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Opposition changes position on sole parents

The Parenthood welcomes the change in position regarding sole parents announced yesterday by the Opposition spokesperson for families Jenny Macklin.

Speaking yesterday at an event for single mothers at Parliament House, Jenny Macklin acknowledged the former government “got it wrong” when they shifted almost 100,000 sole parents to the Newstart jobseeker allowance last year cutting their income by up to \$160 a week.

Executive Director of The Parenthood Fiona Sugden said while parents welcomed the comments from the Opposition it was critical they now took action to help change the policy and support sole parents living in desperate situations.

“We have been in numerous meetings with Government and Opposition MP’s on this issue and we know they are listening.

“We welcome their recognition of this issue, however it now critical the upcoming federal budget changes the earning capacity for sole parents moved onto Newstart to \$180 a fortnight.

“We need all MP’s that agree with this change to tell the Treasurer and Minister for Social Services they want to see it happen in May.

“This is a small but significant way of immediately helping sole parents to earn an additional \$80 a fortnight before their payments are reduced.”

Parenthood member and Brisbane mum of three Anita, said she strongly supported an increase in the earning capacity of sole parents moved onto Newstart.

When Anita’s youngest child soon turns eight she will be moved onto Newstart. She is currently halfway through her four year education degree.

“I know moving on to Newstart will cut my income by \$100 - \$150 each week and I know I can’t make that up while studying,” Anita said.

Parents like Anita cannot wait. Anita wants to finish her degree so she can leave the welfare system, but she cannot live on Newstart and support her children to be able to finish her degree.

The Parenthood will continue to fight hard for sole parents and has many more meetings with MP’s lined up over coming weeks. 5000 sole parents have joined The Parenthood’s campaign.

For further information please visit www.theparenthood.org.au/campaigns/aneustart.

For media inquiries, please contact Elise Dalley – 0422 738 884.