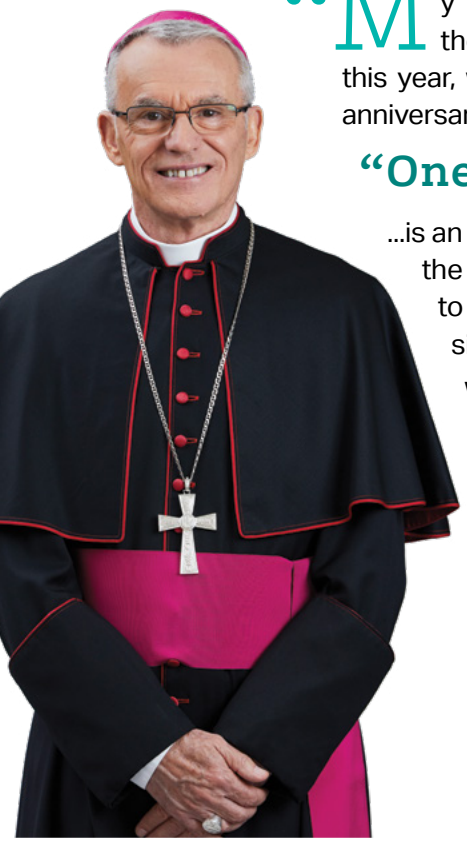
LIFELINKS Newsletter *in support of* Archbishop's 2026 Winter Appeal *for* LifeLink



"My Winter Appeal message for 2026 been inspired by the theme chosen by Pope Leo XIV for World Missions Day this year, which will be a worldwide celebration to mark the 100th anniversary of the Day's establishment by Pope Pius XI.

"One in Christ, United in Mission"

...is an opportunity, an invitation, for us to highlight and reflect on the profound ways that our Church agencies work together to bring Christ's love, dignity, and hope to our brothers and sisters most in need.

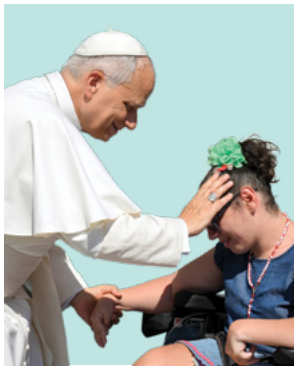


Photo: Catholic News Service/Vatican Media

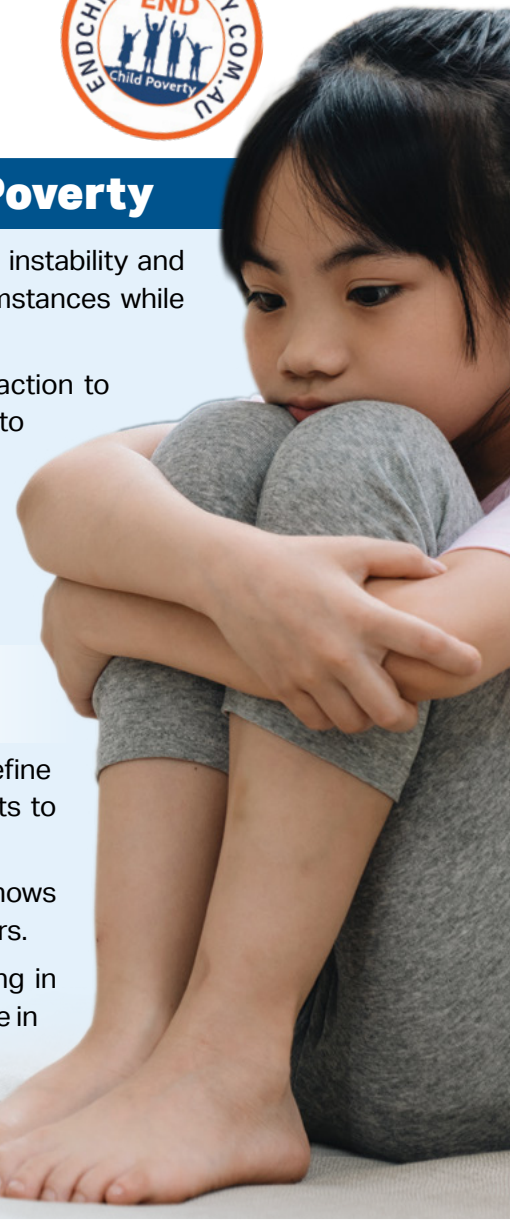
When we extend our arms to those who reach out to us for help, we express and live our faith in a very real and tangible way ...and truly walk in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd.

