

Australia Fair

MEDIA RELEASE

Australia Fair Media Release

Immediate Release

Is Australia Fair?

As part of the national initiative "Australia Fair" a number of Canberrans will gather today to express their support for a fair go for all. Across the country people are gathering around barbeques, business tables, and over breakfast to voice their concern about the number of Australians who cannot make ends meet. The group will make a visual petition using thong or foot prints to demonstrate that they stand in solidarity with the over 1 in 10 Australians experiencing poverty. Thongs are the visual identity for Australia Fair. On our posters and in our material, one in every 10 thongs is missing, representing the over 1 in 10 Australians missing out on a fair go. Australians are asked to wear their thongs to show their support for those Australians missing out. Thong shaped lapel badges are available from the Australia Fair website.

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"Canberrans have a strong sense of commitment to those who are doing it tough," said Ara Cresswell, Director of the ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS). "They want to feel like they are making a difference and this gathering is one way to show that support."

Ms Cresswell went on to say that despite Canberra's apparent affluence, it remains true that over 13% of Canberrans are in the lowest 20% of income-earners nationwide. These are the people who most suffer in terms of insecure housing, financial stress, poor access to health services, transport and crisis support. There is enough in this country for everybody – the time has come for the resources to be shared more evenly."

Available at the BBQ will be the latest Australia Fair publication '*Australia Fair: Update on those missing out*' which confirms that the number of Australians in poverty increased between 2003-04 and 2005-06, and the publication '*Australia Fair: International Comparisons 2007*', which identifies Australia is ranked only 14th out of 18 OECD countries on the UN Human Poverty Index, behind most of Western Europe.

St Vincent de Paul Society National Council CEO, Dr John Falzon said, "Now, more than ever, it's time for a national anti-poverty strategy with targets to ensure that no one gets left out or pushed out, this is the approach taken in 22 out of 30 OECD countries."

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