Item 12.5

Notices of Motion

Addressing Poverty and Inequality in the City of Sydney

By Councillor Thompson

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

(i) more than 5 million Australians are barely scraping by on Centrelink payment rates below the poverty line, and millions more are struggling with the cost of living;

(ii) members of our community receiving this support are forced to make impossible choices between paying rent, purchasing food, or buying essential medicine, while low-income earners are 10 times more likely to have no internet connection at home;

(iii) income support should provide people with enough to cover basic necessities to live a healthy and dignified life, rather than keeping them in a cycle of financial struggle and survival;

(iv) economic inequality is a major problem in the City of Sydney, there are persistent gaps between groups in Sydney that enjoy the majority of benefits of the city's growth compared with the groups that do not; and

(v) Australia's mutual obligations framework forces jobseekers to complete tasks such as applying for jobs or attending training, or have their payments stopped. The scheme is highly controversial and potentially unlawful, with numerous leading advocates and organisations critiquing the system as unfair, ineffective and enormously harmful to people in poverty due to abusive providers;

(B) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the Prime Minister, the Treasurer, and the Minister for Social Services, asking them to commit to raising JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, and related payments to at least $82 per day, equivalent to the pension rate, to ensure all members of our community experiencing hardship can live with dignity, and urging immediate action to address this critical issue of inequality;

(C) Council adopt the position that Centrelink payment rates must be urgently raised above the poverty line, and advocates for this important reform; and

(D) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to write to the Anti-Poverty Centre, Economic Justice Australia, Yfoundations, Deadly Connections, Unemployed Workers Union and any other relevant organisations in the Local Government Area to ask what the City can do to address widening inequality, and any additional practical support the City can provide to those experiencing and at risk of poverty in our communities.

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