

## **SACOSS urges public Equal Pay commitment from Premier Rann**

**The Rann Government is being urged to publicly commit to funding the outcomes of the equal pay case currently before Fair Work Australia. The case is seeking to bring the pay level of community service workers, who are predominantly women, up to what they would earn in other sectors. The South Australian Council of Social Service, the peak body for the community services sector, supports the equal pay case but wants to ensure that it will not result in cuts to crucial services to the vulnerable and disadvantaged.**

“With the decision from Fair Work Australia due next year, vital services in South Australia are staring down the barrel of millions of dollars in extra wage costs – but Premier Rann is staying silent on whether he will support the outcomes of the equal pay case. It’s time for the Premier to demonstrate his support for the community sector by agreeing to fund the case outcomes” said Ross Womersley, Executive Director of SACOSS.

Speaking on the day of the equal pay action organised by the Australian Services Union, Ross Womersley said “Many services are already struggling to attract workers. Low salaries are a significant barrier to the sector’s capacity to attract and retain staff. With demand for services already outstripping supply, the issues of low retention rates and challenges in staff development must be addressed.”

“The Premier has an historic opportunity to stand strong for the community sector. 87% of the sector’s workers are female, and the tendency to undervalue the sector for gender-based reasons is here being fundamentally challenged. These are defining times for any government” said Mr Womersley.

Commenting on the national state of play, Mr Womersley said “The current equal pay case is based on a similar case run successfully in Queensland in 2009. The Queensland Government responded with additional funding of \$414 million towards the cost of higher wages. The South Australian community deserves equal consideration.”

“SACOSS believes achieving pay equity is crucial for the sustainability of social services. The current equal pay case is likely to deliver a long overdue advance in wages for the deeply committed people in the sector. Funding models that continue to undervalue the work are past their use by date. It is imperative for the South Australian Government to commit to fully funding the outcomes of the case” Mr Womersley said.

**Ross Womersley will be addressing the Australian Services Union rally today at 12 o’clock at the SA Museum Lawns, North Terrace, Adelaide.**