

6 September 2023

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By Email: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the *Inquiry into the worsening rental crisis in Australia* on Wednesday 30 August 2023.

Please find a correction to Hansard and additional information requested by the Committee below.

Data correction required to Hansard (page 60, paragraph three) –

Mr Chester: "...In terms of our financial wellbeing services, I can relate to you that last financial year we had 70 families who accessed emergency relief and identified as experiencing homelessness. In the year to date, which is only two months, we've got 55 families who've already self-identified in that space, which equates to about a 500 per cent increase if that trend continues."

Reason for correction – the 'year to date' data was incorrectly cited as financial year, the data pertains to the calendar year.

Suggested amendment –

"In terms of our financial wellbeing services, I can relate to you that last financial year we had 70 families who accessed emergency relief and identified as experiencing homelessness. **From 1 January 2023 - 31 July 2023, we've got 55 families who've already self-identified in that space.**"

Additional information requested by the Committee –

The Standing Committee on Community Affairs requested any additional information pertaining to clients being unable to receive assistance due to rising demand.

Uniting's Financial Wellbeing Services have the capacity to assist approximately 40 clients per week (individuals, couples, and families) with emergency relief (ER) across two sites, our Inner City Hub (ICH) and Merriwa (located in Perth's northern suburbs). Emergency relief provides support for people facing immediate financial crisis and is predominately provided in the form of bill payment, food vouchers and Kmart vouchers

Emergency relief is allocated as follows:

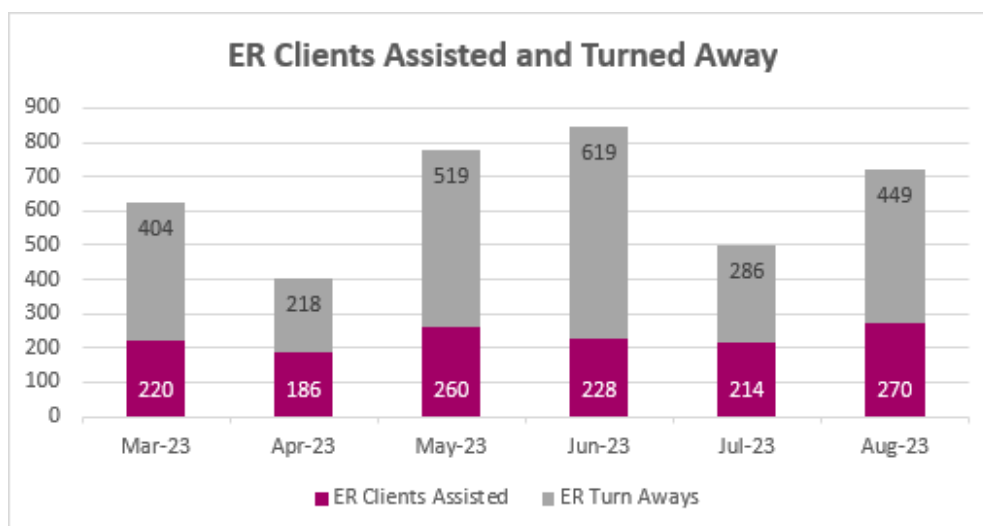
- \$100.00 - food voucher for single client
- \$200.00 - food vouchers for family up to 4 people
- \$300.00 - food vouchers for families above 4 people
- \$300.00 - maximum for bill payment

For the 6-month period from March to August 2023, 20% of clients supported with ER identified as homeless or at risk of homelessness.

ER Assistance: March – August 2023

	No. of Clients	% Clients	ER Assistance	% ER Assistance
Homeless	211	18.7%	\$29,417.69	12.2%
At Risk of Homelessness	77	6.8%	\$18,918.24	7.9%
Not Homeless	840	74.5%	\$192,347.59	79.9%
Total	1128	100.0%	\$240,683.52	100.0%

During the same period, requests for assistance from 2495 people were unable to be directly met due to capacity and financial constraints associated with the provision of ER; that is, nearly 70% of people seeking ER from Uniting are unsuccessful, although alternative sources of support are offered whenever possible.



Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to the important work of the Standing Committee on Community Affairs.

Yours sincerely

Michael Chester

Co-Chief Executive Officer, Uniting WA