
Council supports increase for people struggling to make ends meet

The Western Australian Council of Social Service supports the City of Fremantle in their decision to back an increase to the Newstart allowance, which hasn't experienced a real increase in more than 24 years.

The decision, made by the council tonight, is formal recognition that people cannot survive on the inadequate rate of Newstart and Youth Allowance, and we need to **Raise the Rate**.

"While this is a Federal issue, the impact of Newstart is a reality for people living without enough to cover bills and basic living costs. This places enormous strain on supports and services at a local level," said Louise Giolitto, Chief Executive Officer, WACOSS.

"We hope that by The City of Fremantle taking a stand, that this will encourage other local governments, organisations, and businesses to draw attention to the lack of financial support for those struggling on the lowest incomes in the country."

Recent studies have found that to just cover the basics of housing, food, transport, health, energy, and clothing costs, for a single person is \$433 per week. The single rate of Newstart is just \$278 per week, which is \$175 below the pension.

In South Australia, 10 local councils have joined the campaign to Raise the Rate, along with two councils in Victoria, and the campaign has received wide recognition from not-for-profit organisations who work with people experiencing hardship on a daily basis.

The motion by the Fremantle Council was the result of a petition by a local grassroots movement The Anti-Poverty Network (APN), calling for their support at a local level, to place pressure on the Federal issue.

"The Raise the Rate campaign is so important right now and the cost of living continues to rise every single year.

"More than three million people live below the poverty line, without security of their basic needs, food, a home, and power being met. What Australia has failed to do with unemployment benefits for virtually a quarter of a century is now a national embarrassment," said Louise Giolitto.

Ends.