In this special newsletter, I want to share with you the wonderful work of Centrecare and how this Catholic organisation is spearheading a National campaign to End Child Poverty in Australia, thanks to funding provided by LifeLink... and your generous support.

Thank you".

Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB
Catholic Archbishop of Perth

LifeLink Helps Fund Campaign To End Child Poverty



Across Australia, many children are growing up facing financial stress, housing instability and food insecurity. Behind the statistics are real families navigating difficult circumstances while trying to provide stability and hope for their children.

Centrecare's "End Child Poverty Campaign" is calling for greater national action to address the causes of child poverty and ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive. The campaign grew out of Centrecare's work through the *Valuing Children Initiative,* which places children's wellbeing at the centre of public policy.

Through counselling services, youth programs and family support work, Centrecare staff regularly encounter families experiencing housing instability, financial stress and disrupted schooling.

These experiences led Centrecare to ask a simple question:
why are so many families reaching crisis point?

The End Child Poverty campaign advocates for national legislation that would define child poverty, measure it consistently, report on it annually and establish targets to reduce it across Australia.

The Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre report, *Child Poverty in Australia 2025*, shows that child poverty in Australia has increased by 33 per cent over the past four years.

By 2025 15.6% of Australian children, nearly 1 million, are projected to be living in poverty, and the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) reports around one in six children live below the poverty line after housing costs.

In WA, more than 103,900 children are affected, with rising housing costs and broader cost-of-living pressures placing increasing strain on families.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

INFLATION SHOCK

PRICE WE PAY LIVING IN WA

The impact is also visible in growing food insecurity. Foodbank WA found in the Foodbank Hunger Report 2025 that between 2024 to 2025, the number of children who live in 'very low food security' households in the Perth metro area, tripled from 11 per cent to 31 per cent.

MORTGAGE PAIN HITTING HOME

This means our hungry children are getting hungrier. Many families are skipping meals or reducing the amount of food they buy in order to manage rising living costs.

Research shows that poverty during childhood can have lasting effects on health, education and long-term wellbeing. These experiences can leave deep and lasting marks on young lives.


Sarah Quinton

"Poverty reaches into every corner of a child's life. Children tell us about the shame of being punished for wearing torn uniforms their families can't afford to replace, or the exhaustion of sleeping on a mattress on the floor. These aren't small hardships.

Poverty can leave children feeling embarrassed, excluded and different from their peers, at a time when they should feel safe, valued and confident. Instead of focusing on learning and friendships, many children are carrying worry, fear and a sense that they don't belong," said Valuing Children Initiative Development Executive and End Child Poverty Campaign Lead, Sarah Quinton.



Finding Hope in Difficult Circumstances - Stacey (4) and Shaun (6)

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Names have been changed for privacy reasons)

Centrecare recently spoke with two young children whose family experienced housing instability after relocating to Western Australia. Stacey (4) and Shaun (6) moved to Perth with their mother after leaving a family violence situation in Melbourne.

The move brought them closer to extended family and support networks, but the family soon faced difficulty securing stable rental housing in the current market. While their mother continues to seek employment and stable accommodation, the family is currently living in shared housing while receiving support through Centrecare.

When asked what "home" means to them, both children spoke about safety and comfort rather than a physical building. Stacey explained simply: ***"Home is nice and relaxing."***

Both children spoke warmly about school and the friendships they have formed there. They described enjoying learning new things and participating in activities that make them feel proud.

Shaun acknowledged that some parts of school can still be difficult. ***"Writing is hard sometimes."***

During the conversation it became clear how closely the children observe their mother's wellbeing. When their mum feels secure, they said, life feels easier too. ***"When Mum is okay, life feels better."***

Despite the uncertainty their family has experienced, both children spoke about the future with optimism and hope.

