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## Poverty Report Rejection Shame

The Federal Government has chosen to not act on any of the 95 recommendations that were made by a major Senate inquiry into poverty.

"UnitingCare Wesley is flabbergasted that a major inquiry dealing with one of the most important issues in this country, poverty, has been dismissed by the federal government," said Mark Henley .

The report, 'A Hand up Not a Hand Out: Renewing the Fight Against Poverty' was published in March 2004. Their conclusions included the statement: "*Evidence presented to the Committee and recent studies provide a profoundly disturbing picture of the extent of poverty and deprivation in Australia.*"

The report stated that South Australia experienced higher levels of poverty than other states, with 18.9% of the population living on income levels below half of average incomes. Currently nearly one third of SA households have government pensions or benefits as their principle source of income.

The comprehensive report made considered and sensible recommendations to deal with many of the most significant aspects of poverty, health, housing, labour market issues and Children in Poverty, which was a priority issue in Uniting Care submissions to the Inquiry.

One of the rejected recommendations (rec.94) proposed "that a comprehensive anti-poverty strategy be developed at the national level."

"The outright rejection of recommendations to deal with poverty, particularly at a time when the economy is 'booming' and poverty probably increasing is difficult to comprehend, from a government that has committed to 'govern for all Australians'", added Mr Henley.

UnitingCare Wesley is urging the Federal Government to review it's approach to the Senate Poverty Inquiry and to commit to a national anti-poverty strategy that takes a whole of government approach.

### Further Comment

Mark Henley

**8202 5135 (w)**

Manager Advocacy & Communication

**0404 067 011**

**8370 1112 (h)**