

MEDIA RELEASE

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Credit where it's due

"The government's allocation of \$60.6m to financial inclusion projects in Australia as well as the refocus on areas of targetted need is cause for celebration for the estimated 2.2 million Australians living in poverty, and the community service providers committed to achieving financial inclusion," Robyn Roberts, Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service's CEO said.

"A further 10,000 Australians on low incomes will benefit from access to no interest and low interest loans, as a result of our partnership with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) the support of the National Australia Bank (NAB) in the coming financial year. This three-way partnership will continue to be crucial in providing alternatives for those excluded from mainstream credit and for whom risky lending institutions present as the only other option.

"I also applaud the government's targeting of benefits to those most in need. For the people we work with, who exist on around \$30,000 per year, per family, and are acutely vulnerable to fluctuations in their household income, this is good news.

"The government's investment in mental health reform is welcome, particularly in light of our recent research investigating the strong link between bankruptcy and mental illness.

"Increases in funding for programs that support people to gain skills and access training will certainly make a difference to the lives of people experiencing disadvantage. How successful these initiatives can be, however, given the failure to increase the Newstart Allowance and Parenting Payments Single, is yet to be seen.

"The challenge now will be in maintaining the spirit of these measures and ensuring that spending is not simply reduced in some areas but also redirected to those most in need" Ms Roberts said.

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Charity gives, justice changes.

Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service

Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service is a community services organisation that has been helping people battle poverty and disadvantage since 1976.

We believe everyone deserves an equal place in the world and a quality of life that makes participation in the community possible. This is why we work with the most vulnerable, particularly women and girls.

Each year, we support more than 18,000 women, families and young people across Melbourne and the Mornington Peninsula, while our financial assistance programs reach over 9,600 Australians on low incomes nation-wide.

We also research the root causes of social injustice, advocating change and greater independence for people experiencing disadvantage.

For more information about us, visit our website at www.goodshepvic.org.au