

Media Release

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West Australians back a permanent increase to JobSeeker

An extra 250,000 Western Australians will be living in poverty by the end of the week, following the Federal Government's cut to the JobSeeker Coronavirus Supplement.

A report released today shows that the cut is going ahead despite clear public support for a social safety net above the poverty line, listed by the OECD as \$457 per week.

Commissioned by Anglicare WA, Communicare, Foodbank WA, Ruah Community Services, Uniting WA and WACOSS, the *Above the Line – Perceptions of Poverty in WA* report throws weight behind the growing push to permanently increase JobSeeker to levels well above the pre-COVID rate of \$40 a day.

Uniting WA CEO Amanda Hunt says the research shows West Australians overwhelmingly support the notion that poverty is unacceptable in today's society.

"There is no doubt – people believe that poverty should be a thing of the past," said Ms Hunt.

"But the research also shows that many of us don't understand the reality for the thousands of families trapped in a cycle of disadvantage.

"The rhetoric we've heard about dole bludgers over the years has blurred our vision when it comes to understanding what's really going on.

"We need to confront government-sanctioned poverty, demand our voices are heard and that action is taken. We need to say 'enough is enough'," said Ms Hunt.

WA-based Federal MPs have been provided the independent research and invited to discuss the findings.

WACOSS CEO Louise Giolitto says there's ample evidence to show now is the wrong time to pull the rug out from people.

"This \$300 cut to JobSeeker comes at a time when the economy is struggling and unemployment is high.

"We're seeing more families at risk of becoming entrenched in disadvantage, so if we don't act now and address the problem we'll be picking up the pieces for generations to come," said Ms Giolitto.

The *Above the Line – Perceptions of Poverty in WA* report outlines the key findings from independent research into the perceptions of poverty and JobSeeker in Western Australia.

The report is available [here](#) and also on the websites of each of the commissioning agencies.

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