



Edmund Rice Institute for Social Justice, Fremantle Statement to the

Western Australian Council of Social Services Inc. *Pre-Budget Submission to the State Government's Budget, 2009-2010.*

Preamble

WACOSS annually consults peak Non-Government Organisations when preparing its annual 'Pre-Budget Submission' that urges social justice considerations upon the annual Budget preparation processes of the Western Australian Government.

ERISJ Submission

The Edmund Rice Institute for Social Justice, Fremantle has today urged that WACOSS advocate that the Western Australian Government:

1. deliver a social dividend from the WA Boom. The Boom should be understood as a likely one-off, the equivalent of a fluke 'lottery win'. It must be managed with a bifocal optic - to build a trust fund in perpetuity while directing large-scale funding immediately toward present crises. When these short and long-term purposes are fused together – each funded by the Boom's increased taxation and royalty receipts – the resultant policy and program capacity might be conceived similarly to former American President LB Johnson's War on Poverty from 1968. The difference is that this one has to work. This proposal is eminently plausible electorally as the social equivalent of Peter Costello's Future Fund while Howard Government Treasurer;
2. especially respond with infrastructure and many other investments (eg education, training, health, and governance and leadership programs) that are genuinely useful to WA's indigenous communities; and
3. ensure that royalties earned by the WA Government for minerals and gas be set at rates that – at minimum – are not less than those prevailing elsewhere.

Further, we urge WACOSS to explicitly make the case for two of the emphases of the WA *Civil Society Dialogue* of 1 July 2008. First, political parties often extol the virtues of civil society and the third sector. Yet they rarely provide financial support at a level commensurate with the benefits and virtuous circles that they suggest – and empirical research corroborates - are generated for society via this sector.

Second, all tiers of government ought be held to Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard's undertaking shortly after the December 2007 election that NGO's will no longer lose public funding simply because critical of Government during advocacy processes.

The ERISJ thanks WACOSS and the State Government for this opportunity to comment.

David Freeman

Director

31 July 2008