
Children and families need better support, ahead of Anti-Poverty Week

The Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS) is calling on the State Government to commit to an early intervention Child Poverty and Wellbeing Strategy, this Anti-Poverty Week.

“WACOSS is calling for the State Government to develop a whole-of-government strategy to ensure quality universal early child education and care services are accessible for all families, regardless of income,” said Louise Giolitto, Chief Executive Officer, WACOSS.

According to Telethon Kids Institute research, children growing up in ‘working poor’ families, who are both time and resource poor, are missing out on opportunities to thrive. In Western Australia, 20 per cent of children live in working poor families, while a further 10 per cent live in ‘overwhelmed’ families, where unemployment and poverty create distress and diminished capacity to access services. A further 7 per cent of children come from migrant or refugee backgrounds, where poverty can be compounded by language barriers.

“We need to be able to provide support and opportunities for mothers early, to assist children who may be at risk developmentally by linking them up with appropriate services.” Louise said.

“Three and ten-year targets should be implemented to measure the benefits of early intervention, and redirect efforts to more effective support systems.”

With more than 240,000 children in Western Australia experiencing poverty, Anti-Poverty Week is a national week of significance to highlight the impacts of poverty in our society, and to create discussion, awareness, and action, to reduce poverty and hardship in Australia.

“Western Australia is a wealthy state, but we have nearly a quarter of a million children living in a situation where they might not get three full meals per day, or their family has to move around or stay with family or in their car because they can’t afford a safe place to live.”

In addition to State Government measures, WACOSS continues to call on the Federal Government to Raise the Rate of Newstart, which hasn’t seen an increase since 1994. A single person living on Newstart has around \$39 per day to pay rent, utilities, food, and other expenses.

“Paramount to the growth of a children and their participation in society, we need to Raise the Rate of Newstart, so that children are not growing up in impoverished households, unable to put three meals on the table, or pay the rent and utilities that month.”

Ends.

More information:

www.acoss.org.au/raisetherate
www.antipovertyweek.org.au