

MYTH #4

FURTHER INFORMATION

It is too easy to receive the Disability Support Pension (DSP). The number of people on the payment is dramatically rising.

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WELFARE MYTHS

FACTS

As of December 2013 there were 830,000 people on DSP, or 5.4% of people aged 18-64 – this is down from 5.5% two years earlier.

Over the past decade, the proportion of people on the DSP has risen slightly but that is mainly due to Australia's ageing population.

To be eligible for the DSP someone must have a serious medical condition that would prevent them from working within the next two years.

The process involves a detailed questionnaire, written reports from doctors and/or specialists, and assessment by government-chosen experts.

If your only problem is a back condition, you would have to be in almost constant pain or be unable to sit or move around properly to receive the pension.

ANTI-POVERTY



NETWORK

The Anti-Poverty Network is fighting for the dignity, needs, and rights of people on Centrelink and other low-income people.

AND HOW TO SMASH THEM!

Responses to four
common misconceptions
about Australian support
payments

by the
**ANTI-POVERTY
NETWORK SA**

MYTH #1

People who want to work can find work. Barriers to employment are mainly the poor attitudes of people receiving Centrelink benefits.

MYTH #2

If people on Centrelink are struggling financially it is because they are incompetent or irresponsible.

MYTH #3

Australia spends too much on Centrelink payments and too many people rely on it. This is unsustainable and we cannot afford it.

FACTS

There are NOT enough jobs to go around. Research shows that there is always around four to six job-seekers competing for every one job.

Available jobs generally favour the well-educated, whereas half the long-term unemployed have less than year 12 qualifications.

People with major caring responsibilities (like single parents) often find it very difficult to find work that fits around their commitments, i.e., jobs that allow them to pick up their kids in the morning/afternoon.

It has been documented that employers discriminate against people like single mothers, those with disabilities, older unemployed and long-term unemployed (even when they have recently had training).

FACTS

Many welfare recipients suffer from financial stress, but this is usually because of very low payment levels, not because of mismanagement or excessive consumption of alcohol, cigarettes, or gambling.

A recent survey found only 4% of Centrelink recipients' payments were spent on luxuries, whereas 70% was spent on necessities like groceries and housing.

Australia has the lowest unemployment payment in the developed world, at \$260 per week. Most of the main Centrelink payments are well below the poverty-line, ranging from \$86 under for the Age Pension, to \$182 under for Newstart.

Two-thirds of students live below the poverty-line and 17% report going without food/necessities.

FACTS

We spend less on age pensions, less on family payments, less on unemployment benefits. We spend only 6.9% of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on payments.

We spend 3.5% of GDP on age pensions, 2.5% on family payments, and 0.5% on unemployment benefits.

We have a strict, targeted system that provides income support to only those who need it.

In 2011, 18.5% of people received Centrelink payments, down from 23% in 2001. Only 4.8% of working-age households derive 90% or more of their income from Centrelink, down from 7.1% in 2001.