

Tuesday 31 March 2020

MEDIA RELEASE

Welcome Extra Support to Keep People Connected

WACOSS has warmly welcomed the McGowan Government's announcement today of additional support for WA households experiencing financial hardship.

"This is a time when many people are facing serious financial strain and we must do everything we can to support them get through it," said Louise Giolitto, CEO, WACOSS.

"The package unveiled today by Premier McGowan is crucial for maintain people's connection to essential services like energy and water."

WACOSS is one of more than 40 community organisations that has supported the call to [keep people connected to essential services during the COVID-19 crisis](#) and has been advocating directly to the State Government on this issue.

"We are particularly pleased to see the commitment made today by the State Government that people experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19 will not have their energy or water disconnected," Ms Giolitto said.

"The privately-owned gas companies operating in WA need to follow the example being set here by the publicly-owned Synergy and Horizon, by making the same commitment.

"Disconnections have serious emotional, financial, health and safety impacts. That data shows that WA households have been disconnected by their utilities at the highest rate in the country.

"With the extra pressures households are facing and with many people spending more time within their home, it is so important that they are able to stay connected to essential services.

"At the same time, it is crucial that households are not being pushed into the position where they are accumulating larger and larger debts. That no interest will now be charged on deferred bill payments for those people is crucial to that.

"It is also pleasing to see that the Energy Assistance Payments are being brought forward to this financial year, as well as the eligibility for the payment boost expanded. This means more households who need this money right now, will be able to access it faster."

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