

# MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Federal Budget attacks those on welfare yet again**

The WA Council of Social Service has slammed the welfare provisions in 2017 Federal Budget as unfair and unnecessary, while welcoming modest steps on affordable housing, health and education.

Louise Giolitto, CEO of WACOSS said, “What we have seen tonight is more pointless nastiness directed to those on income support.”

“The social security system is simply insufficient to meet the basic costs of living, causing entrenched disadvantage in our communities. This budget once again demonises and attacks those who deserve our support, undermining their ability to secure ongoing employment.”

“This demerit point system for welfare recipients is the latest manifestation of a repugnant political culture that treats the impacts of societal disadvantage as some kind of personal failing.”

“When there is only one job for every ten unemployed people, how does making it harder for them to get by actually help?”

“The linking of people’s income support to reducing substance abuse is deeply disturbing, when there is no provision being made for increased support to help those struggling with addiction. How kicking people off welfare and consigning them to the gutter is supposed to help deal with the complex health issue of substance addiction is beyond me.”

“The Treasurer’s statement that welfare will be denied to those who have a disability as a result of substance abuse is reprehensible. What does he think is going to happen to these people, or does he simply not care?”

“The extension of the cashless welfare card to two further regions is occurring in the absence of any credible scientific evidence that it does anything other than increase the cost of welfare administration. Removing people’s capacity to manage their own household budget does nothing to prepare them for work.”

“WACOSS welcomes some of the modest measures introduced on affordable housing. The new National Finance and Investment Corporation and the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement are first steps in addressing the housing crisis in this country, and provide much needed support for services and community housing providers.”

“We welcome the promised continuity of funding for social housing and welcome the promise of greater transparency and accountability for state governments in meeting social housing growth targets.”

“It is, however, disappointing that once again we have seen no action to tackle negative gearing and reduce the competition for investment properties that continues to inflate housing prices, with the proposed Super Tax breaks simply adding to those pressures without addressing the underlying structural problems.”

“Much more needs to be done to address rental affordability for those on lower incomes and the inadequacy of income support and Commonwealth Rent Assistance in the face of growing poverty and inequality within our community,” concluded Ms Giolitto.

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