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Incoming Federal Government must focus on creating a more compassionate and just Australia: Jesuit Social Services

Less than one month out from the Federal Election, Jesuit Social Services calls on political leaders to commit to policies, practices and investments that allow all Australians the opportunity to reach their full potential, and says responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have shown that complex social issues are not beyond resolution.

“Elections are opportunities for all Australians to have their say about the type of society we want to live in, and where our priorities lie. We must ensure that the needs and wellbeing of vulnerable Australians are not overlooked. Vulnerable people and communities have been hardest hit by significant events such as COVID-19 and the climate crisis, and they must be supported by policies and investments to help them flourish,” says Jesuit Social Services CEO Julie Edwards.

Jesuit Social Services’ recently released Federal Election platform, [A blueprint for a just recovery](#), draws on the organisation’s 45 year history of advocacy and action to provide recommendations across a range of interconnected social policy areas including youth justice, mental health, affordable housing, ecological justice, immigration and settlement.

“Creating a more just and humane society is possible, as shown by some of the responses to the pandemic like the collaboration of private and public sectors to increase the level of mental health support and provide housing for people experiencing vulnerabilities. The impact of the temporary increase to JobSeeker was profound. Some of our participants were able to access rental accommodation, to afford medication or purchase items as simple, but essential, as warm clothes and achieve a measure of stability in their lives that they hadn’t previously enjoyed. Our participants had hope and their outlook changed,” says Ms Edwards.

“Instead of just short-term relief, we need long-term solutions to address inequality and create a society where nobody is left behind.”

Some of the organisation’s key recommendations for the incoming Federal Government include:

- Raising the age of criminal responsibility to the age of 14 across all states and territories
- Increasing the base rate of JobSeeker and related payments to at least \$69 per day
- Establishing a 10-year national strategy on housing and homelessness
- Replacing the compliance-focused Jobactive system with a new model prioritising funding for intensive, flexible and individualised training and support for people seeking work
- Increasing funding and resources for organisations and communities seeking to trial, test and implement climate change adaptation, mitigation and transformation activities
- Ending indefinite and arbitrary immigration detention in Australia

“Next month, Australians will decide who will lead the country for the next three years. We urge our incoming Federal Government to commit to building a more compassionate Australia.”

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