Jenny's Story

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Name and photo changed for privacy reasons)

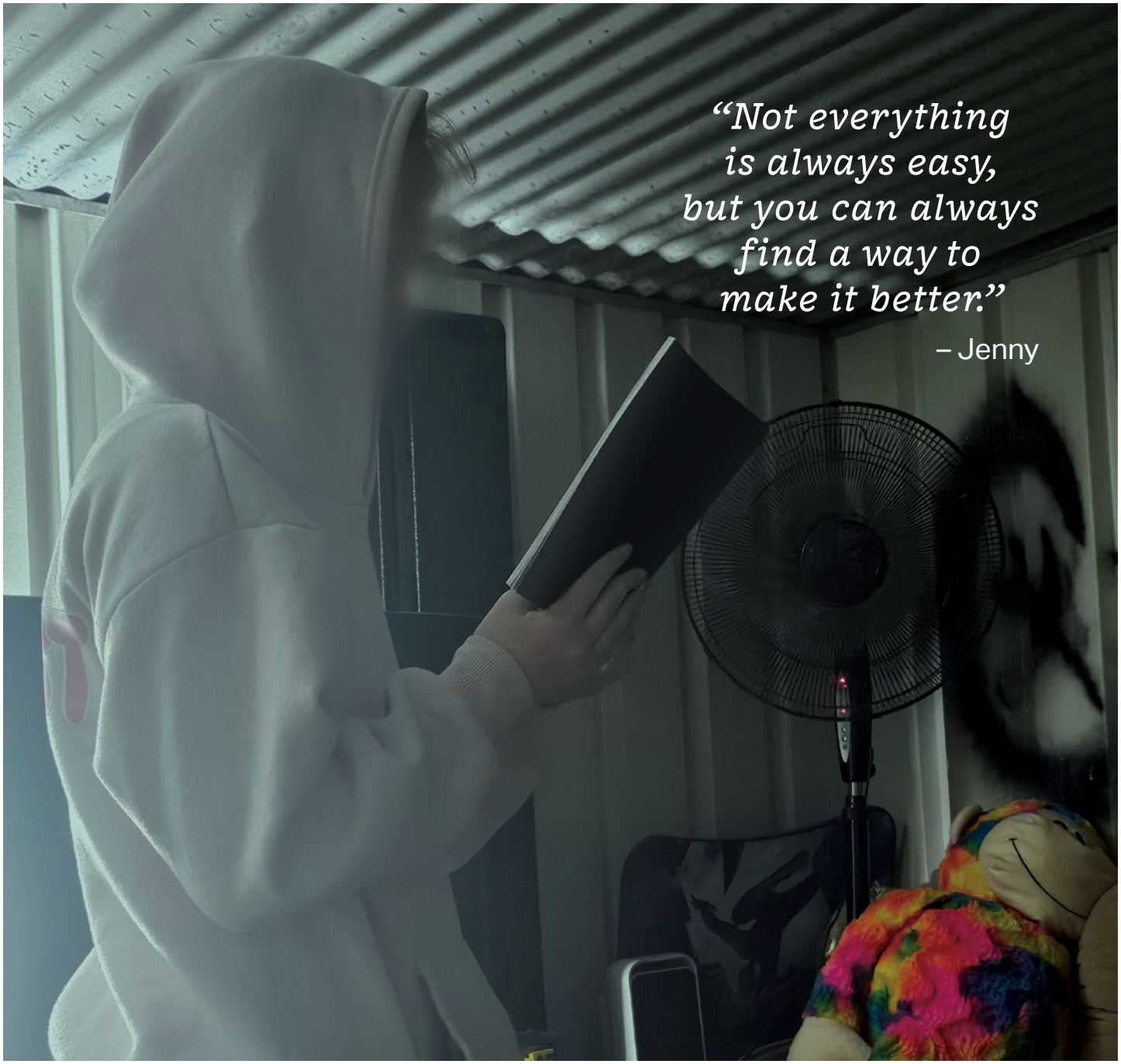
Jenny is the eldest of three children and recently entered a transitional accommodation program with her family through **Centrecare's Family Accommodation Service.** Before accessing transitional accommodation, the family had been living in a caravan on a friend's property following a parental separation.

While the service has provided greater stability and support, it has also meant leaving behind friends, school connections and the support network the family had built in their local community.

For Jenny, the things that make life good remain simple. *"Going out and having fun with my friends… spending time with friends and family,"* she said.

She also enjoys music, drawing, art, Lego and reading comic books. Above all, Jenny said the challenges her family has faced have changed how she sees the world and helped her grow stronger. At the same time, moving further away from school and friends has been difficult, limiting how often she sees the people who are important to her.

