



Media Release

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More pain to come for households

Households can expect more big hikes in electricity bills in coming years, following the release of the WA Budget today.

“This pain will be felt most by low income families, who are already struggling to meet big rises in fees and charges announced in the lead-up to the budget in June,” said Louise Giolitto, WACOSS CEO.

A further 7% increase to power bills is expected next year and 5.6% the year after, on top of the 10.9% increase announced in June 2017. Today the Treasurer announced that Synergy would be moving to full cost recovery by 2019/20.

“Unfortunately there was no announcement today of matching increases in concessions and support for low income households who spend a much greater proportion of their income on their basic living costs.”

The Premier talked about “fair and reasonable measures” to achieve budget repair and seeking to achieve “the right balance” to get our economy “back on track” - but more is needed to protect the most vulnerable in our community during tough economic times.

“We are calling on the Treasurer to commit additional resources to concessions and to announce an independent review of their adequacy and targeting,” Louise said.

“The commitment of \$1.3 Billion over four years to building Stage 1 of Metronet provides an opportunity for the Government to leverage some affordable housing outcomes.”

WACOSS welcomes the commitment to improve our public transport infrastructure and hopes the Government will make the most of its investment by capturing some property value uplift alongside the train line.

“While there is no new money for investment in social housing and affordable rental for low-income households, there is a once in a lifetime opportunity to set some targets and negotiate some outcomes with property developers who will benefit from the project,” she said.

WACOSS acknowledged the announcement of new revenue measures through short-term increases in payroll tax on large corporations, and increases in gold royalties as a fair and balanced measure to ensure those who can afford to are contributing to budget repair.

“We have seen some significant increases in workforce productivity in recent years while wages have remained flat – the big end of town can afford to make a contribution to helping balance the bottom line.

“WACOSS remains concerned by increasing demand and expenditure forecast for children in the care of the state, with a growing proportion of Aboriginal children in out of home care.

“While we welcome the development of an earlier intervention and family support strategy, we remain concerned that we are not seeing enough investment in early intervention to produce better outcomes and bring down the growing cost of care.”

Some positive new measures included:

- \$20m over five years for an Aboriginal Ranger Program
- \$12.4m for the Stopping Family and Domestic Violence package
- Reinstatement of \$2m for Financial Counselling Services cut by the previous government
- A point of consumption wagering tax, included at 15% of net wagering revenue.

Ends.

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