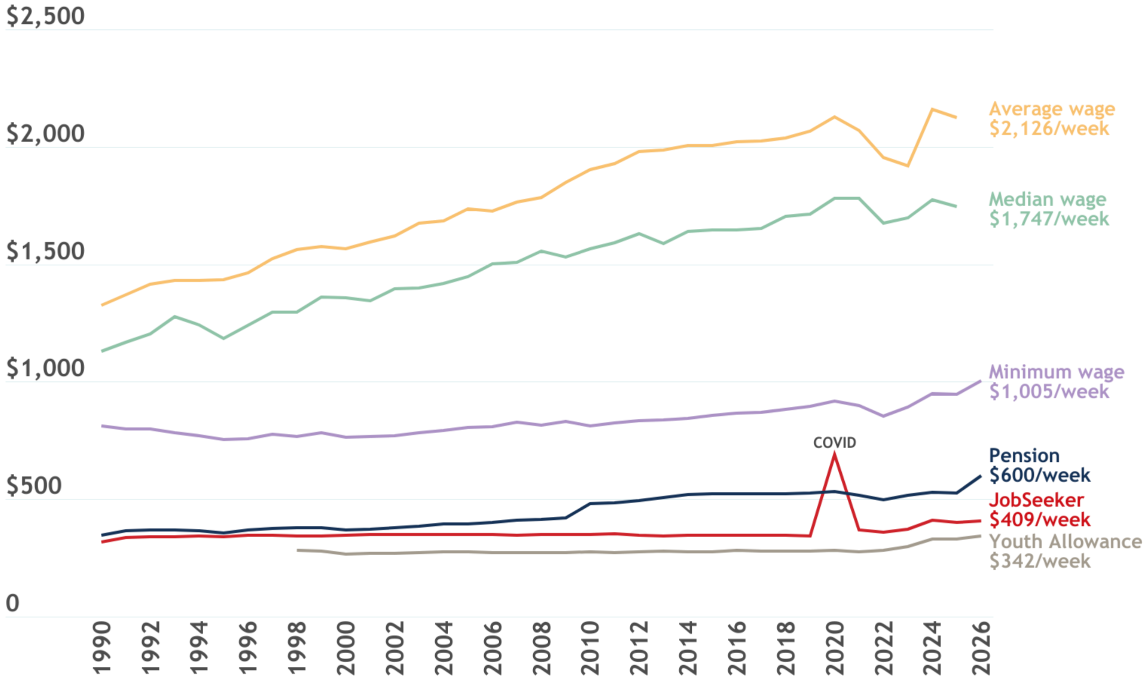
Why JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, Parenting Payment and related payments need to increase

Key facts

July 2026

- Over 1.5 million people receive JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, Parenting Payment and related payments that are well below all measures of adequacy including poverty lines (EIAC, 2026[1]; DSS March 2026).
- JobSeeker – our unemployment payment – is just 40% of the minimum wage (as at July 2026).
- The single rate of JobSeeker is $409pw. Youth Allowance is even less at $342pw. This compares with the pension at $600pw.

How JobSeeker compares with the pension and wages (2026$, pw)



[1] Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee (2026) '2026 Report to Government', available at: [Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee 2026 report | Department of Social Services]

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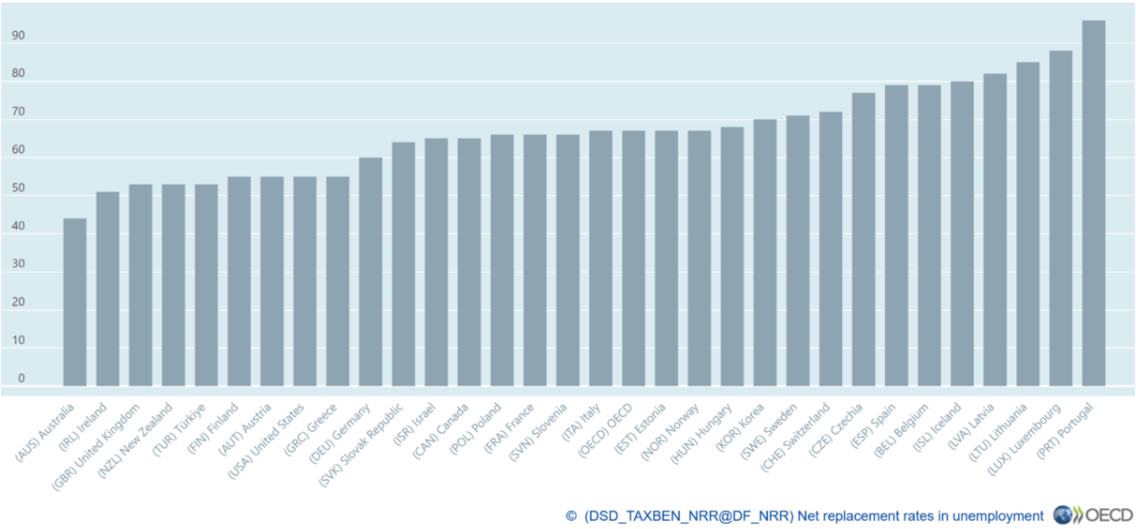
- Almost one in two people receiving JobSeeker (45%) report high to severe anxiety or depression. The highest number of suicides among people receiving income support is people receiving JobSeeker Payment.[2]
- In 1999, JobSeeker Payment was the equivalent of 90% of the Age Pension. Today, it's 68%. It is $191 a week less than the pension.
- JobSeeker Payment continues to be the lowest unemployment payment in the first two months of unemployment in the OECD (EIAC, 2025).

Net replacement rates in unemployment, single person who was earning 67% of the average wage, first two months unemployment, including housing assistance (2025)



- In 2023, [the OECD recommended Australia lift unemployment payments] highlighting that they 'remain below the relative poverty line'(OECD 2023).
- The [Australian Human Rights Commission called for a national plan to eradicate poverty] arguing that social security payments are too low and calling out the government for failing to implement recommendations to lift them (AHRC 2026).
- The median asset value held by someone receiving JobSeeker Payment is $4,500 (EIAC 2024).[3]

Key ask

- Lift JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, Parenting Payment and related income support to at least $600pw and index payments to wages as well as prices.

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[2] Mandala (2025) 'The Social Dividend: An Actuarial Case for Higher Income Support' https://mandalapartners.com/uploads/the-social-dividend.pdf pp. 31 & 34
[3] Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee (2024) '2024 Report to Government', available at: https://www.dss.gov.au/system/files/resources/13404-eiac-report-dv-08-app-orig_0.pdf