



WACOSS

Western Australian
Council of Social Service Inc

*Ways to make
a difference*

MEDIA RELEASE

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Community Services Not Keeping Up With Rate Rise Pressures

WACOSS is expecting that community service agencies supporting people in need when interest rates rise, will not be able to keep up with the additional demand for help, which is likely to follow from today's predicted interest rate rise from the Reserve Bank.

"When interest rates rise, families who are already balancing strained budgets hit crisis point, and are commonly referred to community service agencies for support like food parcels, assistance with paying bills, and financial counselling" comments Lisa Baker, Executive Director of WACOSS.

"The numbers of people turning to community services for support has been escalating rapidly for the past three years and agencies are not keeping up with the demand."

"The Government has failed to deliver any commensurate investment in the services that people turn to when rates rise, to ensure they are able to help them. We need to see an immediate strengthening of the financial capacity of the services that are most important to ensuring families make it through tough times."

This would be the 12th consecutive interest rate rise and the 4th in 8 months. It will force families into deeper financial hardship, as they struggle to keep up with rising living costs.

According to the WACOSS Cost of Living Report, in the last 18 months, household costs for an average family have increased 18%, while average wages have only increased 7.8%. Given the number of people living on below average wages, the picture is even worse than that.

Community service agencies, such as Helping Out People Everywhere (HOPE), Uniting Care West (UCW), Communicare, and Geraldton Resource Centre (GRC) are all feeling the pressure that these continuous rate rises are having on Western Australians.

"The government must ensure that *all* community services are adequately funded to meet the increasing demand for services, as more and more people turn to them for help."

For further comment

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