

SUBMISSION TO THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION

I urge the Productivity Commission to use its considerable influence with Federal Government to strongly recommend the substantial increase required to the lifting of the Jobseeker income so that it reaches at least the poverty line.

This will enable unemployed Australians and their families enough income for the basic requirement of enough to eat. It will enable also unemployed Australians to more easily access the job market by regular income for phone credit, travelling expenses and suitable clothes for any interviews available and everyday life. This will increase productivity in the nation.

It will also be the means of decreasing much of the mental stress and anxiety of people not knowing where their next meal is coming from – for themselves as individuals and the terrible burden of feeling responsible for their children having to miss meals. As well all the difficulties of not having funds for everyday expenses associated with schooling and life in general.

The 2024 statistics available revealed the shameful number of 3 and a half *million* Australian families who currently have to skip meals – who are experiencing hunger in our nation which is one of the richest countries in the world. In October 2024 Anti-Poverty Week there was released another related shameful statistic revealing that 716,000 of these Australians are children or young people.

Apart from humanitarian justice for Australian citizens, this statistic of course raises the question of how are these young Australians going to have sufficient personal resources to contribute to their country's productivity when their basic personal needs are being denied in their formative years

Federal Governments of either persuasion have long resisted calls to directly raise Jobseeker income to any reasonable living level – that is, at least to the poverty line. Before the May 2025 election Jobseeker was raised to below \$5 – this was a humiliating 'increase.' Current Treasury can point to other increases or benefits such as decreasing the HECS amount while continuing to resist strongly any calls – or evidence of the need for calls- of a direct substantial increase in Jobseeker.

In the meantime funds are needing to be spent in the health and other departments as a result of consequences for people and their families struggling with the impossible task of living below the poverty line with basic needs unmet. Countries such as Finland with far more evenly structured across the board income for its citizens prove that governments can succeed in making a priority of a genuine 'fair go' for all. Productivity itself also thrives.

Thank you for receiving my brief submission on this urgent matter which does have relevance for this and other reviews the Productivity Commission is currently undertaking at the request of the Federal Government of Australia.

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