

Media Release

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NSW BUDGET DELIVERS FOR DRAG RACING, NOT THE DISADVANTAGED

The NSW Budget is a missed opportunity from the NSW Government to tackle social issues and reduce disadvantage across the state.

When the Premier was re-elected in March 2019 she promised to “...focus on tackling social issues to reduce disadvantage,” but it’s difficult to see how this Budget achieves that.

NCOSS CEO, Joanna Quilty, said despite some positive initiatives, the Budget does not do enough for those doing it tough, particularly on cost of living, housing and support for vulnerable families.

“Overall, there is not a lot to get excited about. By and large it’s more of the same,” said Ms Quilty.

“Disturbingly, there seems to be less money this year for energy rebate programs to help low-income households manage financial pressures.

“While there is \$33.4 million for a drag racing strategy there is only \$30 million to support children in out-of-home care with complex needs – a reduction in funding made available last year.

“I am not saying that something like drag racing is not a worthy cause, I am just saying that we should be in a race to reduce poverty, and addressing disadvantage shouldn’t be a zero-sum game.

“The community sector is dealing with ever-increasing demand for services as more people in NSW fall through the cracks, but this Budget does little to address that.

“There are some positives in mental health, with mobile dental clinics, TAFE courses for the young and older people returning to work, and funding to support free school breakfasts to 500 schools.

“But is it safe to say that as a whole, the Premier’s post-election promises to address disadvantage are yet to be fulfilled.”

Despite the Premier’s commitment to halve street homelessness by 2025, there is no new or additional funding for initiatives to support this, nor for additional social and affordable housing.

“In NSW we have a growing homeless population, a social housing waiting list of 60,000 and waiting times of up to 10 years in some areas – we need to be doing more on housing,” Ms Quilty said.

“If people have a safe, secure, affordable place to call home, they are more likely to be able to get a job, be a good parent and be a productive member of their community.

“As well as this, despite rhetoric about wanting to intervene early in the lives of vulnerable children and families, there is little mention of early intervention and no additional funding.”

For more information on NCOSS, go to www.ncoss.org.au