



5 March 2021

About Shelter Tas

Shelter Tas is Tasmania's peak body for housing and homelessness services. We are an independent not-for-profit peak organisation representing the interests of low to moderate income housing consumers, community housing providers and Specialist Homelessness Services across Tasmania. We provide an independent voice on housing rights and a link between governments and the community through consultation, research and policy advice. We work towards a fairer and more just housing system. Our vision is affordable, appropriate, safe and secure housing for all Tasmanians and an end to homelessness.

Our submission

Shelter Tas appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee's Inquiry into the *Social Services Legislation Amendment (Strengthening Income Support) Bill 2021*.

Shelter Tas supports *Raise the Rate* campaign and the call to permanently increase JobSeeker, Youth Allowance and related income support payments to a level that enables people to live a dignified life. All Australians deserve to live with an income that is adequate to meet their basic needs for housing, food, medicine, transport and other essentials of life.

Shelter Tas welcomed the Federal Government's COVID-19 response packages that substantially increased JobSeeker and related payments.

We know from consultation with our members, the housing and homelessness services across Tasmania, that this additional income enabled people to manage their rental payments as well as other essential costs. Fewer people presented to services because they were experiencing rental crisis, or needing assistance with rent arrears.

Research shows that adequate income makes a real difference to people's ability to pay rent and manage the essential costs of living, and the additional income support payments made a significant difference to renters and consequently to landlords as well.¹

¹http://povertyandinequality.acoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/COVID19_Rental-housing-and-homelessness-impacts_report-1.pdf p. 16

At the last Census (in 2016), more than 120 000 Tasmanians were living in poverty.² On the standard measure that compares income to rental cost, Hobart has been in the top two capitals for unaffordable rentals since 2015, and has been Australia's least affordable capital city since 2018.³ In Tasmania, as well as in the whole of Australia, income support payments have not kept pace with increasing costs for rent and other essentials. Tasmanians who rely on income support need a permanent and adequate increase to these payments.

We urge the government to ensure income support payments for working-age people do not return to below-poverty levels again.

For any further information on this submission, please contact

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² TasCOSS 2018 <https://www.tascoss.org.au/120000-tasmanians-live-in-poverty/>

³ <https://www.sgsep.com.au/projects/rental-affordability-index>