

# Media Release

## MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 27 February 2020

### **NEW SURVEY SHOWS NEW SOUTH WALES COMMUNITY SERVICES AND WORKERS AT RISK FROM FUNDING UNCERTAINTY**

A new survey of community sector employees has found that services are at risk, and staff could lose their jobs if the Federal Government does not guarantee vital funding.

The funding in question is the Equal Remuneration Order supplementation, which was put in place to provide fair pay in the highly feminised sector.

The funding is due to expire on 30 June 2021, and the Federal Government has not committed to extending it.

The survey, conducted by the Social Policy Research Centre at UNSW Sydney, shows 55 per cent of community sector services in NSW currently receives the at-risk funding.

These services can provide vital support to vulnerable people, including domestic violence, mental health and homelessness support.

According to the survey, many respondents said that staff would be cut, and services reduced if the funding was not guaranteed.

NCOSS CEO, Joanna Quilty, said community organisations perform a critical role in helping the most disadvantaged, and their funding must be guaranteed, or services risk being affected.

“Community service workers deserve fair pay for their important work. This funding must be guaranteed and built into baseline funding to ensure long-term certainty,” Ms Quilty said.

“These services employ dedicated and experienced staff who are often dealing with increased demand and increasing complexity.

“This is a sector that already runs on a shoestring and we need the Federal Government to guarantee this funding so they can move forward with confidence.”

Founder/CEO of the Small Business Association, Anne Nalder backed the calls from the social services sector.

“The last thing small business needs is for community services workers to be out of work, or reducing their hours, which will mean reduced capacity to spend in the High Street.

“It is crucial that the Federal Government properly support community services workers, so they can continue to support those doing it tough.”

CEO of the Australian Council of Social Service, Cassandra Goldie, said:

“Cutting funding for community sector workers would mean less people to help those who reach out in times of great need.

“Without adequate funding, community services can’t keep up with demand and people are not getting the help they desperately need, such as emergency food relief, affordable housing or mental health services.

“In the lead up to International Women’s Day, we’re calling on the Government to commit to continuing to provide to Equal Remuneration Order Supplementation funding, which established almost a decade ago to provide fair pay in the feminised community service sector,” Dr Goldie said.

To find out more about NCOSS, visit: [www.ncoss.org.au](http://www.ncoss.org.au)

**Media contact: Zoe Landry 0450 286 290**