

Australian Services Union
Western Australian Branch

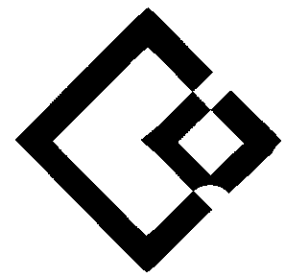
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A•S•U

Mr Colin Barnett
Premier of Western Australia
Parliament House
Perth WA 6000

Dear Mr Barnett,
The Budget and Social and Community Services:

I understand that you will be busy with the time approaching for the budget to be considered. I just wanted to remind you of the importance of the Non Government Social and Community Services and the vital role that the employees, [our members], play in the provision of those services. As you know, their pay is very low [up to a 53% variation in some cases, compared with the Public Sector work], and with the finalisation of the ASU Pay Equity case in Fair Work Australia, we are confident that there will be formal recognition of the value of that work.

There have been threats that services will have to be cut if employers are "forced" to pay the proper award rates. We believe that this is an awful thing that some State Governments have said simply because employees will be able to stop subsidising their own wages and earn a decent living wage. It seeks to make the SACS workers feel guilty for trying to have a standard of life that doesn't actually make them eligible for their own services. I sincerely ask that the WA State Government will not seek to impose any such guilt on our members here. A statement by your Government to that effect would be very helpful.

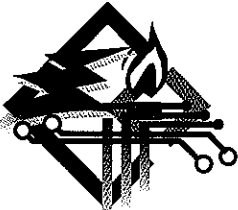
On the same matter but with a slightly different slant, I bring this other urgent issue to your attention. We met with Minister McSweeney a few weeks ago to discuss this matter with her. I realise that she does not have the power to make major change in respect of the industrial matters. At the meeting, I took our Delegate from the Salvation Army with me and we were able to point out that after the wage case there would be two classes of employees in WA doing the same work. We used the example of Graceville, which is a refuge run by the Salvation Army which clearly falls into the Federal system and will pay the correct rates of pay. We compared this with a stand alone refuge which would fall under the State Industrial Relations system. Given that there is no capacity to run a pay equity case under the State Industrial Relations Act, employees would need to make separate agreements if they wanted anything like parity with Federal jurisdiction organisations.



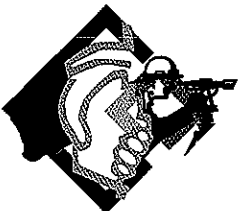
ACCS



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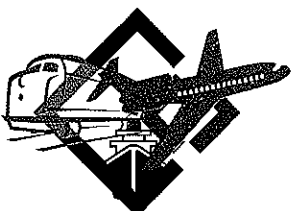
ENERGY / IT



LOCAL GOVT



SACS



TRANSPORT

Given the threats I spoke of above, and the advice that **some** employer groups would provide, it is very highly unlikely that State Jurisdiction employees would ever achieve any decent increases, making WA workers worse off, yet again. Similarly, the threat of funding being withdrawn by funding organisations is a very real one felt by employers. SACS organisations could face reductions in services which would, one way or the other, be laid at the feet of the workers. Even with the low wages currently paid, some employers have gone to the industrial umpire to ask for exemptions to pay the proper wages using the argument of "the public interest." This has allowed below Award wages to be paid. This was supported by the funding body.

So Mr. Barnett, when you once again set up partnership forums and round table groups, I ask, once again, that you give the workers a voice by including their union at the table. I ask also that you meet with us to discuss ways and means whereby the SACS workers in the state system, can be paid the same rates of pay as their counterparts in other states and in the Federal system.

I look forward to hearing from you about this, so that some meaningful dialogue can be commenced between us

My contact details are as follows:

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Yours sincerely



Pat Branson
Assistant Branch Secretary.

5 MAY 2011