

FAIR WORK COMMISSION — EQUAL REMUNERATION ORDER 2012

Statement by Minister for Community Services

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Community Services) [2.12 pm]: I rise to inform the house of the McGowan government's response to concerns raised about the impact of the Fair Work Commission's Equal Remuneration Order 2012. In particular, I refer to concerns raised by the Western Australian Council of Social Service, Community Employers WA and the community services organisations that have written to me about the impact on crisis accommodation services.

Since 2012, incremental pay rises for staff across the community services sector have been implemented, which in some cases has increased the cost of services. The CEO of WACOSS, Louise Giolitto, said in a media release dated 20 March 2019 —

... the lack of funding increases —

To address the ERO —

over recent years had left homelessness services across WA at breaking point, with the most vulnerable in our community paying the biggest price.

I am pleased that, after working closely with the community-based sector, the McGowan government will provide supplementary funding of up to \$1.9 million for services that operate seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The supplementary funding will be provided to services that are funded under the National Housing and Homeless Agreement, which in many cases have had contracts in place since before 2012. This additional funding reflects the McGowan government's support of the principles behind the Equal Remuneration Order. It will support the continued delivery of services while the Department of Communities finalises the 10-year strategy on homelessness and the 10-year strategy for reducing family and domestic violence.

Importantly, the additional funding will ensure that these services will not be required to reduce the crucial services they provide to some of our most vulnerable citizens. I would like to place on record my thanks to my cabinet colleagues, in particular, Hon Ben Wyatt, and the respective staff in the Departments of Finance, Treasury and Communities for their support in addressing this very important issue.