

# MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 12 May 2009

---

## Unemployed People Miss Out Again

WACOSS has welcomed the \$32.49 per week increase to single pensions announced in the 2009 Federal Budget, but is worried about unemployed people in WA.

Sue Ash, CEO of WACOSS, said “we already have over 50,000 unemployed people in WA, and the number is rising rapidly. Unemployment benefits are barely sufficient for subsistence, especially in Perth with its high cost of living. The cost of food went up by over 8% in Perth over the last 12 months, and unemployed people are struggling to make ends meet”.

“While we welcome the additional \$10 per week for some unemployed people who are undertaking full time training, this budget does not do enough to address the inadequacy of Newstart Allowance. While the stimulus may be preventing even higher rates of unemployment, it’s certainly not helpful for those who do find themselves without work” said Ms Ash.

In addition to the long-overdue increase to the base rate of the single pension, WACOSS welcomes the \$600 annual payment to carers and the moves to tighten eligibility criteria for government benefits.

“We’ve long supported increased means testing of benefits. Government assistance should go to those who need it most”, said Ms Ash.

Government-funded parental leave will be welcomed by the not-for-profit community services sector.

“WACOSS welcomes the paid parental leave scheme, as it will enable employers in the community services sector to offer equivalent benefits to those already enjoyed by employees elsewhere,” said Ms Ash.

WACOSS also welcomed the infrastructure spending announced in the budget, notably the \$236 million to sink the railway in Northbridge.

“This infrastructure spending will create additional jobs in WA and help to revitalise the city centre. WACOSS would have liked to have seen even more money for infrastructure, particularly social housing. The \$539 million that will be spent in the next three years on the first home buyers scheme could have been put to better use if it was devoted to constructing more social housing,” said Ms Ash.

|  
For further comment:  
Sue Ash - CEO  
0411 723 394