

## SACOSS MEDIA RELEASE

THURSDAY 5 MAY

### **Government slams door on financial counselling**

The South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS) today is releasing a new report “At the Crossroads: Financial Counselling in South Australia”. This is in response to the South Australian government’s 2010-11 Budget decision to effectively halve its financial counselling services—cutting 44 full-time equivalent staff within Families SA. This is due to commence 1 July 2011.

Ross Womersley, SACOSS Executive Director, said “The government believes that the work of these counsellors will be taken up by the community, with no additional funding.”

“This assumption is unfounded, and is an abandonment of the government’s responsibility to provide necessary services to the community. The community sector’s resources are already overstretched. We cannot take up the workload abandoned by the state government without further funding.”

Womersley said, “Financial counselling is an important service to the community, particularly at a time when the cost of living for people on low and modest incomes is rising alarmingly, and much more rapidly than incomes.”

“We estimate that this cut in financial counselling will mean that each year about 7,000 people on low incomes will not get basic financial assistance.”

“Families SA has also decided to limit access to its remaining financial counsellors to only those people engaged with Families SA on child protection issues,” said Womersley.

“These decisions will have the impact of savagely reducing—even slamming the door on—the financial counselling support available to anyone experiencing financial hardship in SA.”

The SACOSS Information Paper *At the Crossroads: Financial Counselling in South Australia* contains case studies of people whose lives have been turned around by the assistance provided by financial counsellors.

It outlines the history and context of financial counselling in South Australia, and highlights the impacts these cuts will have.

Download the report from [www.sacoss.org.au/publications#papers](http://www.sacoss.org.au/publications#papers)

**Media Call: 10am at The Salvation Army, 277 Pirie Street**

**For further information and to arrange an interview:**

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