SUMMARY REPORT • 2025/26

THE POWER OF A POSTCARD

Community action to end poverty in Western Australia

998 handwritten postcards.
16 locations. One clear message to decision-makers. Western Australia is no place for poverty.

NO PLACE FOR POVERTY



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

No Place for Poverty acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which this initiative took place across Western Australia and pays respect to Elders past and present.

We recognise the enduring connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country, culture, community and knowledge systems.

We acknowledge that poverty and inequality are shaped by historical and ongoing injustices, and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to show strength, leadership and resilience in the pursuit of self-determination and wellbeing.

We are grateful to all First Nations peoples who shared their voices, experiences and aspirations through *The Power of a Postcard*.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
About the Movement	5
About the Initiative	6
What We Did	8
Understanding Poverty in WA	9-10
What We Heard	11
What We Want	15-16

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The number of people living in poverty in Western Australia has doubled in the last decade. The community's determination to see it addressed has grown.

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This report brings together the voices of everyday Western Australians, highlighting the strength of community concern and the growing expectation for action.

Over the past 12 months, this initiative has provided people across WA with a simple way to turn concern into action: handwriting a postcard to be sent to government leaders and decision-makers.

Through workshops, community events and library displays across **16 locations, 998 advocacy postcards were collected, with 679 meeting the quality threshold**.

Together, these postcards provide a powerful snapshot of community concern and a call for action: an invitation for government to listen to these voices, recognise the drivers of poverty, and work with the community to deliver lasting change.

The message from these 679 voices is clear: poverty is not inevitable, and Western Australians expect action.

To take these community voices directly to decision makers, No Place for Poverty has sent an open letter to the Western Australian and Australian Governments, calling on them to take poverty seriously and act on the priorities outlined in this report.

Acting on behalf of the community members who took part, we have asked elected representatives to listen, respond to these concerns and work with the community to address the systemic drivers of poverty.

1. Duncan & Twomey (2026) *Poverty Snapshot 2026: The Changing Face of Poverty in Western Australia.*



ABOUT NO PLACE FOR POVERTY

A movement for a fairer WA

No Place for Poverty is working to end poverty in Western Australia by creating fairer systems and more connected communities.

By bringing together lived experience, engaging community and cross-sector partners, we shift understanding, challenge unjust systems, and build momentum for lasting policy change. Dignity, fairness and opportunity belong to all of us, and no one should be left behind.

OUR VISION

To create a fair, just and compassionate Western Australia where everyone has fair opportunity to reach their potential.

WHY POSTCARDS?

People across Western Australia care about the rising level of poverty and want to see change, but many don't know where to start or whether their voice will be heard.

While many understand that contacting their local MP can influence policy, there are two key barriers:

BARRIER 1

Effectiveness

People are unsure whether their voice will make a difference.

BARRIER 2

Confidence

Writing to an MP can feel onerous, and people often don't know what to say.

The Power of a Postcard turns that goodwill into simple, visible action. By making advocacy quick, tangible and collective, it gives people an accessible way to speak directly to politicians.

The physical, almost nostalgic format captures attention in ways digital tools often don't. People stop, reflect and act. Each postcard is a voice that might otherwise have gone unheard.



WHAT WE DID

The initiative engaged Western Australians across a range of forums over 12 months, from July 2025 to June 2026.

The basic method was to:

1. Provide information on the scale and nature of poverty.
2. Offer participants the opportunity to record a response on a postcard, delivered by No Place for Poverty to State and Federal government leaders.

The postcards were then analysed to identify the dominant areas of concern and the policy responses participants wanted to see.

SNAPSHOT

998	679	16	42
POSTCARDS COLLECTED	HIGH QUALITY, ANALYSED	LOCATIONS ACROSS PERTH	AVG. PER ENGAGEMENT

WHERE WE COLLECTED POSTCARDS

Workshops	Community event stalls	Library displays
50+	9,500+	5,000+
PEOPLE	PEOPLE (EST.)	PEOPLE (EST.)

WHO WROTE THE POSTCARDS



998 postcards were collected; 679 met the quality threshold and are used in this report.



