



MEDIA RELEASE: 3 June 2011

Homelessness Services out in the COLD with 'Landmark Funding Decision'

Hundreds of workers in homelessness accommodation services have missed out on much needed wage increases as of 1 July through the Barnett Governments \$604million dollar package for the not-for-profit sector. These workers are some of the lowest paid and help those most in need including young people and those fleeing from domestic and family violence.

“These services are already struggling and this decision by the State Government not to pay increases on their proportion of joint State/Federal contracts as of 1 July 11, will only, create greater disparity in the wages paid across the community sector and compound issues around the recruitment and retention of staff in homelessness services making it difficult for them to help those most in need” said Angela Hartwig, CEO of the Women’s Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services.

There is now a lack of any certainty for homelessness services with the State Government’s decision to delay funding increases for these services until the outcome of the Equal Remuneration Case currently before Fair Work Australia, and negotiations with the Commonwealth. This increase may come too late for some services that are already cutting back on their opening hours and reducing the number of people they are able to support. “These services have been left out in the cold, with others in the community sector receiving an immediate funding increase of 15%, while the homelessness sector continues their struggle just to keep open” said Ms Hartwig.

Workers in the Domestic and Family Violence Sector, who have been fighting for these increases for many years, are very disappointed. “In the 2011/12 WA State Budget the State Government have chosen to significantly delay any increases for the hundreds of lowly paid workers in the homelessness sector. The predominately female work force who work tirelessly to support women and children escaping family violence, have been left without certainty as to when they will be included in the community sector funding increases” said a Refuge Manager of many years.

“What does this say about the Barnett’s Government’s attitude to people experiencing homelessness in WA and those who work so hard to assist them?” Given that WA boasts the second best economy in Australia, behind Canberra, this is a grave injustice to workers who are already underpaid and obviously undervalued.

The Women’s Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services are calling on the State Government to provide the **State Government’s proportion of funding of the 15% increase for homelessness services as of 1 July 2011**. This increase will help services cope, including assisting them in attracting and retaining staff while they wait for the outcome of the Equal Remuneration Case currently before the Fair Work Australia.

Media contact:

Angela Hartwig, CEO, Women’s Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA)

Mobile: 0409 207 264

Email: ahartwig@womenscouncil.com.au