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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**ABBOTT GOVERNMENT'S UNFAIR STRONGER PENALTIES LEGISLATION  
DEFEATED**

Vulnerable long-term jobs seekers have been protected from further cruel and harsh measures after Labor today voted against the Abbott Government's stronger penalties legislation.

If not defeated, the Government's *Social Security Legislation Amendment (Stronger Penalties for Serious Failures) Bill 2014* would have continued an attack on young jobseekers, the homeless and people with mental illness.

Vulnerable long-term jobseekers have been protected from bearing the brunt of the Abbott Government's cruel measures that were merely a cost-saving measure.

We know that the Government's stronger penalties measures were about making cuts and not about assisting or supporting long-term unemployed Australians into work.

The Abbott Government has shown its true colours by wanting to penalise vulnerable people already doing it tough.

The Government's attention should be on job creation rather than blaming and demonising job seekers.

The Abbott Government should be ashamed of its already poor record on employment services.

To expect some of our most vulnerable jobseekers to suffer an eight-week non-payment period and have no ability to actively participate in finding a job is cruel and punitive.

Penalising and preventing jobseekers from actively engaging in the job-seeking process can only be described as shameful and counter-productive.

The proposed measures were a disgrace and particularly harsh when viewed in combination with the Government's proposed changes to Newstart for those jobseekers aged under 30.

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