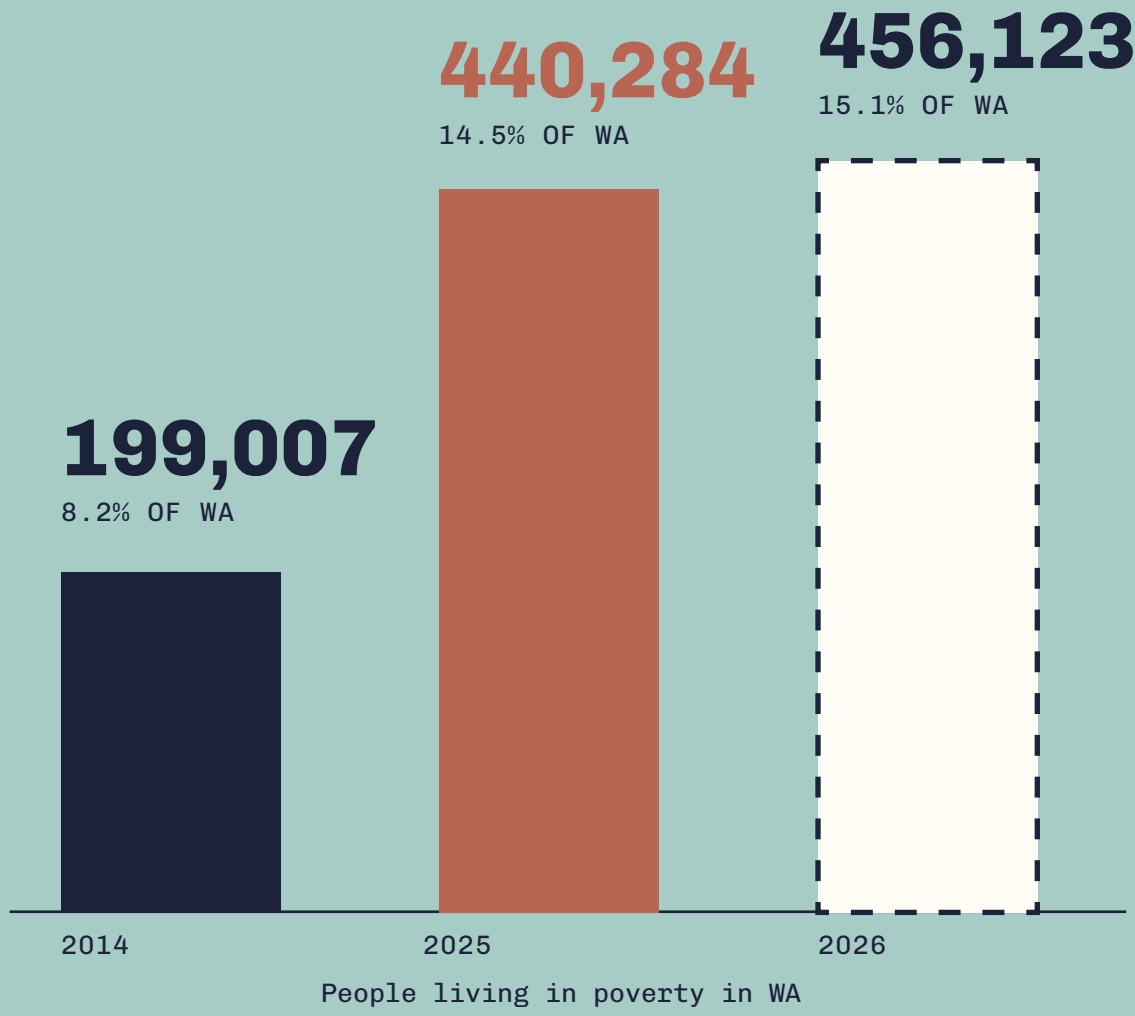






Images (Top to Bottom, Left to Right): Anglicare WA staff member at a workshop, Participant at AWESOME International Arts Festival, Staff member at Cannington Library display, City of Canning staff participating in a Power of a Postcard workshop.

POVERTY IN WA HAS DOUBLED IN A DECADE



Source: Duncan & Twomey (2026) *Poverty Snapshot 2026: The Changing Face of Poverty in Western Australia.*



That's enough people to fill Optus Stadium

7.6 times over

WHO IS AFFECTED

WHO IS MOST AFFECTED

1 in 3
are First Nations adults[2]

1 in 3
are single parents (about 90% women)[1]

1 in 4
people with disability live in poverty[1]

INCOME & EMPLOYMENT

20%
are in paid employment[3]

39%
live in wage-earning households[1]

60%
rely on welfare payments[1]

HEALTH & WELLBEING

82%
have at least one chronic health condition[1]

76%
have at least one mental health condition[4]

80%
experience low or very low food security[4]

HOUSING & DEBT

55%
of people in public housing live in poverty[4]

86%
have non-mortgage debt[4]

