

Our social security system is under attack!

Although Australians have been affected in different ways depending on their situation, everyone is being subjected to an array of punitive tactics, and being forced to get by on miserly payments - all of which are below the poverty line.

The latest blow comes in the form of 250,000 'robo-debt' notices - a large percentage of which are fraudulent - issued to all kinds of social-security recipients. The measure amounts to extortion, and is part of a broader attempt to defund Centrelink, which has lost 5000 staff over last 5 years. The result is the current mess: an overworked staff, inability to provide basic services, absurd call-waiting times, *36 million unanswered calls* in 2016, and a dangerously low level of human oversight.

The bottom line is that rather than investing in job-creation, the government is using tax-payer money to fund measures that punish the victims of poor public policy; the public welfare system is being systematically dismantled.

Fight back by getting involved and supporting the *Dignity Not Debt* campaign!

- Australian Unemployed Workers' Union

Dignity

not
DEBT

A comprehensive assault

Almost every vulnerable group in Australia has been targeted.

The Sick

Centrelink routinely rejects doctors' certificates, forcing unemployed Australians to attend appointments and activities against the explicit advice of their doctor.

The Disabled

Since 2014, more than 35,000 people have been kicked off the Disability Support Pension, and this number is increasing daily. Over two thirds of DSP applications are rejected.

Single Parents & Families

In 2013, at least 100,000 single parents were forced off the single parent pension and onto Newstart – leaving them \$160 worse off per fortnight. Moreover, the Coalition wants to cut Family Tax Benefit Part A (by \$200 a-year-per-child), and Family Tax Benefit Part B (\$350 per year per family).

Students & Young Australians

Under its proposed Prepare Trail Hire program (PATH), the Coalition wants to offer under-25s to businesses for free.

Older Australians

In January, 236,000 Australians had their pensions reduced and 91,000 part-pensioners will lose their payment altogether. Turnbull has proposed to increase the pension age to 70 by 2035 – meaning that Australia will have the highest pension age in the developed world.

The Unemployed

In addition to the attacks described below, the Coalition has proposed to: cut the Carbon Supplement; introduce a minimum one month waiting period; and raise the eligibility age to 25.

Job shortage

According to ABS data, there are *17 job seekers competing for each job vacancy*. This ratio has *more than doubled* since 2008.

Job agency bullying

On the recommendation of private job agencies, Centrelink imposed 2 million penalties on unemployed Australians in 2016 – up from 200,000 in 2011.

Cashless welfare

Turnbull has expanded its punitive cashless welfare scheme and is planning on expanding to other areas.

Unsafe Work for the Dole

Work for the Dole is punitive and dangerous. In 2016, there were 500 Work for the Dole injuries reported (along with the death of Josh Park Fing) – up from 92 the year before.



Who we are

The Australian Unemployed Workers' Union is a volunteer-run organisation, committed to offering advocacy and support services for our members. Additionally, the AUWU provides a platform to fight back against the Government's ongoing attacks against unemployed and underemployed workers. Our overall aim is to initiate a national grassroots movement to address Australia's employment crisis.

Uniting with other social-security recipients and the public to fight back against unfair treatment is the only way this system will ever change.

Become a member

Visit unemployedworkersunion.com to sign up - membership is free and open to all. Benefits include:

- free access to our National Advocacy Hotline
- copies of our leaflets, posters, and Rights Guide
- the opportunity to meet other AUWU activists in your area
- notification of upcoming meetings, actions, and legislation
- access to our growing list of contacts and allies

If you don't think we're the right group for you, we'll be happy to direct you to one of the welfare rights groups we're partnered with.

Get involved!

Become an active member by attending our **meetings**, participating in our **regular workshops** and working groups. Whether you'd like to assist us with our **advocacy hotline**, manage our social media accounts, create **artwork and leaflets** (like this one), plan and execute **campaigns**, or simply help with all the administrative tasks that keep us afloat, we'd love to have you on board!

 Please write to contact@unemployedworkersunion.com

 or call **(03) 8394 5266** to express your interest.

 Visit unemployedworkersunion.com to sign up, download your copy of our Rights Guide, & find out more about current campaigns.

 Follow us on **Facebook**.

Demands of the Dignity Not Debt Campaign

1) Abolish Debt Recovery Scheme

Since the Coalition (supported by Labor) introduced the Debt Recovery System in July 2016, Centrelink have sent 20,000 debt notices per week to social security recipients. It has been estimated that 90% of debt notices are incorrect. As a result of the Government's broken system, tens of thousands of vulnerable Australians are being harrassed by Centrelink and private debt collectors for debts they do not even owe. This is a disgrace.

2) Dignity for Social Security Recipients

The Coalition has gone out of its way to make dealing with Centrelink a humiliating and difficult experience for millions of low income Australians. Despite the well documented problems with Centrelink's phone system, online portal, application process, and frontline offices to name only a few, the Coalition has continually refused to address these problems let alone acknowledge them. Australia's social security recipients deserve better.

3) Restore Adequate Funding to Centrelink

Over the last 5 years, more than 5,000 Centrelink staff have been sacked. Consequently, Centrelink have been unable to keep up with the rising demand for its services. Last year alone 36 milion calls to Centrelink went unanswered. Due to Australia's rising population, it is estimated that each year the number of calls to Centrelink increase by 3 million.

4) Lift Payments Above the Poverty Line

Australia's expenditure on social security payments is one of the lowest in the OECD. As a result, every social security payment sit well below the Henderson poverty line.

