
Foodbank funding reinstatement welcomed, but we can do more to prevent food insecurity

The Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS) welcomes the reinstatement of the funding to Foodbank Australia, which is an essential provider in the food relief system across the country.

In 2018, more than 4 million Australians experienced food insecurity at least once in the preceding 12 months. Of those people, one in four go an entire day without eating at least once a week. In Western Australia there was an increase of 39 per cent in the proportion of charities reporting an increase in the number of people seeking food relief since 2017, with more than 508,000 meals provided every month¹.

360,000 Western Australians live in poverty, and 150,000 at risk of financial hardship². WA has the second highest rate of poverty in Australia after South Australia, at 13.7 per cent³.

“We thank the Federal Government and Prime Minister Scott Morrison for listening to the concerns of the community, and are pleased that the funding has been reinstated,” said Dr Jennie Gray, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, WACOSS.

“People have spoken loudly, which shows how valued these services are in our communities, but there are gaps that still exist – the Government needs to do more, not less.

“Food insecurity and financial hardship are symptoms of inequities that we cannot stand for in a civil society, especially when we can address this through policy levers. We need a national coordinated, nutritional-focused food relief policy that recognises and addresses the fundamental policy drivers of food insecurity and poverty.

“Food insecurity does not travel alone. There are often many other issues impacting people and households who experience food insecurity and some groups are being left behind. This disadvantage is becoming entrenched for many groups, such as those surviving on Newstart, single parents, the underemployed, and young people.

“WACOSS is working with sector stakeholders such as Foodbank WA to develop a coordinated Food Relief Framework, with recommendations to WA State Government for better accountability and improved service integration that helps break the cycle of poverty and eliminates the need for food relief,” Dr Gray said.

Ends.

¹ Foodbank Hunger Report 2018

² The Price is Right? An Examination of the Cost of Living in Western Australia - BCEC Report 2017

³ Poverty in Australia - ACOSS Report 2018