

ANTI-POVERTY WEEK 2023

I'm sure we are all astonished by the increases in the cost of living, but people living in poverty are being driven further behind because 'it cost more to be poor.'

This year Anti-Poverty Week is actually running for two weeks, from 15 to 27 October. For more

than 20 years Anti-Poverty Week has called for Australians including our children to have what they need to cover the basics and have a secure roof over their heads. Children can thrive and be healthy when they have what they need to develop well. Not all children get an equal start in life. Today, one in six Australian children and young people are living in poverty. When families experience financial disadvantage, children can fall behind with their learning, leaving them 2 to 3 years behind by the time they reach 15, less likely to complete schooling and gain employment.

Anglicare Australia has launched a report showing that Australians on lower incomes face higher living costs. <https://www.anglicare.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Australia-Fair-The-Poverty-Premium.pdf>

The Poverty Premium: The High Cost of Poverty in Australia explores the higher living costs faced by Australians who are least equipped to bear them, those on the lowest incomes. A study comparing living costs for people who can afford to pre-pay, buy in bulk, or find value in key living expenses compared with those who can't. It finds people are penalised if they can't afford to buy groceries in bulk, pay costs annually instead of monthly, or upgrade to a more efficient car.

Anglicare Executive Director Kasy Chambers said that people on lower incomes often pay more for the same basic essentials.

"These numbers show us that Australians doing it tough need real action, and real leadership. That means raising the rate of Centrelink payments, making the minimum wage a living wage, and creating cheaper insurance and energy options for people who need them. People on low incomes did not create Australia's cost-of-living crisis. They shouldn't be asked to pay a higher price for it. We need a plan to stop the lowest paid Australians from being pushed deeper into poverty."

Doug Taylor, CEO at The Smith Family said:

"We need a comprehensive national framework for reducing child poverty, with targets and publicly reported figures so we can measure it over time and determine which policies are most effective. Now is the time to tackle child poverty as a national priority. We have an opportunity to make things better."

Members can connect with APW on Facebook and Instagram. Please support any Anti-Poverty Week activities in your area and continue to call on leaders to take action to address the issues of children living in poverty.

Susan Skowronski
AMUA Social Issues and Action Coordinator

