



Protecting vital human services in NSW

23 March 2004

The Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS) has proposed to the Carr Government that it provide an additional \$31 million in each of the next three financial years to help the State's 6,000 Government funded not for profit human services organisations manage the impacts of rapidly increasing insurance, information technology and occupational health and safety costs.

"Over 600,000 NSW citizens receive information, counselling, support, advocacy therapeutic, accommodation or other specialist services each year from the NSW not for profit human services sector," said NCOSS Director, Gary Moore.

"Nearly 50% of the annual budgets of Departments such as Community Services and Ageing, Disability and Home Care are directed to funding non government services."

"The health and long term viability of the thousands of small community based organisations, as well as the largest charities is critical for the well being of NSW."

"Cost increases over the past two years in essential items such as public liability and professional indemnity insurance have been massively above the CPI, whilst Government funding levels have barely kept pace with inflation."

"Installing, maintaining and upgrading computer hardware, software and email/internet links is now a core cost for every not for profit human services agency. The vast majority of Government funding programs do not make a provision for these costs."

"And the important requirements to improve workplace safety and minimise risk, which were fully applied to these non government organisations from September 2003, are costing from \$2,000 to \$20,000 per organisation. Current government funding programs do not provide any assistance to meet these costs."

"Unlike businesses, not for profit human services organisations cannot raise their prices or take out commercial loans to meet these major fixed costs increases."

"Without extra funding in the forthcoming NSW Budget, NCOSS is concerned that more agencies will have to reduce services, some organisations will become unviable and even more stress will be placed on the already overworked labour force and volunteers."

"The result is less and poorer, rather than more and better human services in NSW, at a time when the adequacy and quality of our Government provided health, education and transport services are under serious question."