paulene said JobSeeker allowed her to stock her fridge with fresh food.(ABC News: Chris Gillette)

"There are some weeks where we get towards the end of the week and I realise I don't have enough petrol to do something.

"I'll skip meals to make sure the kids eat. Even these days, with foodbanks and things, you can still [find] some weeks there are so many bills to pay and to cover rent."

She said the increase of \$50 every fortnight had helped, but it was not enough.

"The \$50 for raising the rate was great but another \$100 a week, it would take everybody out of survival mode."

Posted 18 Oct 2021 18 Oct 2021, updated 18 Oct 2021

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-10-18/queensland-600-000-queenslanders-living-in-poverty/100545918>

Food insecurity hits kids during ‘most challenging time on record’

Diana Jenkins, Wednesday 20 October, 2021

Foodbank’s Hunger Report 2021 reveals a spiralling harm to the nation’s children that has been hiding behind the pandemic.

Australia’s 1.2 million hungry children are the shocking Covid-led wake up call of Foodbank’s Hunger Report 2021, with Foodbank Australia CEO Brianna Casey calling the past 18 months “the most challenging time on record.”

“The massive concern for us is not only those one in six Australian adults who haven’t had enough to eat, but on top of that a further 1.2 million children have gone hungry through that same period,” Ms Casey said.

“The effect on wellbeing, future prospects (and their) ability to absorb information in class? We have to look at all aspects of mental health and wellbeing for Australian children and we know that having access to enough food and the right food is critically important to a child’s ability to thrive.”

Ms Casey welcomed children’s long awaited return to the classroom so school breakfast programs could resume nationwide.

“Starting the day well with a full tummy is (critical) to a child’s ability to engage in class, to participate in learning,” she said.

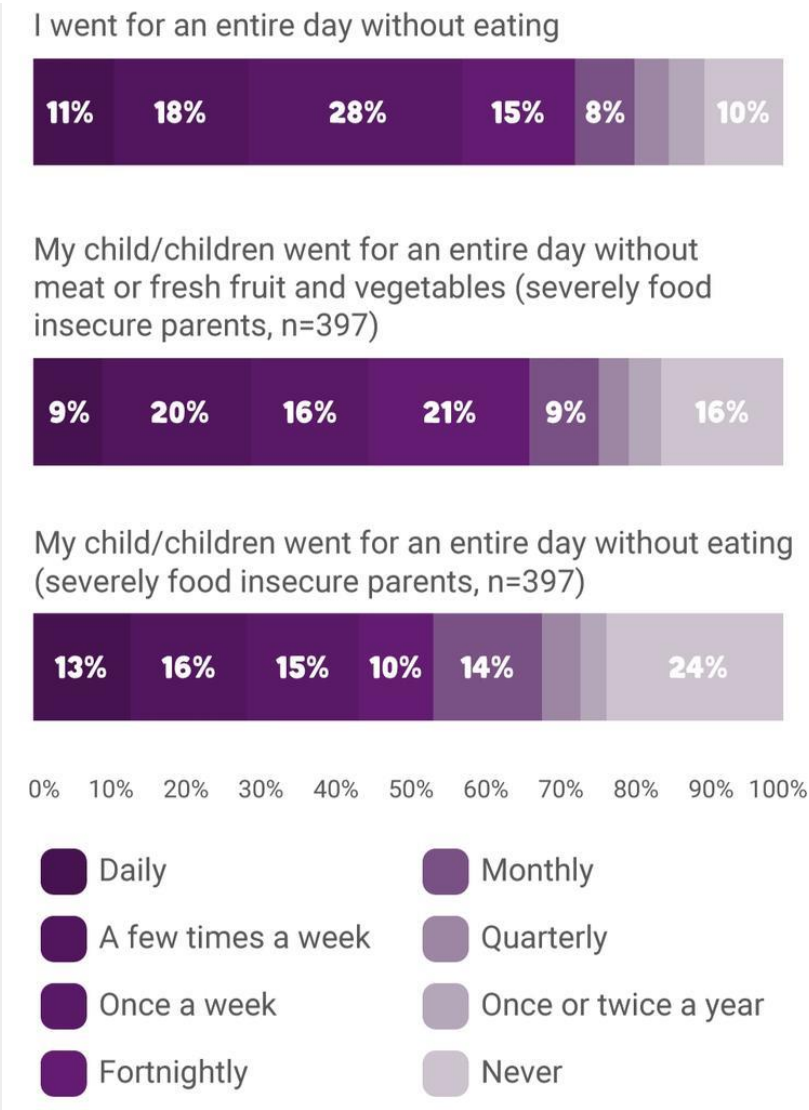
Despite Australia producing “enough food in this country to feed ourselves three times over”, Foodbank distributed more food in the last 12 months than in any time in its history to more than a million people each month, Ms Casey said.