1 in 3
do not have someone they can turn to for support[4]

EMERGING RISK

- Older women (55+) are the fastest-growing group experiencing homelessness[5]
- Older women face a higher risk of poverty in later life due to lower lifetime earnings, lower superannuation balances and lower rates of home ownership[5]
- Singles face higher poverty risk than couples or families[1]

GEOGRAPHY

- Poverty is significantly higher among people living outside capital cities than those who live in capital cities[6]
- And it is rising across all areas[1]

1. Duncan & Twomey (2026) *Poverty Snapshot 2026: The Changing Face of Poverty in Western Australia.*
2. Markham & Biddle (2018) *Income, Poverty and Inequality: Census Paper No. 2.*
3. Duncan (2022) *Behind the Line: Poverty and Disadvantage in Australia 2022.*
4. Phillips et al. (2021) *Insights into Hardship and Disadvantage in Perth, Western Australia: The 100 Families WA Report.*
5. Raynor (2021) *Protecting Older Australian Women from Homelessness.*
6. ACOSS *Poverty and Inequality in Australia Data Observatory: Rate of Poverty by Location.*

WHAT WE HEARD

The postcards highlight widespread public concern about poverty across Western Australia. Community members consistently pointed to inadequate income support, rising living costs and housing insecurity as key drivers of poverty, framing it as a fundamental issue of fairness and social justice.

1

Widespread concern about poverty and inequality

A dominant theme is the high level of concern and distress about the growing poverty across WA. Many contributors highlight that poverty is increasingly visible in their communities and affects families, children and vulnerable groups. Many contributors frame poverty as an issue of fairness requiring both government and community action, and a desire for systemic change.

READ MORE

2

Inadequacy of income support payments

The most consistent message is that current income support payments are too low to meet basic living needs. Contributors repeatedly stated that Australia should increase income support so people don't live below the poverty line and struggle to afford essentials such as food, housing and healthcare.

READ MORE

3

Housing insecurity and homelessness

Housing stress is a major concern, with mentions of homelessness, rental unaffordability and the risk of losing housing. Some contributors shared personal or observed experiences of housing instability. They advocated for stronger and more stable affordable and social housing.

READ MORE

1

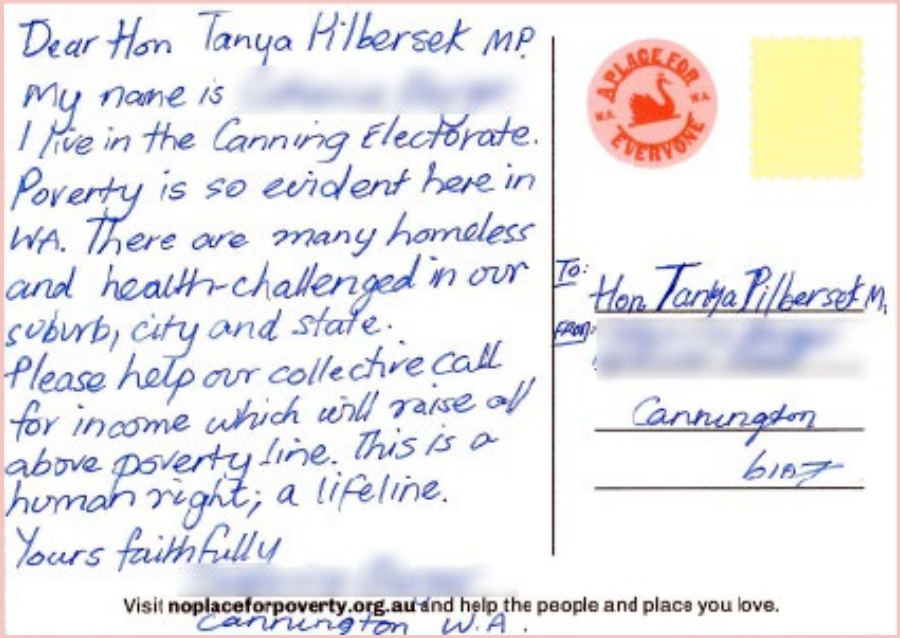
Widespread concern about poverty and inequality

