



Community services workers need better pay and a plan to develop the future workforce

The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) is disappointed that the Federal Government appears to be unwilling to resource a pay increase for the community services workforce.

The community services workforce provides a range of essential services on behalf of State and Federal Governments, to support the needs of low income and disadvantaged Australians in areas including housing, family violence, family relationships and aged care.

Social workers make up a considerable proportion of the community services workforce, with around 1 in 5 members of the AASW working for not-for-profit organisations.

The AASW has actively supported the ASU test case and its National President, Professor Bob Lonne of QUT, was an expert witness in the 2009 Queensland Industrial Relations Commission case which led to substantial increases in the Social and Community Services (SACS) Award in that State.

“Governments urgently need to develop a workforce strategy for the community services sector and to address its sustainability. Workers in the sector are dedicated to delivering vital services but low wages and poor conditions do not help to attract and retain high quality staff. The government’s announcement calls into question their commitment to properly resourcing services to the most vulnerable and needy in the community,” **said AASW National President Professor Bob Lonne.**

“The AASW calls on the Federal Government to commit to the support the community by supporting the staff who deliver services to low income and disadvantaged Australians,” **said AASW acting CEO Karl Charikar.**

The AASW calls on Governments to develop a workforce strategy for the community services which includes:

- Strategies to attract and retain highly skilled staff to work in the community services sector, including better pay and conditions for the workforce;
- Professional accreditation to guarantee quality to the community;
- Learning and development pathways for staff to further their professional development; and
- Regulation of the sector’s workforce to ensure protection of the public.