

Media Release



Uniting Church in Australia
Western Australia



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Uniting Church WA calls for an urgent increase in funding to homelessness services

The Uniting Church WA calls on the Western Australian Government to prioritise funding increases to homelessness services and to end no-cause evictions to reduce the risk of people becoming homeless.

The calls were made at the 46th Annual Meeting of the Synod of WA, from Friday 9 to Sunday 11 September, where more than 120 Uniting Church members from around Western Australia came together to discuss issues of importance in the life of the church and the wider community.

Susy Thomas, Moderator of the Uniting Church WA, said that the church was calling on the WA Government to prioritise the needs of those who are doing it tough.

“The Uniting Church, along with all churches, has always had concern for people experiencing poverty and everyday our care agencies see the impacts homelessness has on people’s health and wellbeing,” said Mrs Thomas.

“The WA Government have managed the economy well and we are very grateful for the leadership displayed during the pandemic, but it is now time to consider a significant recalibration of budget priorities to make sure that all Western Australians can benefit from the boom.”

Mrs Thomas was keen to express her gratefulness for a number of the Government’s initiatives on housing and homelessness, but questioned some of the broader priorities of the Government.

“We welcome the commitments that have been made to reduce household energy costs and provide some new social housing. That is all very positive and fits with our vision for a fair and equal society, but how is it that our homelessness services are still struggling to cope with demand and our public housing waitlist continues to blow out?” said Mrs Thomas.

“We keep recording record surpluses, but that means very little if people are continuing to fall into poverty and homelessness.

The church also made calls on the Federal Government, recognising the need for a coordinated set of commitments between Federal and State Governments. The calls included an increased provision of social housing, financing of housing in remote Indigenous communities, and an increase to the Commonwealth Rent Assistance payment to prevent people entering homelessness.

“We need all efforts aligned if we are going to make inroads. One of the best ways to address homelessness is to prevent it from occurring in the first place. So, alongside an increase in social housing stock, it is also vital to provide support for particularly vulnerable cohorts at risk of homelessness,” said Mrs Thomas.

Ends

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