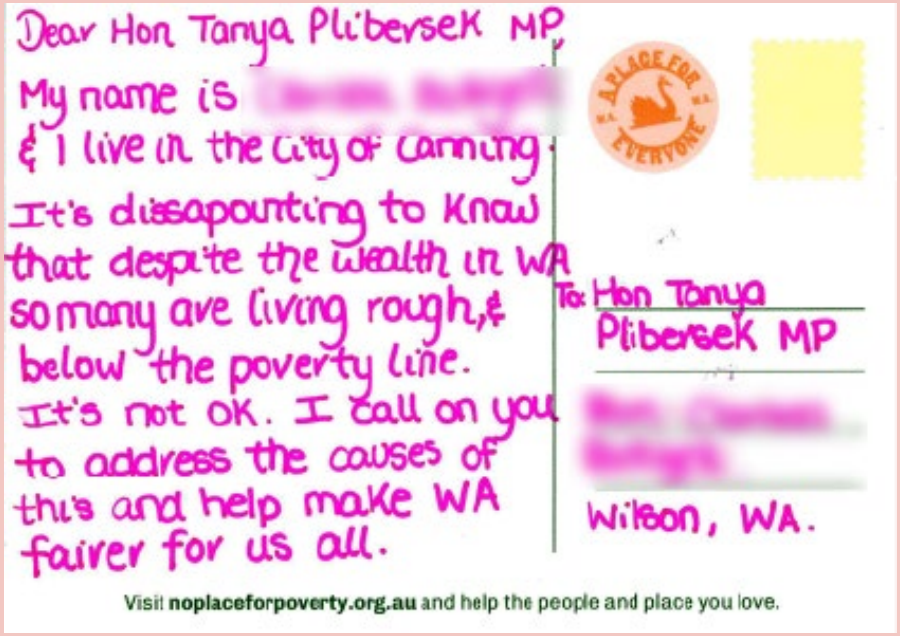
> **“Poverty is so evident… There are many homeless and health-challenged in our suburb, city and state.”**

> **“I am concerned about the rates of poverty in WA. Everyone deserves the opportunity to build a good life.”**

WORDS FROM THE POSTCARDS

*** Full names redacted for privacy**





2

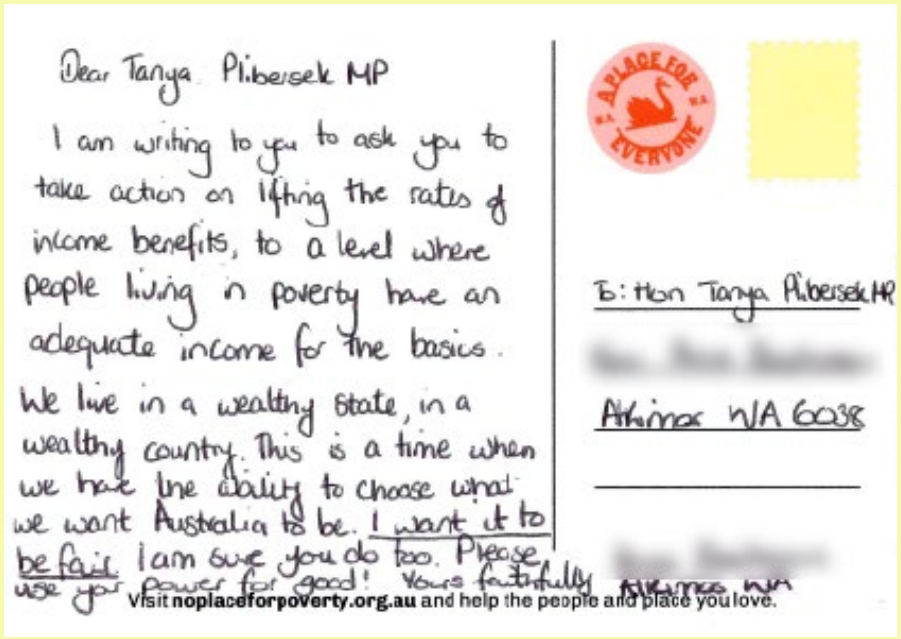
Inadequacy of income support payments

> **“Current income support rates... are not enough to meet the most basic needs.”**

> **“The amount is totally insufficient, keeping people stuck living well below the poverty line.”**

WORDS FROM THE POSTCARDS

* Full names redacted for privacy


Dear Tanya Plibersek MP

I am writing to you to ask you to take action on lifting the rates of income benefits, to a level where people living in poverty have an adequate income for the basics.

