

## Media Release

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### New Understanding for Financial Hardship

Faster help is on the way for some of the most vulnerable South Australians struggling to deal with debt and money worries.

Through a new memorandum of understanding between leading social enterprise Junction and Uniting Care Wesley Bowden (UCWB), tenants living in social housing properties managed by Junction will be eligible for free priority financial counselling that is confidential with UCWB.

Junction CEO Maria Palumbo said the initiative would ensure earlier intervention in many situations.

“As housing providers, we have the privilege of gaining an insight into the homes and lives of our tenants,” she said. “This can put us in the unique position of being a connection between tenants and links to other supports such as financial counselling.

“However, the reality is that right now in SA, it is usually a two to six week wait to see a financial counsellor. If you are facing pressing circumstances, which many people are by the time they reach out, this delay can be detrimental and compound what is often an already dire and extremely stressful situation.

“Through this partnership, we’ll cut the waiting time so people, most who are on low incomes and some, who have complex needs, can have access to this service before they are in crisis.

“The fact that the counselling is completely confidential between UCWB and our tenants is also really important. It means tenants can feel completely confident the help and support they receive is strictly a matter between them and their counsellor.”

UCWB Chief Executive Fiona Kelly said the service was free and UCWB financial counsellors were professionally qualified.

“Our financial counsellors are seeing more people than ever before with high bills, threats of power disconnection and struggling to put food on the table,” Ms Kelly said.

“We recognise the enormous stress that this adds to peoples’ lives. Financial counselling can help people get back on track.”

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