

# **SENATE INQUIRY ON NEWSTART AND RELATED PAYMENTS**



## **A GUIDE TO SUBMITTING YOUR STORY**

The Senate Community Affairs References Committee is holding an inquiry on the adequacy of Newstart, Youth Allowance, and related payments: [tinyurl.com/y5th3f2zy](https://tinyurl.com/y5th3f2zy)

This inquiry provides an opportunity to share your views, and your experiences of living on these Allowances, whether it is Newstart, Youth Allowance, Austudy, Special Benefit, or other related payments. It is important because it will have an impact on the positions taken by the parties on whether these payments should be increased, and if so by how much.

The Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) has produced this guide to help people share their stories.

Generally people write to a Senate inquiry (which is called a submission). Written submissions are due on September 13<sup>th</sup>.

After submissions are received, the inquiry holds hearings, which can be held anywhere in the country. We do not yet have information about when the hearings will be or where they will be held.

Some people are also invited to speak to the Committee at a hearing, which is where the Committee can ask questions to get further information about people's situation or points that they may have raised in their submission. It's your choice whether or not attend a hearing.

The inquiry is due to report in March 2020.

## **TELLING YOUR STORY MATTERS**

This committee is a Senate Committee, and includes members from all sides of politics: [tinyurl.com/y3697qpd](https://tinyurl.com/y3697qpd)

Typically, not all members attend hearings.

Every Senate Inquiry has 'terms of reference', which are the topics the committee wants to hear about. You can read the terms of reference for this inquiry here: [tinyurl.com/yxsb8ng3](https://tinyurl.com/yxsb8ng3)

However, you do not need to write about all of these terms. You might just want to cover what it is/was like for you being on Newstart, Youth Allowance, or a similar payment.

Sharing your story is important. Every time people share their stories, it becomes clearer that people cannot get by on \$40 a day, which is the current rate of Newstart for a single person. And it gets easier for others to find the confidence to share their stories.

## **WHERE TO START WITH MAKING A SUBMISSION**

Firstly, you can write as much or as little as you like in a submission to a senate inquiry. But we know it can be hard to know where to begin. Remember that this inquiry is likely to get a lot of submissions and the committee must read them all, so there is nothing wrong with making your submission short and to the point. It is up to you what and how much you share.



You can state in your introduction whether you would like to speak to the inquiry.

Submissions are published on the senate inquiry website and are available for the public to read, unless you request that your submission not be made public.

In brief, you have three options:

1. Make your submission public, with your name published alongside it
2. Make your submission public, but with no identifying information published (anonymous)
3. Make your submission confidential, so only the committee will be able to read it and it is not published on the senate inquiry website or in the senate inquiry report.

**ACOSS has developed a guide about confidentiality and Senate inquires, which we encourage you to read: [tinyurl.com/y2nmv97r](http://tinyurl.com/y2nmv97r)**

If you do introduce yourself in your submission, it is up to you how much information you give about yourself, including whether you include your full name, age, and where you live.

#### **SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR TOPICS TO WRITE ABOUT**

1. How long have you been (or how long were you) on Newstart or another Allowance? What was your situation before getting Newstart?
2. How much do you receive per week? How much do you have left after you pay your housing costs? Do you receive Rent Assistance?
3. Do you struggle with the cost of utilities?
4. Do you skip meals? How often? Are there particular foods – like meat, or fresh fruit and vegetables – that you cannot afford?
5. Do you struggle with health costs? When was the last time you were able to see a dentist?
6. Do you struggle with public transport costs? Do you ever have to stay home because you cannot afford a bus or train fare? Do you find it hard to maintain a car?
7. What are some things that you go without or have to do differently? Do you avoid using heating or cooling? Do you buy second-hand clothes? Do you find it difficult to buy gifts for loved ones for birthdays/other special occasions?
8. Do you ever feel isolated or lonely because of a lack of funds? What effect does living on a low income have on your mental health?
9. Have you ever visited a charity to ask for financial/practical assistance?



10. Does the current rate of Newstart make it harder to look for paid work? OR, if you are studying, does the current rate make it difficult for you to study or train?

11. What have been your experiences looking for paid work?

12. What would a raise to Newstart, Youth Allowance, and other Allowances mean for you? How would it affect your life? How much of an increase would you like to see?

### **WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARE DONE**

Time to submit!! You have three ways of sending your submission:

**1) Online:** [aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/OnlineSubmission](http://aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/OnlineSubmission)

**2) E-mail:** [community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au)

**3) Mail:** Committee Secretary, Community Affairs Committee  
Department of the Senate, PO Box 6100, Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT, 2600, Australia

### **ANY QUESTIONS? WANT MORE INFO?**

Contact Raise the Rate campaign coordinator Pas Forgione at [pas@acoss.org.au](mailto:pas@acoss.org.au) or on 0444 590 297/02 9310 6216.

- For more info about the Senate inquiry: [tinyurl.com/y5th3f2z](http://tinyurl.com/y5th3f2z)

- Raise the Rate briefing note: [tinyurl.com/yyq2lc7k](http://tinyurl.com/yyq2lc7k)

- For more info about the Raise the Rate campaign: [raisetherate.org.au/resources](http://raisetherate.org.au/resources)