We live in a wealthy state, in a wealthy country. This is a time when we have the ability to choose what we want Australia to be. I want it to be fair. I am sure you do too. Please use your power for good! Yours faithfully [redacted]

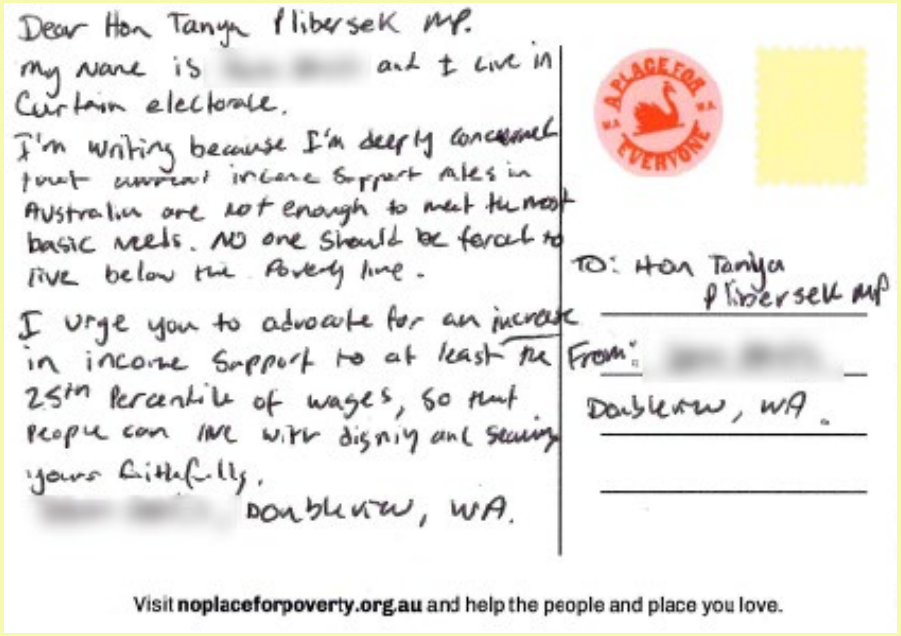
A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

To: Hon Tanya Plibersek MP

[redacted]

Atkinson WA 6038

Visit **noplaceforpoverty.org.au** and help the people and place you love.


Dear Hon Tanya Plibersek MP.

my name is [redacted] and I live in Curtin electorate.

I'm writing because I'm deeply concerned that current income support rates in Australia are not enough to meet the most basic needs. NO one should be forced to live below the poverty line.

I urge you to advocate for an increase in income support to at least the 25th percentile of wages, so that people can live with dignity and security.

yours faithfully,

[redacted] Doubleview, WA.

A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

TO: Hon Tanya Plibersek MP

From: [redacted]

Doubleview, WA.

Visit **noplaceforpoverty.org.au** and help the people and place you love.

