
Community keen for action on *Our Priorities*

The Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS) welcomes the McGowan Government's renewed focus and direction, *Our Priorities*, released today.

"Many of the focus areas in the Premier's Priorities align with the community service priorities championed by WACOSS on behalf of frontline services," said Louise Giolitto, Chief Executive Officer, WACOSS.

The early years of life are critical to child development, adult health and productivity, which is why rising child poverty in WA is such a cause for concern. Setting a whole-of-government target to reduce early developmental vulnerability is critical to delivering a 'Bright Future' for all our children.

"Fundamentally, this is about the kind of society we want to live in. Putting children at the centre of state policy strengthens our communities, and ensures there is a focus on creating a better future.

"We are heartened that the Premier's priorities reflect the community's calls for action to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in custody. This must include ending the practice of imprisoning people for unpaid fines, as we have seen in most other states in Australia. Fine default disproportionately impacts Aboriginal women, often as a result of poverty.

"The Government's commitment to increase the number of homes close to public transport is very welcome, but it is essential that this includes a serious investment in social housing for those on the lowest incomes. Access to well-connected, affordable housing for all, is crucial for building a more inclusive Western Australia.

"It is reassuring that these priorities reflect community concerns, but the critical challenge is to effectively translate them into action and achieve real on-the-ground outcomes. This is not something Government Departments can do alone – it requires genuine collaboration with communities as partners, and people at the centre of policy decisions," Louise concluded.

Ends.

WACOSS released its Budget Submission in October 2018. The Budget Submission is the annual strategic policy recommendations that are the culmination of conversations and consultations with community service organisations, and individuals with lived experience in poverty, disadvantage, and inequality.

[Download a copy of the WACOSS Budget Submission 2019-2020.](#)

The WA Government's *Our Priorities* are available from: www.OurPriorities.wa.gov.au