

### **UnitingCare West launches Most in Need research report**

On Tuesday 2 December Minister Helen Morton, launched the UnitingCare West 2014 Most in Need research report in Weld Square. This year the report was designed to shine a light on economic disadvantage and what this means for members of the West Australian community who are most in need. Information from more than 1,000 clients as well as direct engagement with 250 individuals was included in the building of the report.

Sue Ash AO, CEO of UnitingCare West said “this report is highly important for not only UnitingCare West but for the wider public, including state and federal government, to better understand the significant number of people who are living with economic hardships. As the gap continues to widen between those suffering economic disadvantage and the rest of society, it is becoming vital that we conduct research such as this to better understand what we can do to help going forward.”

UnitingCare West was established eight years ago to support, serve and empower people, focussing on those most in need. For the past three years, UnitingCare West has undertaken to learn from the people accessing our services by asking what it means to be most in need. This year the decision was made to release the report to the public, highlighting the severity of resource poverty within the WA community.

Through this report it was identified that the vast majority of UnitingCare West clients are facing economic disadvantage and a growing number are being supported to address severe financial distress. In fact for a large number of clients covering the cost of accommodation and utilities alone is using up all of their available resources, with nothing left for other essential items including food and clothing. This is reflected in that one in five clients accessing support through UnitingCare West financial counselling services are spending between 90% and 120% of their income on housing costs alone.

UnitingCare West continues to help those most in need through a vast range of programs and services, and this report has helped to highlight what economic disadvantage looks like for these clients.

For a copy of this report or further information, please see [www.unitingcarewest.org.au](http://www.unitingcarewest.org.au) or call 1300 663 298.

**For more information and photo opportunities please contact:**

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**About UnitingCare West**

UnitingCare West assists over 30,000 individuals and families each year. With 300 staff members and over 300 volunteers, UnitingCare West is a community service agency that has a mission to support, serve and empower those most in need. UCW operates over 35 community service programs from 17 sites across Perth, reaching as far North as Merriwa and as far South as Bunbury, in the areas of community housing, accommodation, homelessness, family support, mental health and disability services. UnitingCare West's clients include those in the community experiencing financial hardship, domestic violence, child abuse trauma, mental health issues and disability to name a few.