

# MEDIA RELEASE

Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia



## ATTACK ON SOCIAL WELFARE RECIPIENTS MUST STOP

YACWA has condemned the federal Government for its approach to social welfare and young people in the federal Budget.

YACWA CEO Ross Wortham said that “Whilst YACWA welcomes the announcement regarding homelessness funding, the budget as a whole is disappointing and harmful to young people.”

“It is disappointing to see that the Government is remaining stubborn to the end in pursuing some of our most vulnerable people in the community. This constant attack on social welfare, in particular on young people, needs to stop.” Ross Wortham, said.

In the Treasurer’s budget speech, Scott Morrison stated that:

“Those who do not meet their responsibilities and either fail to turn up to appointments or take on suitable work will face escalating financial penalties, ranging from reduced to cancelled payments.”

YACWA disapproves of this policy approach and the announced drug testing, which it opposes unequivocally.

“We know that there are a myriad of reasons why young people require support, and sometimes it is through no fault of their own. The vast majority do the right thing, and do not deserved to be punished by adding additional barriers to a system that is already difficult to navigate,” YACWA CEO, Ross Wortham said in response.

YACWA welcomed the announcement addressing funding uncertainty with homelessness which will secure long-term stability for homelessness services in Western Australia.

‘It is encouraging to see that our views have been listened to in ensuring the stability of services that support young people sleeping rough, instead of adhoc spending amounts applied at the last minute,’ Ross Wortham said.

‘However, the Budget delivers mixed results in a lot of other areas, which have had small amounts of funding - applied or none at all. There are also some harmful measures contained within the budget that will inadvertently affect young people – like the increase in the Medicare levy, or the changes to higher education. These actions demonstrate a missed opportunity for long term solutions in important areas, such as housing affordability, mental health, employment and engagement with young people.’

YACWA has consistently been calling for the restoration of funding to support the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC) over the last three years, the national body representing the views of young people, and will continue to do so.

“The lack of commitment to hear from the voices of young people at a national level in the formation of policy, due to the defunding of a national body must be addressed. It is vital that are engaged in these decision making processes,” Ross Wortham said.

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