

MEDIA RELEASE

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WACOSS highlights community priorities ahead of WA Budget

One week out from the delivery of the WA Budget on 14 May the Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS) has highlighted its major priorities for the services and support delivered to our community and the impacts of budget measures on our most disadvantaged citizens.

“Last year, in the face of a tightening economy, the Premier promised there would be ‘a little pain for everyone’ and yet that pain was not shared equally,” said Irina Cattalini, CEO of WACOSS today.

“Given clear indications from WA Treasurer, Mike Nahan that our state is facing another tough budget, we are particularly concerned to ensure that low income and vulnerable households are shielded from unnecessary budget pain.”

“We must ensure during times of relative economic austerity that low-income and vulnerable people are protected from adverse impacts. These people deserve better than being hit hard by both phases of the economic cycle. We do not want to see them finding their circumstances continuing to worsen during these times of economic tightening the way they did due to cost of living increases during the boom.”

“Safe, secure, appropriate and affordable housing remains critical as an underpinning foundation for the social and economic wellbeing of all Western Australians and should be the top priority.”

“Increased investment in public and community housing has continued to be our strongest recommendation for improving outcomes and strengthening our economy for many years running. We are hopeful that its critical role as a pre-cursor for economic participation will be recognised in the Budget.”

“The Council strongly cautions against any suggestion to cut funding levels to the Department of Child Protection and Family Services,” said Ms Cattalini. “Concerns about the sustainability of child protection expenditure need to be addressed by stronger investment in the early intervention and prevention services that we know reduce the risk of children being taken into State care.”

“Our Budget submission calls for an expansion of Family Support Networks that coordinate services for families with children at risk, as well as increased capacity for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, given that fifty percent of children in care are Aboriginal.”

“We understand that Treasury is undertaking a whole of government review of state concessions. While the Council has been calling for such a review for many years, highlighting opportunities to better target a range of non means-tested concessions to insure that adequate assistance is reaching those most in need, we are concerned that there has not been the stakeholder consultation process we expected.”

“The Council is firmly of the view that any savings achieved from better targeting of State concessions should be directed back into increasing the adequacy of support to those most at risk of poverty and extreme disadvantage, not channelled back into consolidated revenue,” concluded Ms Cattalini.

More information can be found in the WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission [*“The Difference We Can Make: Building a better future for all Western Australians”*](#) at www.wacoss.org.au.

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