Support programs have helped her feel heard and supported during this time. She said, *"I can talk about my problems with no judgements, and I feel comfortable talking to my workers. Not everything is always easy, but you can always find a way to make it better."*



Archbishop Confirms Support

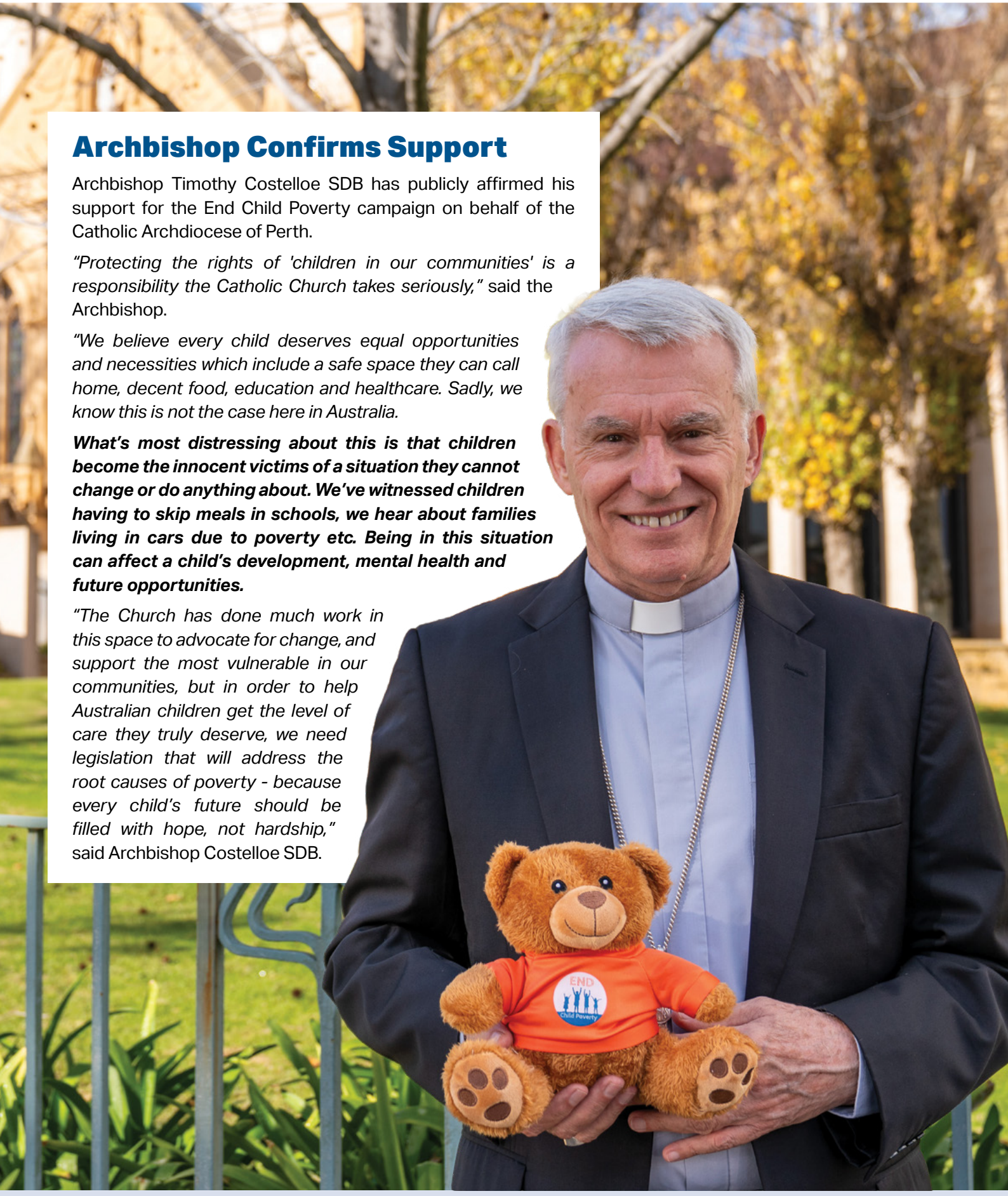
Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB has publicly affirmed his support for the End Child Poverty campaign on behalf of the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth.

"Protecting the rights of 'children in our communities' is a responsibility the Catholic Church takes seriously," said the Archbishop.

"We believe every child deserves equal opportunities and necessities which include a safe space they can call home, decent food, education and healthcare. Sadly, we know this is not the case here in Australia.

What's most distressing about this is that children become the innocent victims of a situation they cannot change or do anything about. We've witnessed children having to skip meals in schools, we hear about families living in cars due to poverty etc. Being in this situation can affect a child's development, mental health and future opportunities.

