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Communiqué from NCOSS, LCSA, NSW Family Services, YAPA, WSCF, LGSA  
regarding the Community Services Grants Program

June 2008

This Communiqué is in response to the 2008/2009 NSW Government budget statement announced by the Treasurer Michael Costa on 3 June 2008.

- The NSW Government decided not to increase funding at this time for the Community Services Grants Program (CSGP). This is despite a two year collaborative process by the sector and DoCS, through the CSGP Roundtable, to develop a program reform package that will improve service performance.
- The non-government members of the CSGP Roundtable had expected additional funding in this Budget to maintain the current level of service.
- Future additional funding was expected to permit the reform of the program, aligning it with the agreed headline result of “Disadvantaged children, young people, families and disadvantaged communities are resilient and safe”.
- The non-government representatives on the CSGP Roundtable believe the reform process cannot be successfully implemented without additional funding. Only in this way can NSW Government show its commitment to the services funded from CSGP, that do so much to build capacity and resilience.
- The NSW Government has decided to move CSGP funding to the Statutory Child Protection part of the DoCS budget. The non-government members of the CSGP Roundtable believe the move fails to recognise the full range of CSGP service activities identified by the reform program which include Service Development and Community Capacity Building, Skills Development and Resilience Building as well as Coordinated Support and Intensive Support. This undermines both the real contribution of CSGP to child protection, which is prevention and early intervention and DoCS’ commitment to supporting the contribution of services to community capacity building in local communities.
- It appears that the NSW Government has set aside the years of work on the CSGP by DoCS and the non-government CSGP Roundtable members, in favour of waiting for the recommendations of the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services by Justice Wood. This is despite the fact that many services funded through the CSGP provide important, community based prevention and early intervention services rather than statutory child protection services.

- The Forum of Non Government Agencies (FONGA) has also expressed its concerns that CSGP did not receive additional funding in the Budget. FONGA has offered its strong support to CSGP funded organisations, in the effort to achieve much needed additional funding. This support demonstrates the importance of CSGP funded services to the entire community services sector.

The non-government representatives on the CSGP Roundtable will be seeking an urgent meeting with the Minister for Community Services to discuss these matters. We will also continue meeting as a group to develop a broad campaign to ensure the CSGP gets the proper funding it needs to continue its vital work including community development, generalist family support services and youth services.