

Catholic Welfare Australia

Media Release



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Welfare to Work announcements the first steps in a long journey

Catholic Welfare Australia's Executive Director, Mr Frank Quinlan, responded cautiously to announcements by Minister Kevin Andrews affecting the Government's Welfare to Work Package

"Today's announcements are welcome changes to the original proposals, particularly changes to suspension and breaching, and exemptions for some small groups of job seekers. These changes represent steps in the right direction, but they are only the first steps in a long journey. We look forward to continuing discussions with Government on these important issues," said Mr Quinlan.

"The Government has listened to some of our concerns regarding suspension and breaching, but there are many more issues that must be addressed as the Welfare to Work package is implemented." Mr Quinlan said.

"The fundamentals of a sound welfare to work package are: adequate income support, education and training, and job creation. Today's announcements only relate to the first of these. Investment in education and job creation remains inadequate," said Mr Quinlan.

"We know for instance that 60% of single mothers receiving benefits have a year 10 education or less," said the Executive Director of Catholic Welfare Australia, Mr Frank Quinlan. "ABS data reported in the media only two days ago showed that 97.5% of the 236,000 jobs created last year went to people with skills and a university degree, a TAFE diploma or equivalent work experience," Mr Quinlan said.

"The job seekers we encounter want desperately to work. To achieve this they need a solid foundation of income support so that they can survive adequately and look for work, they need opportunities to complete further education and re-training, and they often need intensive support as they re-enter the workforce," said Mr Quinlan.

"The proposal as it stands will still see reductions in income support payments to people who exist at or below the poverty line and will still see some people without any income support at all for periods up to 8 weeks," concluded Mr Quinlan.

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