



100 Families WA

Embargoed until 2:00pm, Monday 14 October 2019

Perth families on support payments live well below the poverty line, cannot meet basic needs.



A landmark study has shown that families living on Newstart and related income support payments are living well below the poverty line, with income being grossly inadequate to provide for a family's basic needs.

The 100 Families WA findings were released today at an event for Anti-Poverty Week 2019, supporting the campaign to #RaiseTheRate.

UnitingCare West Chief Executive Officer Amanda Hunt said the findings were unsurprising.

"Sadly, the entrenched poverty and disadvantage of many people in our community is a tragedy that community service providers see every day.

"People can get stuck in a cycle of financial hardship, with compounding effects on a person's mental health, physical health and their interactions with their community. It can be debilitating, but it's preventable with adequate income and the right supports," Ms Hunt said.

Newstart payments in Australia have remained stagnant in real terms over the past 20 years, falling well below average wages and the poverty line. The 100 Families WA study highlights the lived experience of poverty, which is defined as the inability to afford what most Australians would think are necessities for a good quality of life.

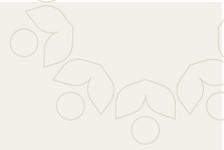
Professor Paul Flatau, Director of the Centre for Social Impact at the University of Western Australia said the significant financial hardship experienced by families on Newstart causes high levels of stress and anxiety as well as other impacts which affect a person's ability to find or maintain employment.

For the 164 families who receive Newstart of similar allowances in the 100 Families WA study, 82% had at least one chronic health condition and 76% had at least one mental health condition.

"These findings tell us that families are contending with chronic health conditions which they may not be able to afford to treat, at the same time as trying to find a job or study. Given the activity requirements of income support payments and their intent to assist people into work or study, there's a clear need for more health support and suitable study or work options," said Professor Flatau.

Tiba Moeini, single mother of two and 100 Families WA Community Advisory Group member, shares the experience of 85% of families in the study who do not have access to \$500 in savings for emergencies. She lives from fortnight to fortnight and regularly goes without for the sake of her children.

"It's very hard, after nine days I have to search for coins and see if there is money left over from school lunches. I sometimes have to go without dinner so my children can eat," Ms Moeini said.



It's the situation of families like Ms Moeini's which Amanda Hunt says supports the campaign to #RaiseTheRate.

"We're a wealthy society with an unhealthy attitude towards supporting people to break the cycle of poverty. It's time to get behind the campaign to #RaiseTheRate and support the next generation to live their best life," said Ms Hunt.

Life on Newstart, 100 Families WA Bulletin No 2, will be released at 2pm on Monday 14 October 2019.

[Anti-Poverty Week](#) runs 13-19 October 2019

Hashtags: #APW2019 #100FamiliesWA #RaiseTheRate

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Media Contact:

Ren Adams, Lead – Communications & Engagement, UnitingCare West, Ren.Adams@unitingcarewest.org.au, 0422 146 680

Laurene Coller, Communications Officer, WACOSS, laurene@wacoss.org.au, 0419 316 557

About 100 Families WA

[100 Families WA](#) is a collaborative research project with a vision to address the issue of entrenched disadvantage or hardship, as experienced by families living in Western Australia.

The 100 Families WA baseline report was released on 4 September 2019 and forms part of a wider study to understand entrenched disadvantage in Perth. The baseline study involves 400 families, while in-depth interviews with 100 families will continue until 2022.

The baseline report examined the domains of social, health and economic wellbeing, including demographics, family and household composition, income, material deprivation, employment, health, mental health, substance use, wellbeing and quality of life, and adverse life experiences.

WACOSS, Anglicare WA, Ruah Community Services, Wanslea, Jacaranda, Centrecare, UnitingCare West, Mercycare, the UWA Social Policy Practice and Research Consortium and the Centre for Social Impact UWA are collaborative partners on the project.

#100FamiliesWA