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Dear Kate

Thank you for writing to the Australian Labor Party with the Economic Justice Australia candidate survey.

The Albanese Labor Government is committed to a strong and sustainable social safety net that provides support to those most in need, when they need it.

Labor has made significant investments to strengthen the safety net, providing an additional \$11.5 billion for social security payments.

This includes delivering a \$40 per fortnight increase to working-age and student payments, including JobSeeker. In recognition that some people can face additional barriers to finding employment and need more support, we also expanded eligibility for the higher rate of Jobseeker to Australians aged 55 and over who are on payment for nine months or more, and to those with an assessed partial capacity to work of 0-14 hours per week.

Since Labor was elected, the base rate of JobSeeker for single recipients with no dependent children has increased by \$138 a fortnight or 22 per cent. This is an extra \$3,600 in additional support in people's pockets each year.

It is important to remember that everyone who receives JobSeeker is eligible for at least one additional supplementary payment which could include the Energy Supplement, Family Tax Benefit and/or Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

We've delivered the first back-to-back increases to Commonwealth Rent Assistance in over 30 years, to help people on income support, pensioners and low-income families to manage rental pressures. Combined with indexation, this means maximum rates of rent assistance have increased by 45 per cent since Labor was elected.

In addition, for single parents who face the difficult challenge of balancing work and care on their own, the Government has expanded eligibility for Parenting Payment Single until their youngest child turns 14, up from 8.

These measures have been complemented by the comprehensive cost of living relief delivered by the Albanese Government to ease pressure on households. This includes a tax cut for every Australian taxpayer, two rounds of relief to help households with their energy bills, cheaper medicines on the PBS, freezing social security deeming rates and record investments to strengthen Medicare to make it cheaper to see a GP and establish more Urgent Care clinics.

Labor will always do what we can to provide support to people who need it. We've said we'll look at payment rates as part of every Budget, and we'll continue to do that.

The Albanese Labor Government has invested in Services Australia and reducing processing and call waiting times.

Labor has invested in an extra 4,000 staff into Services Australia. As a result phones are answered faster – congestion messaging is down 93 per cent.

We are now paying people faster:

- Older Australians are waiting 52 days less to get the Pension
- Parents are waiting 28 days less for parental leave
- Carers are waiting 59 days less to get a Carer Payment
- Job seekers are waiting 19 days less
- People used to wait 68 days for the low income card, now they only wait 16 days

We will continue to resource Services Australia so call waiting and processing times are reasonable.

The Albanese Labor Government abolished the punitive ParentsNext program and modernised mutual obligations rules to give job seekers more flexibility. We will keep working to build a model that provides pathways to secure jobs for people looking for work.

Thank you for writing to the ALP.

Yours sincerely

ALP Campaign 2025