

media release



7th October 2009

National Anti-Poverty Week – 11th to 17th October 2009

Alleviating Poverty – stepping up locally

① Many Australians are not enjoying a decent standard of living, especially in non-metropolitan areas. Almost 4% more people living in country South Australia experience life below the poverty line than their metropolitan counterparts.

② Poverty is a complex issue and is not just caused by individual experiences but by major inequalities in the structure of our society. Some of the main causes of poverty include limited access to: work and income, education, housing, health and community services.

ac.care steps up and responds to the local needs of people living in the South East, Riverland and Murrayland regions of South Australia.

Work & Income Many people working and trying to support a family on a minimum wage struggle to meet basic costs of living each week. ac.care provides emergency financial relief in times of crisis along with support and guidance for a range of life's challenges faced by individuals and families on a low income.

Education Low education levels are linked with unemployment and subsequently the risk of living in poverty. ac.care provides links to educational opportunities and assists young people to re-engage with mainstream education and support services where needed.

Housing

People on low incomes rarely own homes and rent is often unaffordable. ac.care provides low rental properties and emergency accommodation in times of crises while helping people find long-term accommodation. ac.care assisted 984 people towards self reliance by increasing their access to safe and secure housing options. FY09

Health

People living in poverty commonly suffer greater levels of physical and mental illness. The high stress of living in poverty can contribute to substance abuse and poor diet and the associated health risks. ac.care provides support and works closely with local health care services for people experiencing challenges associated with poverty.

Services

Access to affordable community services is an important poverty prevention strategy to help disadvantaged people participate in a social and economic life. In the South East of South Australia ac.care creates many opportunities for individuals, families and young people to fully embrace life and all its potential.

44,122 people were assisted with immediate financial need, gaining skills to better manage their money, increased their participation in their local communities and took up the challenge to improve their education and seek out job prospects through ac.care's initiatives. FY09

ac.care Community Services Manager, Gregory Were said, "ac.care does this by encouraging people seeking assistance to consider the many aspects of their lives to find innovative and sustainable solutions. ac.care focuses on skill development, early intervention and prevention to make a real difference and help fight poverty and hardship."

Anti-Poverty week aims to strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship around the world and in Australia. ac.care spreads the word locally:

Gregory Were continues: *“ac.care invites everyone to visit the **Mount Gambier Community Centre**, 22 Ferrers Street on **Thursday 15th October** between **11am and 2pm** for **The Gathering**.” An informal and friendly atmosphere with **light refreshments** and a **sausage sizzle lunch** for everyone that calls in. People will receive information about services and support available in the local area. People can call the Mount Gambier Community Centre on 08 8723 0540.”*

“ac.care’s Community Centre is also involved in a combined display at Centro Shopping Centre during Anti-Poverty Week by local welfare organisations and service providers. Everyone is invited at their leisure to take home information and brochures on a variety of support programs for local people.”

End

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References

- ① Australia Fair 2007 “Update on those missing out” | www.australiafair.org.au
- ② Australian Council of Social Services May 2008 | www.australiancollaboration.com.au
- ③ ac.care Annual Report FY09

About ac.care

ac.care was formed in Mount Gambier in 1985, with one social worker, a part-time administration officer and an accommodation support worker. Today ac.care employs nearly 200 staff with current offices and community centres in Mount Gambier, Millicent, Naracoorte, Bordertown, Murray Bridge, Berri and Waikerie. More than 60,550 (FY07-08) people in the South East, Riverland and Murraylands of South Australia were supported through over 70 different programs and services that fall under one or more of ac.care’s 7 goals: **alleviating homelessness | building communities | promoting learning | reducing poverty | sharing cultures | strengthening families | supporting children.**