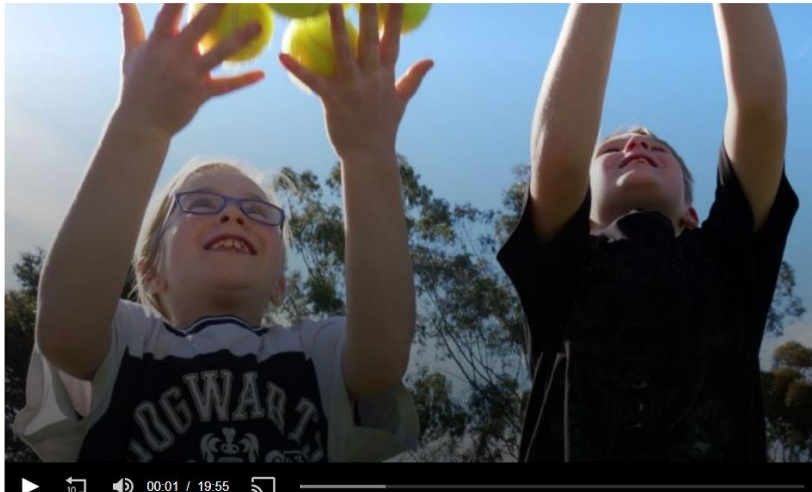
In the past 12 months, Foodbank has distributed more food than in any time in its history. Infographic source: Foodbank Hunger Report 2021/supplied

“Whether there’s a natural disaster or a pandemic, an increasing number of Australians are not able to access the food and groceries they need or the quality of food they need to be able to sustain their family,” she said.

“If you can’t fill your child’s lunch box, if you can’t give them breakfast, if you are an older Australian who is skipping eating for an entire day a week ... please (contact) us.”

Released Wednesday, the annual Hunger Report challenges key assumptions about who accesses emergency food relief, finding that 64 per cent of Australians experiencing food insecurity are in paid emplo





Full episode • 54min 40sec

The benefits of extracurricular activities, babies and music, and YouTube goes wild for Mark the farmer19mins
55secs**Extracurricular activities most beneficial for those least able to afford them**14mins
53secs

The value of musical play for babies and toddlers

15mins 8secs

More than a quarter of a million people have watched this man do his job

Extracurricular activities most beneficial for those least able to afford them

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/lifematters/extracurricular-activities-most-beneficial-for-those-least-able/13593288>

New research from Flinders University has found activities like organised sport, dance and drama outside of school can be beneficial for all children.

But these activities are less likely to be available to children in medium and low-income families, despite these children benefiting the most from them.

Guests:

Dr Alex O'Donnell, Research Associate and expert in developmental psychology at Flinders University

Christine Lane, parent of a child who plays rugby league outside school via Playford 10, a project that reduces barriers for kids participating in extracurricular activities

Ali Elder (voice memos), Manager of [Playford 10](#)

Duration: 19min 55sec

Broadcast: Wed 20 Oct 2021, 9:06am

Virus relief proved we can beat poverty



STEVE BEVINGTON

COVID-19 has been a major disaster. The pandemic has caused significant distress and upheaval around the world.

The most distressing aspect being, of course, the loss of human life and the health crisis that continues to generate uncertainty in our lives.

But, strangely, some positive measures have been taken in Australia to improve the lives of the most disadvantaged in our communities. Covid-19 payments provided to people on income support, and those who lost their jobs, during the pandemic temporarily lifted almost a million Australians out of poverty.

Actions taken by most state governments to temporarily house people sleeping rough

provided respite to thousands and undoubtedly prevented many deaths. Both measures – the increase in income support and provision of housing for people experiencing homelessness – demonstrated we can end poverty in Australia. A secure income and stable, affordable housing are the two basic needs we have as humans.

During this, Anti-Poverty Week, the call to action is to raise income support and to invest in social housing as the way forward to lift more than 3.4 million Australians out of poverty.

The idea it is impossible to end poverty was disproved by the actions of the very people who say it is an insurmountable task.

Not only did the increase to income-support payments during Covid-19 help low-income households, it boosted the economy. The rapid response to housing people sleeping rough was a clear vin-

dication of our ability to end street homelessness.

But measures taken by governments were temporary stopgap solutions instead of an opportunity to create the enduring social change needed to address growing disadvantage. Housing-and-income security is not just a problem for low-income earners. It is every-

one's problem, and we have a collective responsibility to eradicate homelessness.

a secure home, and enough income to provide adequate food, health care and education, is a sign of a civilised society. The federal government is in a strong position to resolve the supply issue which has not kept pace with housing need within Australia's growing population.

It is well recognised we have

The call to action is to raise income support and to invest in social housing

We are at a crossroads. We can continue to pretend these issues are too big to solve, or we can acknowledge it took a pandemic to prompt government interventions which improved the lives of millions without harming the economy.

Access to affordable housing, and a universal income, is the way out of poverty. Having

social-housing models the government can affordably invest in. This kind of investment will increase economic activity, increase employment and reduce the causes of poverty. We can all do our bit by demanding something good comes out of this pandemic.

The first step is to lift the rate of income support and invest heavily in social housing.

STEVE BEVINGTON IS COMMUNITY HOUSING MANAGING DIRECTOR

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News.com.au report on Toni Wren's National Press Club address,

[Aussies in poverty tipped to rise, advocate warns](#), 17/11/21



Finance > Economy

Number of Aussies in poverty tipped to rise, advocate warns

The pandemic has 'supercharged' the housing affordability crisis with the number of people in poverty tipped to rise. Here's who will be worse off.



Melissa Iaria

 @Mel_Iaria

 2 min read November 17, 2021 - 6:15PM

NCA NewsWire

