
Pressure on WA Budget to support people experiencing hardship

The release of the Federal Budget yesterday will increase pressure on the State Budget to address the needs of households facing hardship.

The Federal Government Budget has failed to provide:

- **Adequate social security** – Newstart and Youth Allowance have not seen an increase in more than 24 years. More than 100,000 Western Australians reliant on these payments are being pushed further into poverty. We need to *Raise the Rate* of Newstart
- **Housing affordability for low income earners** – the recent Anglicare rental snapshot found only three rental properties in the whole of Australia affordable for a single Newstart recipient (none in Perth). Low income households facing rental stress (spending more than 30% of income on housing) have increased to nearly 50%
- **Poverty alleviation** – for the more than 2.99 million people living in poverty (13.3% of the population), 731,000 of whom are children
- **A progressive tax system** – where everyone contributes fairly to the services we share, according to their ability to pay

“The failure of the Federal Budget to ensure people have sufficient income to get by, passes the buck to the states in the inevitable increasing demands for their services,” said Louise Giolitto, Chief Executive Officer, Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS).

“This is not a fair budget. It is not fair to the people in our community in vulnerable circumstances. Large business and corporations win out in this budget, and everyday people lose. This budget promotes inequality. We need fair budget measures so that we can all enjoy things that are important to living a healthy, happy, fulfilled life.

“As of July, there is no more Commonwealth money for remote housing in WA, which means the State Government is going to have to step up to ensure the survival of those communities.

“Last year’s State Budget had a major impact on the weekly budgets of low income households, with no relief provided to the significant hikes in household fees and charges. With power and water cost predicted to rise yet again, there needs to be specific measures to protect at-risk families.

“The State Budget needs to provide for people experiencing disadvantage and hardship. Yes, it isn’t fair that the Commonwealth has not done their part, but our State has an opportunity to show Federal Parliament that a budget is a choice. The WA government can choose to create a fair West Australia for all, and do what needs to be done now to provide the support that people need,” Louise Giolitto said.

Ends