



# MEDIA RELEASE

Australian  
Council of  
Social Service

Wednesday June 6, 2011

## **ACOSS hails Govt commitment to help community sector with equal pay**

The Australian Council of Social Service today welcomed a Federal Government commitment to support the community sector in meeting the inevitable implications of higher wage costs resulting from any pay increases Fair Work Australia may award following the ASU's equal remuneration application.

"We are encouraged by today's announcement that the Commonwealth is committed to a strong and viable community sector and to helping the sector through this process. It is a clear indication that the Government accepts its responsibilities in funding effective and sustainable community services, including through decent wages," said ACOSS Acting CEO, Dr Tessa Boyd-Caine.

"This is a major step forward. The Commonwealth is taking responsibility for the services it supports by committing to fair and appropriate supplementation for higher wage costs. It is a recognition that the effectiveness and viability of these vital community services depends on adequate funding for those services and their workforce.

"In its recent interim decision Fair Work Australia accepted the irrefutable evidence that community sector workers are underpaid, mainly as a result of the gender make-up of the predominantly female community sector workforce. This is a significant gender pay gap that simply must be addressed.

"Responsibility for funding decent wages is shared by those who support and fund community services in Australia. That is why we have been calling on all governments to accept their responsibilities as the primary funders of these services. We have also called for 'industry' support for the sector in recognition of the extensive contribution that community services make to Australia's economy and society.

"We are pleased the Government has indicated it will continue to work closely with the sector on the implications and implementation of equal pay. ACOSS will continue to work with the Government and with our members across the country to ensure adequate funding for effective and viable community services," Dr Boyd-Caine said.

*The Commonwealth's commitment will be given in its forthcoming submission to the case before Fair Work Australia. ACOSS will be contributing to the final evidence before FWA through a joint submission from the COSS network.*

**Media Contact: Fernando de Freitas, ACOSS – 0419 626 155**