

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## Carers Australia calls on the Government to Raise the Rate

Carers Australia is joining the call for the Federal Government to 'Raise the Rate' of Newstart.

'The notion that an unemployment payment well below the poverty line is adequate to meet the essentials of daily living is difficult to comprehend in the land of the 'fair go'', said Ara Cresswell, CEO of Carers Australia.

'Even some supplementation for energy costs and rent do little to cover the costs of staying warm or cool, running necessary household appliances and having a roof over one's head in a country noted for high energy costs and increasingly high rental costs. The affordability of unsubsidised medical treatment, other medical needs and transport costs further compound the issue.

'While unsustainable levels of poverty affect a diverse range of Australians, we are acutely aware that one-in-four people on Newstart has a disability but do not qualify for the Disability Support Pension, even though their disability may be a barrier to finding suitable employment,' said Ms Cresswell.

'We are also aware that many unemployed people who are providing care for people with disability, chronic illness, mental illness or who are frail aged, may not meet the strict criteria which would qualify them for the Carer Payment or Carer Allowance. However, their caring responsibilities can constitute another barrier to finding employment, especially if they need to seek employment in reasonably close proximity to the people they care for.

'We add our voice to those of other Australians in the community, including business and many across the political sector in asking the Government to increase the Newstart rate by at least \$75 a week.'

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