

The Federal Budget that was announced last night left those of us who provide social services highly underwhelmed. Apart from the very welcome payment increases to the aged pension and to carers there is little else to be happy about.

It is hard to understand how at a time of immense social need there has not been a greater attempt made to assist those who are already unemployed or those who will inevitably become so in the months ahead. Those locked in poverty such as students and single parents are left to linger there waiting for the same attention that banks and business have received so far.

Of the enormous amounts of money that has been provided for infrastructure projects there has not been a single initiative that has been directed at the non-profit sector. This is despite significant information flowing to the government from non-profit representative bodies about the increasing financial pressures on non-profit organisations that are currently struggling to meet increasing demands on their services. It is as if the non-government sector, despite the rhetoric from government about its importance and relevance, remains invisible when it comes to assisting it to meet its infrastructure needs and those of staff and clients. This is very disappointing and negatively affects the sector's relationship with government. A relationship that is crucial in meeting Australia's social needs.

As the impact of the economic crisis becomes more evident Centrecare and organisations like it will continue to serve those that approach them as best they can. It is unfortunate that the government has not shown a similar commitment.

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