



Sharon Grierson MP
Federal Member for Newcastle

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ANOTHER 176,000 PEOPLE WORSE OFF UNDER HOWARD

The Howard Government today gagged debate on another regressive piece of legislation, using the guillotine to try to polish off its Scrooge-like agenda before Christmas.

Today 13 Labor MPs, including Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson, were denied the opportunity to speak on the Government's Welfare to Work Bill.

The Bill restricts access to Disability Support Pension and Parenting Payments for new applicants, forcing them instead onto the lower Newstart Allowance – a change expected to affect 176,000 people in coming years.

"This is not Welfare to Work," Ms Grierson said, "it's Welfare to Welfare."

"It's a cheap approach from a mean and lazy Government disinterested in the lives of ordinary Australians."

"It shifts people from one welfare payment to a lower welfare payment, but does nothing to break down the barriers many people face to gaining a job."

"In Newcastle last year there were 7,486 people receiving Disability Support Pension and 2,973 people receiving Parenting Payment. Rather than just cutting the payments of new applicants, the Government should be addressing the very real and very complex reasons why these people aren't in work."

"It should be addressing the high marginal tax rates that act as a disincentive to people moving from welfare to work - rates which will see some DSP recipients \$122 a week worse off if they find a job under the new system."

"It should be providing more vocational training opportunities so that people can obtain the skills they need to find work."

"The government can't just cut welfare payments and call it reform."

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