



MEDIA RELEASE

11 July 2016

Shop window display ‘One of us is homeless’ questions homelessness stigma – 61% of WA service users are women

UnitingCare West has revealed a shop window in Forrest Chase, across from the Perth train station overpass, which draws attention to the growing number of homeless women in Perth.

Four well-dressed female mannequins hold up cardboard signs, stating to the shopping public “One of us is homeless”. Over the next three months a story will unfold, revealing which woman has become homeless due to life’s circumstances.

The public is invited to view the display and follow the story of the women via the UnitingCare West Facebook page www.facebook.com/unitingcarewest/. Each story will highlight just how quickly anyone in our society can find themselves living on the streets.

The shop window is part of UnitingCare West’s 2016 Winter Appeal which aims to raise over \$100,000 to further assist people experiencing homelessness.

Currently around 10,000 people in Perth⁽¹⁾ are experiencing homelessness, with around 61% being women⁽²⁾.

UnitingCare West CEO Sue Ash AO says the organisation continues to see a high level of demand across its homelessness services.

“I think people will be shocked and surprised by what they see in this display. The life stories of these women will give the community an understanding of just how quickly anyone can go from having everything, to living rough on the street, and the number of factors that contribute to that,” Ms Ash said.

Ms Ash added. “We are seeing a broad range of people getting into dire straits very quickly. Family and domestic violence is a key reason why women become homeless, followed by financial crisis and a lack of affordable housing. Many of the clients that seek assistance



through UnitingCare West's homelessness services also experience mental health challenges."

The UnitingCare West Winter Appeal continues to run throughout July and August 2016 to raise much needed funds to support those sleeping rough on the streets of Perth during the coldest months of the year. Just \$25 pays for a person's breakfast for five days at UnitingCare West's Tranby Centre. We also collect items such as sleeping bags, sturdy blankets, jackets and jeans.

Anyone wishing to donate to UnitingCare West's 2016 Winter Appeal can call 1300 663 298 or visit www.unitingcarewest.org.au/donate/winterappeal.

⁽¹⁾Australian Census 2011; ⁽²⁾ v AIHW (2013) WA Supplementary Tables of Specialist homelessness services 2012-13.

Contact Details

For quotes and comments please contact:

Sue Ash AO, Chief Executive Officer, UnitingCare West

Phone: 9355 9002

Email: sue.ash@unitingcarewest.org.au

For more information and photo opportunities please contact:

Nienke Rozendaal, Team Leader Marketing and Communications, UnitingCare West

Phone: 9355 9023

Email: nienke.rozendaal@unitingcarewest.org.au

About UnitingCare West

UnitingCare West touches the lives of 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 Great Southern, 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.

Photos

