



MEDIA ALERT

To: News Editor

From: Uniting Church Western Australia

Tuesday, 17 October 2017

Perth Churches Combine for Anti-Poverty Week Event

An Ecumenical Service will be held at 1.00pm today, Tuesday 17 October at Uniting Church in the City, Wesley to recognise Anti-Poverty Week and demonstrate the community's commitment to ending poverty in our community. Co-ordinated by the Ecumenical Social Justice Roundtable, which consists of representatives from Anglican, Catholic and Uniting churches, as well as the Salvation Army, Quakers and the Council of Churches, the event will focus on the question **"Can you live on Newstart or Youth Allowance?"**

According to a report released by the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) in October 2016, there were 731,300 children or 17.4% of all children in Australia living in poverty at the time, an increase of 2% over the past 10 years, from 2004 to 2014.

Rev Steve Francis, Moderator of the Uniting Church Western Australia said, "The current rate for Newstart and Youth Allowance is significantly below the ACOSS poverty line. This is unsatisfactory for a wealthy society like ours – we must not leave people behind. We call on the Federal Government to immediately begin a process of increasing the Newstart and Youth Allowance rate, so that those who receive them have the resources to live above the poverty line."

According to the Western Australian Council of Social Services (WACOSS), in 2016, "Figures indicate that 240,000 Western Australians live below the poverty line, with a further 150,000 at risk of financial hardship. These figures are likely to be an underestimate, as they do not take into account higher living costs in Western Australia."

Acknowledging that nationwide, more than 730,000 children live in poverty (one child in six), the theme of Anti-Poverty Week in 2017 this year is "Start at The Beginning".

Amanda Hunt, CEO of UnitingCare West said, "We must do better at supporting families who are struggling financially, particularly lone parent families who consistently appear at elevated levels in the statistics on poverty.

"Children deserve to have a safe and healthy start to life. We see children who just want to fit in and not have to worry about always having old clothes, feeling hungry and tired, not having access to books or the internet to study. We need to do better than this."

Event: Ecumenical Anti-Poverty Week Service

When: 1pm, Tuesday 17 October 2017 (12 noon soup lunch)

Where: Uniting Church in the City, Wesley, corner William & Hay Streets, Perth

For media enquiries and interviews, please contact Maggie Johns on 0419 831 576.