

JOINT STATEMENT OF CONCERN REGARDING AUSTRALIA'S SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

We, the undersigned, would like to express our deep concern regarding Australia's punitive social security system and growing employment crisis.

At the 'Solving Our Employment Crisis' Conference held in Melbourne earlier this year, all organisations present agreed on the importance of working together to demand the Turnbull Government address Australia's employment crisis and the punitive social security system. This statement will be the first of many joint campaigns to this end.

With 18 job seekers competing for every job vacancy in Australia, millions of Australians are being condemned to lives below the poverty line due to no fault of their own. Despite this jobs crisis, the Turnbull Government continues to reinforce stigma surrounding the unemployed and social security recipients by adopting a punitive approach, which has led to the criminalization of poor Australians.

It is imperative that all parties in the Federal Parliament take responsibility for Australia's worsening employment crisis and work together to implement new policies to support Australians without work.

While the purpose of the conference was not to reach agreement on detailed policies, below is a list of policy changes that effectively all organisations present at the conference expressed similar positions on:

- **Abolish Work for the Dole and Community Development Program (CDP)**
- **Raise Newstart (currently \$392 below the Henderson poverty line per fortnight) and Youth Allowance**
- **Implement a federal job guarantee program**
- **Provide adequate income security for older people**
- **Reverse changes to the single parent pension**
- **Abolish mandatory income management**
- **Make necessary and positive changes to the punitive employment services industry**
- **Loosen eligibility requirements for Disability Support Pension (DSP)**

These changes would help millions of low income Australians out of poverty. We strongly urge all members of Parliament to carefully consider our suggestions.

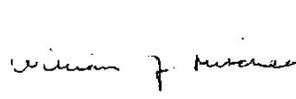
Signatories:



Ged Kearney
President
Australian Council of Trade Unions



Dr. Cassandra Goldie
CEO
Australian Council of Social Services



William Mitchell
Professor of Economics/Director
Centre of Full Employment and Equity



Van Badham
Australian writer, social commentator &
columnist for The Guardian, Australia



Owen Bennett
President
Australian Unemployed Workers' Union



Pas Forgione
Coordinator
Anti-Poverty Network (SA)



Roger Wilson
President
Victorian Steering Committee
Fair Go for Pensioners Coalition Inc