



Media Release

Embargoed for 6am Wednesday 19 October 2011

Media note: SACOSS Cost of Living Summit
9am, Lakes Resort Hotel, Brebner Drive, West Lakes
Keynote speaker:
Chair of the Prime Minister's Social Inclusion Board
Patricia Faulkner AO

First Cost of Living Summit to tackle ideas for change

The South Australian Council of Social Service will today hold its first ever *Cost of Living Summit* to tackle the State's growing problems of disadvantage, as part of national Anti-Poverty Week.

The keynote speaker at the Conference will be the Chair of the Prime Minister's Social Inclusion Board, Patricia Faulkner.

SACOSS Executive Director Ross Womersley says the Summit will bring together leading thinkers to generate realistic policy ideas for helping our most disadvantaged South Australians.

"We hear business commentators talk a lot about a two speed economy, with some sectors booming and others struggling."

"We are seeing the same thing in our community –some people are continuing to do well, but growing numbers are struggling more than ever to cope with the ever-increasing costs of daily life."

Womersley says the basic cost of living, especially the cost of food, utility bills, housing, transport and healthcare have all risen way above the rate of inflation. "For example, while general CPI has risen by 3.9% in the last year, fuel has risen by 12% , electricity by 16.8%, and fruit and vegetables by 38.1%"

"Anti-Poverty Week gives us the opportunity to talk about solutions, fairness and a decent standard of living for all South Australians."

"We don't just want to point out the problems of poverty, but encourage research, discussion and action to address these issues."

"We'll be putting these ideas to the new Premier Jay Weatherill and challenging him to make them a top priority. We have said before that South Australia urgently needs a comprehensive Anti-Poverty Plan, and many of these ideas will contribute to creating that."

Womersley said, "For so many people right across South Australia, poverty is the ongoing and daily struggle to just get through everyday life. At last count about 200,000 South Australians, or 12.3%, were living in poverty—that is more than one out of every ten people in this state."

"This is a problem which is not going away. Worse still, it seems to be growing; between 1994 and 2006, the proportion of South Australians living in poverty rose from 6.7% to 12.3%."

"Our Cost of Living Summit will galvanise leading thinkers and practitioners from business, university, government and the community sector. This event will create some genuine, workable policy ideas on the key cost of living issues."

For further comment contact SACOSS Executive Director Ross Womersley 0418 805 426

To arrange an interview with Ross Womersley or Patricia Faulkner, contact Communications Officer Celia Brissenden on 0414 014 144.