



SACOSS

*South Australian Council
of Social Service*

Justice, opportunity and shared wealth for all South Australians

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday 14 October

What does poverty mean to you?

This will be one of the questions shoppers in Rundle Mall will be asked today as part of National Anti-Poverty week, raising awareness and understanding of the causes and impacts of poverty in Australia and globally.

The South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS) will take to the Mall at lunchtime today, to conduct a 'straw-poll' of Adelaideans to find out about their perceptions and understanding of poverty.

Other questions include:

- How much money do you think a person would need, per week, to not be living in poverty?
- How many people do you think live on a low income in South Australia: 5%,20%, or 35%? *
- Do you feel like there is anything you can do to help prevent poverty in South Australia?
- As it's an election year this year, what do you think politicians could do to address the issue of poverty in South Australia?

To place these questions in context, SACOSS research has revealed that in the last three years, the costs for main expenditure items for low income households — costs such as energy bills, transport costs (public and private), food and housing — have in the main risen faster than the CPI, with some rising far beyond the limits of household budgeting.

For example, the rise in costs means that currently, housing, energy and fuel costs combined would account for over 90% of weekly income for Newstart Allowance recipients, leaving virtually no money for food, let alone anything else such as leisure activities, or buying presents for family or friends.

In the lead up to the March 2010 state election, SACOSS' *Create a Better State* campaign, of which this Rundle Mall poll is part, wants to get people thinking about what could make South Australia a better state — to make it a fairer place to live for everyone — to think how they can help achieve this, and to demand change of our politicians by asking them what they will do to make it happen.

Visit www.createabetterstate.wordpress.com for fact sheets and more information.

* (The answer is 20%)



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SACOSS Anti-Poverty Week straw poll - The results are in!

The South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS) has canvassed the views and opinions of shoppers in Rundle Mall, Arndale Shopping Centre and the Port Canal Mall. Six questions about their perceptions and understanding of poverty were asked as part of National Anti-Poverty Week, with the aim of raising awareness of the causes and impacts of poverty in Australia and globally.

Anti-Poverty Week Co-Chair and SACOSS Executive Director Karen Grogan said, "All respondents thought that an average individual would need between \$150 - \$500 per week to not be living in poverty, based on that person's particular requirements. However, when asked "How many people do you think live on a low income in South Australia", the majority of respondents tended to overestimate the numbers of people on a low income; they also overestimated what a person's weekly income would need to be for them to qualify as 'low-income'."

"While it is also heartening to see that 44% of the people we polled were aware of Anti-Poverty Week and its aims, this survey makes it very clear that as a State, we need much more education into the issues surrounding poverty and disadvantage," Ms Grogan said.

The poll also asked respondents what politicians could do to alleviate poverty and disadvantage in South Australia – a particularly relevant question in the lead up to the March 2010 state election. Some responses included:

- "Create more community housing and counselling services – provide free services so people can manage their own lives."
- "Undertake a lot more research and talk to people, don't just look at statistics - get the public involved."
- "Help people to help themselves, by providing free education and training, or creating jobs to enable people to live above poverty."
- "Fund hands-on agencies and communicate with them often."

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