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## **Thousands of children receive Vinnies emergency assistance in 3 months alone**

**New data from Vinnies WA released during Anti-Poverty Week has revealed that from July to September, the charity provided emergency assistance to 4,715 WA households, including 6,600 children.**

Among the most common types of assistance provided were food and clothing, furniture and bedding, help with utility bills, and transport such as fuel and smart riders.

This year's Anti-Poverty Week (16-22 October) is urging Parliamentarians across Australia to legislate to half child poverty by 2030.

"The number of children who are experiencing poverty and disadvantage is alarming," said Vinnies CEO Susan Rooney.

"In a state as wealthy as Western Australia, it is simply unacceptable that children have to grow up without access to the most basic necessities like food, clothing and a safe, stable home," she added.

Rising interest rates and rents as well as a lack of affordable housing are placing unprecedented pressure on WA families.

Vinnies financial counsellors are reporting that WA families have been forced to decide whether they can keep a roof over their head, put fuel in the car, attend medical appointments or buy food.

Vinnies is calling on the Federal Government to:

- Raise the rate of JobSeeker, Youth Allowance and other income support payments permanently and to a level that ensures people can cover their basic living needs, including housing.
- Increase the rate of the Commonwealth Rent Assistance payment by 50 per cent for low income households who are privately renting and expand the eligibility criteria.
- Develop the promised National Housing and Homelessness Plan as a matter of urgency and fund it appropriately. This plan must include a specialised youth homelessness framework and fund approaches and services that are consistent with the best available evidence and practice to prevent and end youth homelessness.

Ms Rooney is also urging the State Government to support WA renters.

"In these challenging times, if the State Government were to introduce a rental subsidy, it would make a very real difference to vulnerable West Australian families experiencing rental stress, and stop them from sliding into homelessness," she said.

Vinnies WA runs the largest volunteer-delivered emergency assistance program in WA. It assists more than 55,000 Western Australians a year by providing vital support such as food, furniture, clothing and assistance with bills and rent and delivers a range of specialised services and programs in the areas of homelessness, housing, mental health, youth services, and financial counselling.

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