

ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Failure Of Courage – City Of Adelaide Fails To Stick Up For Unemployed People Living In Poverty

Anti-Poverty Network SA is disappointed by the City of Adelaide's refusal to advocate for its residents who are out of work and living in poverty, by last night voting to not even consider a motion calling for Council to publicly support an increase to Newstart, the Centrelink payment for job-seekers.

Over the past 2 months, 9 local governments representing 560,000 South Australians have joined the chorus of business, union, and welfare groups calling for Newstart to be raised: **Clare Valley, Copper Coast, Kangaroo Island, Mount Gambier, Onkaparinga, Playford, Port Adelaide Enfield, Salisbury, Streaky Bay.**

Last night, Adelaide Council had the opportunity to join these Councils and send a strong message, by recognising that Newstart, at \$269 per week (\$160 per week below the poverty-line), is not a liveable income. It chose, instead, to not even discuss the plight of the 1200 residents who are unemployed and experiencing hardship.

“While only the federal government can raise Newstart, local governments have a duty to speak up for their residents, especially those doing it tough. Councils regularly take stands on issues outside their jurisdiction, including marriage equality, coal-seam gas mining, renewable energy, cashless welfare, and many other policies”, Anti-Poverty Network SA State Coordinator Pas Forgione said.

“Adelaide Council has flown the rainbow flag in support of marriage equality, and has declared itself a 'refugee-friendly' city. These are both federal issues. There is no reason why they cannot take a stand on the need for financial relief for struggling job-seekers.

Increasing Newstart would benefit local economies, by increasing the spending power of those on low incomes, whose extra funds would circulate through local businesses. It would reduce the strain on Council community services assisting low-income and marginalised people.

For the unemployed, raising Newstart would mean being able to eat better, look after their physical and mental health, stay connected to their community and social supports, cope with emergency expenses, more effectively search for work, plus much less financial stress”, Mr. Forgione said.

We thank Councillors Phillip Martin and Priscilla Corbell for their advocacy and leadership on this issue.

FURTHER INFO: Pas Forgione, Anti-Poverty Network SA State Coordinator, on 0411 587 663, or at antipovertynetwork.sa@gmail.com.