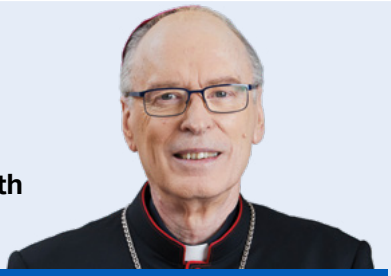
"The Church has done much work in this space to advocate for change, and support the most vulnerable in our communities, but in order to help Australian children get the level of care they truly deserve, we need legislation that will address the root causes of poverty - because every child's future should be filled with hope, not hardship," said Archbishop Costelloe SDB.



Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB pictured outside St Mary's Cathedral, Perth, proudly holding his teddy in support of Centrecare's End Child Poverty Campaign.

Teddies representing the impact poverty has on children were delivered to every Federal Parliamentarian in 2025 in the first major action calling for legislation to end child poverty in Australia. Teddies symbolise those that are lost when children must leave home due to violence, poverty, high rents and homelessness.

Bishop Sproxton Announces Funding Boost



At the end of the 2025 year, the **Most Rev Donald Sproxton, Auxiliary Bishop of Perth and Chair, LifeLink Executive**, sent the following correspondence to Centrecare.

BISHOP SPROXTON DD VG

"On behalf of the Archbishop and the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth, it is with pleasure that I take this opportunity of responding to the special funding proposal regarding the 'Valuing Children Initiative (VCI)' and its 'End Child Poverty (ECP)' campaign presented by Adj. Prof. Tony Pietropiccolo, Director, Centrecare.

I am pleased to advise that there is a great deal of support by the Archdiocese for both the Valuing Children Initiative (VCI) and the End Child Poverty (ECP) campaign established by Centrecare Inc.

Following consultations with the Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB, Catholic Archbishop of Perth, Members of the LifeLink Executive and Mr Daniel Lynch, Chancellor and Executive Director of the Chancery, Catholic Archdiocese of Perth, I am delighted to confirm that the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth has agreed to financially and tangibly support Centrecare in this worthwhile initiative.

Commencing in 2026, the Archdiocese, through LifeLink, has agreed to provide to the VCI annual funding of $100,000.00, for an initial period of three (3) years (2026-2029)."

Children's Voices

Children were asked what made life 'good' or 'bad' for the *More for Children: Children's Experiences of Poverty in Australia - Children's Policy Centre – The Australian National University*

One child explained:

> *"Sometimes my mum won't have enough money... we have to pay rent and all the other bills so sometimes it is really hard to buy the groceries."*

Housing insecurity is another reality many young people described. One participant shared:

> *"[My brother] sleeps on the couch, and I sleep on the ground on a mattress. She sleeps next to me."*

Others spoke about the lack of basic comforts many families take for granted during winter.

> *"It was freezing. I didn't have enough clothes to keep me warm, and there was no heating in the house."*

Stories like these remind us that behind every statistic is a child navigating uncertainty in daily life.



About Centrecare & LifeLink – a partnership of caring.

With a history dating back to the 1940s, Centrecare Inc is a Catholic, not-for-profit, community services organisation with over 300 staff delivering more than 72 quality, professional counselling, support, mediation and training services throughout the Perth metropolitan, Goldfields, Esperance and Southwest regions of Western Australia.

This includes weekly and fortnightly services to the communities of Coolgardie, Menzies, Leonora, Laverton and Norseman. Additionally, staff provide regular support to the remote Aboriginal communities of Coonana, Tjuntjuntjarra and the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.



Centrecare Inc aims to strengthen people and communities through the provision of professional social services, inspired by compassion and recognition for human dignity.

LifeLink supports Centrecare's work both in responding to families experiencing hardship and advocating for long-term solutions to the causes of poverty. Through the generosity of parish communities, children and families receive practical assistance during times of crisis while broader advocacy continues to work toward an Australia free from child poverty.

The voices of children remind us that behind every statistic is a young person with hopes, strengths and aspirations. LifeLink's support helps ensure those children are not left behind.

For more information about the End Child Poverty campaign, scan the QR code or visit www.endchildpoverty.com.au

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Editor's Note

It is as a direct result of your generous donations to LifeLink, in support of the Archbishop's fundraising appeals, that valuable funding can be allocated to important services and programmes such as Centrecare's Ending Child Poverty Campaign.

On behalf of the thousands of Western Australian families and individuals helped in some way by a LifeLink agency each year...

...Thank you!