
\$18 Increase to State Minimum Wage Inadequate

The Western Australian Council of Social Service expressed its concern the \$18 per week increase to the State Minimum Wage announced today by the WA Industrial Relations Commission is inadequate.

The new rate of \$726.90 per week or \$19.12 per hour falls far short of the \$50 per week increase called for by WACOSS and Unions WA in their submissions to the Commission.

“The increases we are seeing in wages for those on the lowest incomes across all workforces are simply not keeping up with the cost of living,” said Louise Giolitto, Chief Executive Officer, WACOSS.

“Massive hikes to utility bills and other household fees are putting increasing pressure on people’s back pockets. We are seeing skyrocketing rates of electricity disconnections, with WA going from having the lowest to the highest rate in the nation in just a year.

“More and more people are seeking food relief, with people reporting skipping meals regularly in order to cover bills or to make sure their children have enough to eat.”

WACOSS also highlighted the failure of community service funding to keep up with the true cost of service delivery.

“The Western Australian Government need to overturn recent changes to community service funding that are creating a growing gap between the need to deliver wage increases to low-paid community workers and the indexation of service funding.

“The majority of our workforce are women undertaking challenging and skilled work with those in need, for comparatively little reward.

“The continued failure to properly fund services is creating a new class of working poor among community service workers, with increasing numbers facing the same issues of insecure work, underemployment, uncertain hours and inadequate pay they are employed to help their clients overcome.

“WACOSS is calling on the Premier to re-instate the policy of the previous WA Labor government that saw human service funding linked to wages to ensure the sustainability of services for our community.

“According to their own Budget papers, wage growth is a significant driver for WA’s economic recovery. Increasing the wages of the lowest paid, such as community service workers, is a proven method for stimulating the economy. It’s time the WA Government put its money where its mouth is and dropped the adherence to an austerity mindset,” Louise concluded.

Ends.