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Joint media statement Thursday 9 November, 2023

**New Rental Relief Program welcomed by Anglicare WA, Vinnies WA**

Anglicare WA and Vinnies WA have welcomed Premier Roger Cook’s announcement of a $24.4 million WA Rental Relief Grant program to help Western Australians at risk of homelessness, as they struggle to afford the soaring rent prices across the state.

Up to 4,500 households will be assisted by the WA Rental Relief program to be co-designed and delivered by Anglicare WA, Vinnies WA and their partner agencies.

Anglicare WA CEO Mark Glasson said the Premier’s announcement will be welcome news – just in time for Christmas – for many families struggling with rising costs of living.

“It’s fantastic to see the Cook Government has heard the concerns of the community service sector about the impact the rapid rise in rental stress is having on WA households.

“We’ve seen this through the increase in calls to our Emergency Relief and Food Access Service. Even a steady income is no longer enough to prevent experiencing rental stress.”

“With Vinnies WA and our other partners, we’ve begun work to set up the program so we can begin receiving enquiries before the end of the year and commence payments in early 2024,” said Mr Glasson.   
  
Vinnies WA CEO Susan Rooney said the program was important new way to help vulnerable West Australians.

“We are extremely grateful for this amazing program for the people we support. It will help people not just to stay in their homes, but by keeping the roof over their head, also help them to keep their jobs and keep their children in school.

“Across the board, through our Emergency Assistance and Support program and our Financial Counselling services, we are seeing an increase in demand. We are seeing 350 calls a day for emergency assistance from across WA.

“The Rent Relief program is an important addition to the measures we have to address cost-of-living pressures for West Australian families,” said Ms Rooney.

To be eligible for the Rental Relief program, tenants must be working with an approved community service organisation, be experiencing genuine rental stress, have less than $3,000 in savings and be in rent arrears.

The organisations will work with both tenants and landlords to secure the continuation of the tenancy agreement and determine the level of support required, with one-off payments of up to $5,000 available to eligible applicants.

Help is available for anyone experiencing financial difficulty through the National Debt Helpline (1800 007 077) or those requiring immediate assistance can contact the Emergency Relief and Food Access Service: 1800 979 777.

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