

## **Historic recognition for South Australian community sector workers**

**SACOSS today welcomes the Federal government's agreement with the Australian Services Union that clears the path to funding pay equity for community sector workers, and acknowledges the lead the South Australian government took when Treasurer Snelling pledged support in June this year.**

SACOSS Executive Director Ross Womersley said, "By coming to an agreement with the Australian Services Union (ASU) on appropriate pay increases for low-paid community workers, the Federal government today has made it clear that they are determined to support community sector workers, and ensure they have access to fair pay".

"Community sector workers support some of our most vulnerable South Australians: they help homeless people find homes; they support people who live with a disability to be active members of their community; they aid families in crisis; they help young people living on the edge; they do some of the most important work in this state."

"In June the South Australian government made an in-principle commitment to fund its share of these vital wage increases, and we welcome the leadership it has shown the nation in this regard. It is imperative that, following a final decision by Fair Work Australia, the state and federal governments work with the sector and unions to ensure required funding is made available in a way that ensures community organisations are not left lacking".

The ASU and the Federal government will now make a joint submission to Fair Work Australia on the pay rates they believe are appropriate to address the gender-based undervaluation of community workers. The Equal Pay test case is scheduled for final hearings on 28 November, 7 and 8 December 2011.

Based on their submission, the proposed rates of pay will align to the pay rises awarded to Queensland community workers in 2009 in their Equal Pay Case, estimated to result in an average increase of 20% across six years.

In order to reach their final decision, Fair Work Australia now has to consider this joint submission from the ASU and the Federal government. It is likely that the submission will be viewed very favourably.

SACOSS together with ACOSS and the other COSSes will now begin work in preparing for critical issues in the implementation of the decision.

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