

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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**To: News Editor**

**From: UnitingCare West, Media Contact – Allison Plenk 0429 723 882**

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### **Financial Boost for Most in Need**

The Honourable Jenny Macklin, Federal Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs will today present a cheque for \$300,000 to UnitingCare West to provide emergency relief services for families and individuals facing financial hardship in Western Australia.

This substantial increase in funding is welcomed by Chris Hall, Chief Executive Officer of Uniting Care West. Emergency relief provides support for socially disadvantaged people with assistance given for utility bills, rent, food, clothing, accommodation or any other crisis needs.

“With emergency relief requests we struggle to meet the demand. The effect from the global financial crisis means we are seeing more West Australians looking for immediate help from community service organisations.

UnitingCare West assists on average 330 families and individuals per month who are seeking emergency relief, yet each week we are forced to turn away many because we do not have the funds to assist them. In the last seven months, we have had to turn away 2,175 individuals and families, that equates to 77 people a week” said Mr Hall.

“Often people can get caught in unforeseen circumstances and need emergency relief to help tide them over. The loss of a job, a relationship breakdown, some ill health or changed circumstances can lead to people who never thought that they would ever need assistance coming into the UnitingCare West centres. UnitingCare West aims to make this process as smooth as possible and assist with the maze of services.” said Mr Hall

UnitingCare West not only provides emergency relief but financial counselling, budgeting, and support to those most in need in our community.

“Our role is to not just give ‘hand outs’ but to educate low income earners to live within their means and to become financially stable. We do this by short term crisis management and long term prevention strategies” said Mr Hall.

Today’s cheque presentation was made at UnitingCare West’s new Inner City Centre which was officially opened by the Premier of Western Australia last week.

The Centre includes Western Australia’s first integrated service response to homelessness. Emergency relief and financial counselling are delivered from this centre as well as a centre in Merriwa which is where these funds are destined.

### **CONTACT DETAILS**

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