

The adequacy of the allowance payment system for jobseekers and others, the appropriateness of the allowance payment system as a support into work and the impact of the changing nature of the labour market.

Dear Committee Secretary,

I wish to present the following submission into the inquiry.

I put the case to the Committee that for a society to function properly, and for all people to enjoy the basic human rights to which they are entitled, there must be adequate government support under all circumstances to prevent them from falling into poverty. Further, there are obvious comparisons linking societal dysfunction with financial inequality (US vs Denmark is one) When allowances fall below the basic cost of living, the resultant stress on individuals prevents them from presenting properly for potential employment, ie; worn clothing, poor nutrition, sleep deprivation from stress, poor dental hygiene, inadequate time to prepare resumes because of being compelled to attend arduous and often inappropriate or irrelevant interviews and training sessions. Inadequate income also presents difficulties in accessing appropriate transport to reach interviews and training.

People in poverty are disproportionately represented in the health and legal systems, often making the saving on allowances a false economy.

Families living in poverty do not have the resources to properly engage in and resource their children's education. This inevitably results in generational poverty, which eventually erodes national character, pride and identity, and retards the development of culture and industry. The argument often made that low benefits are the best incentive to force people into the workforce is disingenuous and cruel. Society is made up of a great variety of people, all with varying capabilities and ambitions. Underpayment of allowances often just condemns less competitive and capable or just unfortunate people into abject poverty, whilst ignoring the natural ambition and search for meaning through work and career which most people are driven by. Unscrupulous elements of the business sector lobby for minimum allowance payments so that people are desperate enough to accept inadequate wages. This process is a denial of justice and must be identified for what it is, and discredited.

Australia is a wealthy country, and everyone is entitled to be free from poverty.

Yours Sincerely,

Don Stokes