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Media Statement

LAST-MINUTE PLEA TO REVERSE DEVASTATING BUDGET CUTS TO COMMUNITY SERVICES

The peak body representing regional WA’s community resource centres (CRCs) has made an 11th hour plea to the State Government to reverse its decision to redirect almost 40 per cent of these CRCs’ budget to other projects.

Linkwest CEO, Ms Jane Chilcott, said the big cut to the CRC budget would result in significant decrease to operating hours and some centres could be closed altogether.

“It is hard to imagine why the State Government is trying to cut the ability of Community Resource Centres to deliver services to remote areas and vulnerable people in the country,” Ms Chilcott said.

“The CRC network is an extremely efficient, cost effective service that provides access to government services at a very low cost. There is no fat to be trimmed. Staff are paid low wages and most buildings are modest. In fact, a recent review headed by esteemed Professor John Phillimore of Curtin University reported the program was both economically productive for the State and provided it with significant potential for cost savings in the delivery of services into rural WA.

“Linkwest is confident that, should a full, open and independent review be undertaken, it will reveal all the essential services the centres provide, as well as activities such as programs for seniors and youth support that contribute to community health and resilience.

“We believe that if these cuts are not overturned they will be the thin end of the wedge which will spell the demise of CRCs.

“Despite the government claims that this is about budget savings, the fact is, it is not. The truth is CRC funding is already allocated via the Royalties for Regions Fund which is enshrined in legislation and set at a certain value. That same amount of money will be in the fund regardless of the cuts to CRCs. The government is making a decision to cut funding to CRCs and allocate it elsewhere, not save money as has been claimed.

“We respectfully call on the Premier, Treasurer or Regional Development Minister to overturn this bad decision which will have a direct impact on men, women and children throughout regional WA.”

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For more information

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