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MEDIA RELEASE

**LABOR TO FIGHT ABBOTT'S UNFAIR CUTS TO PENSIONERS, FAMILIES
AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Federal Labor will fight Tony Abbott's unfair cuts to Australian pensioners, families and young people by removing these cruel cuts from legislation to be debated in Parliament today.

If the Prime Minister refuses to remove his savage cuts from the legislation, Labor will vote against these Bills in full, in the House and in the Senate.

The *Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 1 & 2) Bill 2014*, which will be debated in the House of Representatives today, contains some of Tony Abbott's harshest Budget measures.

Tony Abbott wants to lift the retirement age to 70 and cut the Age Pension – Labor will oppose these changes.

Tony Abbott wants to freeze the payment rates for Family Tax Benefits and kick families off Family Tax Benefit B when their youngest child turns six – Labor will oppose these changes.

Tony Abbott wants to abandon young jobseekers by forcing them to wait six months before receiving any income support – Labor will oppose it.

Labor will oppose these cruel measures because we believe in fairness.

We are prepared to make responsible decisions to ensure the Budget is sustainable, but there are too many measures in this Budget that are fundamentally unfair.

Labor does not believe the role of Government is to make life harder for millions of Australians – and that's precisely what Tony Abbott is doing.

Labor will today move amendments to remove the following measures in these Bills:

- Axing the Seniors Supplement, worth up to \$876 a year to around 300,000 Australian seniors.
- Cutting Parenting Payment single.
- Extending the ordinary waiting period for working age payments.
- Freezing of the payment rates for Family Tax Benefits.
- Cutting the Age Pension, Disability Support Pension, Veterans' pension and Carer Payment by \$80 a week within ten years by cutting indexation.
- Cutting the deeming rate thresholds for seniors and veterans, which will leave them with lower pensions.
- Axing the Pensioner Education Supplement.
- Axing the Education Entry Payment.
- Pushing young people under 25 from Newstart onto the lower Youth Allowance. This is a cut of at least \$48 a week, or almost \$2,500 a year.
- Forcing young jobseekers under 30 to wait six months before receiving any income support.
- Slashing Family Tax Benefit end-of-year supplements and ceasing indexation.
- Cutting families from Family Tax Benefit Part B when their youngest child turns six.
- Raising the retirement age to 70.
- Removing the three months backdating of the Disability Pension for Veterans.

Each and every one of these measures is a cruel attack on low and middle income Australians that they weren't told about before the election. Labor will stand up for these people and against the Prime Minister.

Labor will not oppose some measures in these Bills, ensuring responsible savings can be made without leaving vulnerable Australians worse off, including:

- Better targeting Family Tax Benefit B by reducing the primary earner income limit from \$150,000 a year to \$100,000.
- The inclusion of untaxed superannuation income in the assessment for the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card – meaning concessions go to those who need it, rather than wealthy retirees.
- Pauses in asset tests for student payments, pensions and for all working age allowances. However we will oppose freezes to the low income free areas, to protect those on low incomes.
- Limiting the amount of time students can spend overseas while still receiving student payments.
- Better targeting the large family payment supplement.
- Removing relocation scholarship assistance for students relocating with and between major cities.

- Ending indexation of the Clean Energy Supplement.

In an outrageous attempt to stifle debate on this unfair budget, the Government is ramming this Bill through the Parliament by gagging the debate today.

This will leave the House of Representatives with just three hours to debate some of the harshest changes to Australia's social security system in our history.

Labor members should be allowed the opportunity to speak out against this budget on behalf of their communities – and Coalition members should stand up in the Parliament and explain to their constituents why they are wrecking the fair go.

The Prime Minister now has a choice to make – he knows where Labor stands. The Government can accept Labor's amendments today and pass responsible savings – or they can continue to attack the people who can least afford these cuts.

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