

## **Takes more than you expect to live above the poverty line**

**SACOSS has today released an Anti-Poverty Statement with the results of a statewide survey as part of Anti-Poverty Week (17-23 October). Surprisingly, almost 40% of survey respondents believed an income below \$200 per week would mean they were living in poverty. The poverty line figure is in fact above \$300, and in reality the basic essentials of life cost even more.**

“This result indicates a lack of understanding from the community of the real costs of just getting by. A common measure for poverty is 50% of the median income, which for a single person in South Australia today represents \$326 per week, ” SACOSS Executive Director Ross Womersley.

“In our Anti-Poverty Statement, released today, we note that for a sole pensioner, essential items add up to \$378 per week. With electricity prices going through the roof and water set to increase by 20% per year for the next five years, low income South Australians are going to be really hard-pressed to find the extra cash,” said Womersley.

“Our survey aimed both to raise awareness of poverty as an issue in this state, and to gauge the public’s perceptions and knowledge of it.”

“Predictably some regarded poverty as an issue that affects only third-world countries. Poverty exists in South Australia and is more prevalent than many of us are aware. But it does not need to exist and we should not ever consider it an inevitable part of life, nor should we assume that those who experience poverty are to blame.”

“SACOSS mobilised its members across South Australia, from Mt Gambier to Whyalla, Berri to Port Lincoln, and throughout metropolitan Adelaide, asking people in the street a range of questions about poverty,” said Womersley.

“Many survey respondents believed volunteering and donating to charity were the two things they could most do to help alleviate poverty in SA.”

“The survey asked how politicians should address the issue of poverty: the most common response was that politicians need to understand poverty better. In particular, those surveyed suggested politicians get out in the community and talk to people about the issues they face in everyday life”.

“Further to this, it was recommended that politicians take a leading role in the education of the South Australian community on poverty and how we can all help to alleviate it”.

The SACOSS Anti-Poverty Statement, incorporating survey results, can be downloaded from [www.sacoss.org.au/online\\_docs/APStatement2010.pdf](http://www.sacoss.org.au/online_docs/APStatement2010.pdf)