

MEDIA RELEASE

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ACT

ACT Council of Social Service Inc.

ACTCOSSA

ESSENTIALS TAKE MORE FROM LOW INCOME BUDGETS

The ACT Council of Social Service is releasing a research paper undertaken by the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) showing that low income ACT households devote more of their expenditure to necessities such as housing, electricity, food and transport than average ACT households.

"Low income households spend proportionally more on food, electricity and automotive fuels. So when the price of these essentials goes up they are less able to wear the increases," said Roslyn Dundas, Director of ACTCOSS.

"This research shows low income households spend around 69% of their total expenditure on necessities. 23% of this total expenditure goes on food, compared to only 17% for average income households. The cost of food generally rose by 24% between 1998 and June 2004 with fruit and vegetables increasing by nearly 30%, putting increased pressure on low income budgets."

"Stimulus packages, such as the Federal Government's recently announced plan, are welcome short-term measures but more support is needed for those on low incomes to meet the everyday costs of living."

The research project was supported by a University of Canberra Industry Collaborative Research Grant in partnership with ACTCOSS and a consortium of ACT community and government organisations: ACT Community Inclusion Board; Communities@Work; Woden Community Service; YWCA of Canberra; Gungahlin Regional Community Service; Inanna Inc.; Lifeline Canberra; and Softlaw Community Projects.

Expenditure of Low Income Households in the ACT

**to be launched by Dr Helen Watchirs,
ACT Human Rights Commissioner**

When: 10:00 – 11:00am Wednesday 4 February

Where: Gungahlin Community Resource Centre, Cnr Ernest Cavanagh St and Gungahlin PI

**For more information please contact
Roslyn Dundas, Director
Mob: 0407 916 328 Ph: 6202 7200**

ACT Council of Social Service Inc.
Level 1, 67 Townshend St, Phillip
PO Box 849 Mawson, ACT 2607
Ph: (02) 6202 7200 Fax: (02) 6247 7175
actcoss@actcoss.org.au www.actcoss.org.au