3

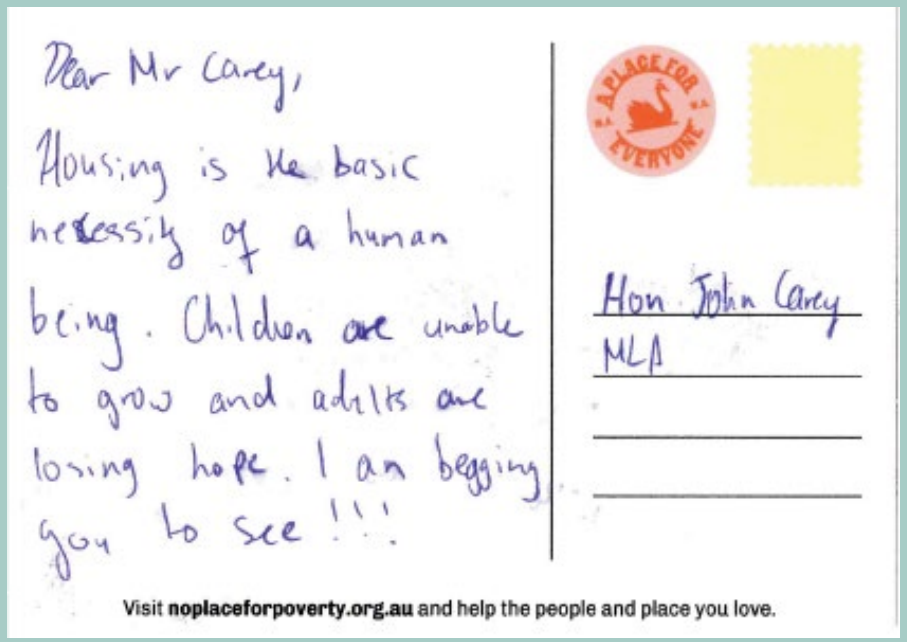
Housing insecurity and homelessness

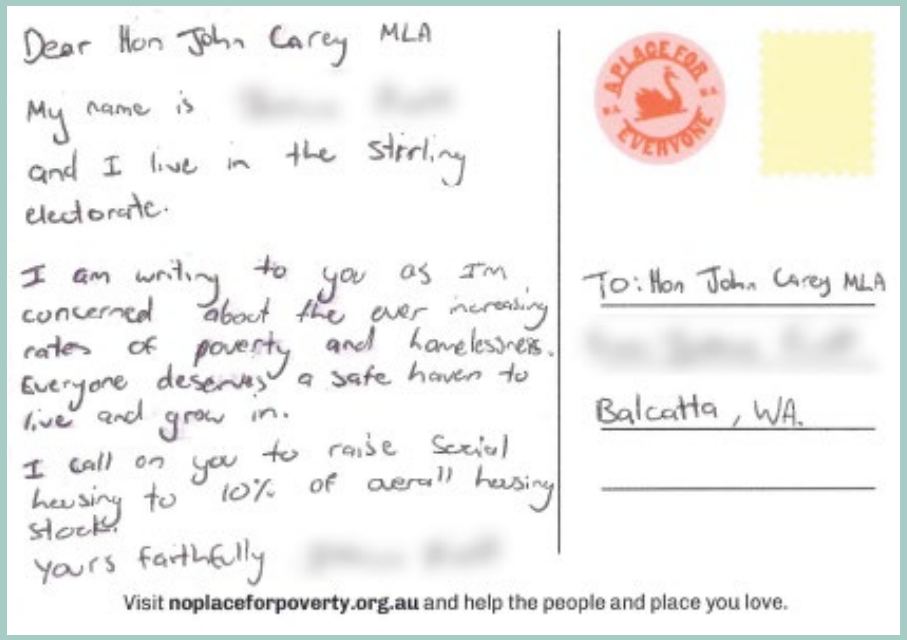
“Housing is the basic necessity of a human being. Children are unable to grow and adults are losing hope.”

“Everyone deserves a safe haven to live and grow in.”

WORDS FROM THE POSTCARDS

*** Full names redacted for privacy**





WHAT WE WANT

The Power of a Postcard represents a community call for a fairer system that better supports people experiencing poverty and those at risk of it.

Western Australians share government's concerns about social cohesion and economic exclusion, and see addressing poverty and inequality as essential to building a fairer, stronger and more inclusive society.

No Place for Poverty is calling on government leaders for three key changes:

1. **Raise income support payments to the poverty line.**
2. **Increase the availability, affordability and stability of housing.**
3. **Establish an official definition and regular measure of poverty.**

No Place for Poverty has taken these community voices directly to the Western Australian and Australian Governments through an open letter, calling on elected representatives to take poverty seriously, respond to the priorities outlined in this report and commit to meaningful action.

Elected representatives have also been asked to respond to these priorities, so the people who contributed their voices can see how their concerns are being heard and acted upon.



Movement Lead, Alex, standing with Lived Experience Advocates, Alison and Len, at Parliament House in Western Australia.

WHAT WE WANT

1 Raise income support payments to the poverty line

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- Urgently lift JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, Parenting Payment and related payments to at least $600 per week.
- Index them to wages as well as prices, so they do not fall further behind community living standards.

The most direct, simplest and effective measure to reduce poverty. In line with ACOSS' Raise the Rate campaign.

2 Increase the availability, affordability and stability of housing

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- Make rent assistance more widely available for people on low incomes to reduce housing stress.

THE STATE GOVERNMENT

- Ensure at least 10 per cent of all housing stock is social housing.
- Incentivise genuinely affordable housing in all new developments.
- Set minimum living standards for rentals.

In line with the Everybody's Home campaign.

3 Establish an official definition and regular measure of poverty

FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS: DUAL MEASURES

- Income-based thresholds for poverty (typically 50% or 60% of median household disposable income), and
- Multidimensional poverty indices that assess deprivation across minimum standards of health, education and housing.

In line with the Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee's 2026 report (ch. 5) and 2025 report (ch. 6).

NO PLACE FOR POVERTY

No Place for Poverty invites government to work with us to turn these community voices into meaningful action.

We all have a responsibility to help build a fairer Western Australia that reflects the hopes and aspirations of its people. Government has a critical role to play in addressing the systemic drivers of poverty and creating lasting change, something the WA community is asking to happen.

Connect with us

No Place for Poverty
28 Cecil Avenue
Cannington WA 6107

E contact@noplaceforpoverty.org.au
W noplaceforpoverty.org.au