

ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

9 Councils Representing 560,000 South Australians Say 'Yes' To Raising Newstart

Anti-Poverty Network SA is delighted by the growing number of Councils across SA that have passed motions advocating for an increase to the grossly inadequate Newstart, most recently, Salisbury Council, who passed a motion last night.

Over the past two months, 9 local governments – 4 metropolitan, 5 regional – representing 560,000 South Australians have joined the chorus of business, union, and welfare groups calling for Newstart to be raised.

These Councils are: **Clare and Gilbert Valley, Copper Coast, Kangaroo Island, Mount Gambier, Onkaparinga, Playford, Port Adelaide Enfield, Salisbury, and Streaky Bay.** Tonight, Adelaide City Council votes on whether to become the 10th Council to publicly support raising Newstart.

Newstart, at \$269 per week, is \$160 per week below the poverty-line. It is less than 41 percent of the minimum wage, less than 18 percent of the average wage, and has not been raised in real terms for 23 years.

While only the federal government can raise Newstart, local governments have a duty to speak up for their residents who are out of work and living in poverty. Local governments regularly take public stands on issues outside their jurisdiction, including marriage equality, coal-seam gas mining, renewable energy, cashless welfare, and many other policy matters.

There is no reason why they cannot take a stand on the need for financial relief for struggling job-seekers.

“Raising Newstart is a no-brainer: for the unemployed, it would mean a greater capacity to eat well, 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”, Anti-Poverty Network SA State Coordinator Pas Forgione said.

“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 also reduce the strain on Council community services assisting the growing number of people experiencing hardship.”

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