

## What is your top priority for an incoming NSW Government?

At NCOSS we know that our communities are one of the State’s most important assets. They are strong, resilient and innovative and contain the solutions to the challenges they face.

For the past three years, NCOSS has travelled right across NSW to talk with and hear directly from metro, regional, rural and remote communities. We have heard about the kind of communities you want to see, the key challenges you face in achieving this, and the solutions that would allow you to overcome these challenges.

This year we are gearing up for our next NSW State Election and we want to hear from you to shape our 2019 Election Platform!

We have heard a lot over the last three years, so will not be starting from a blank page. We will be starting with the priorities and issues identified by communities across NSW over the past three years, and will be refining them into a set of priorities and recommendations for how we can make NSW more vibrant, more inclusive and free from poverty and disadvantage.

### What we have heard from you

We have heard about the root causes of poverty, and the importance of getting it right from the start to better support vulnerable families and communities, and to ensure that no child grows up in poverty. To build the society we aspire to we need to be governed by key principles – to be inclusive and celebrate our diversity by:

- Recognising that not everyone is on an equal footing. We need targeted solutions, led by communities that **recognise multiple and intersecting forms of disadvantage**.
- Aboriginal communities and leaders know what their communities need and must be supported to self-determine at all levels of decision making. We need to **invest in Aboriginal community controlled services**.
- We need **placed-based solutions** that are grounded in communities. Communities need to be empowered and resourced to execute their own solutions – bringing together and leveraging cross-sectoral and collaborative partnerships.
- Addressing and considering the tyranny of distance and the flow on **impacts of isolation and a lack of transport** on individuals and communities accessing opportunities and vital services.

### Our communities strive for a society where:

Vision	What would make a difference
<p>Health outcomes are not determined by where people live, their cultural background, or their income, and everyone receives the right support at the right time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in community mental health services</li> <li>• Environments that support healthy choices, as well as programs that address local issues, such as access to healthy food</li> <li>• Access to affordable dental health care</li> <li>• Adequate funding for health transport to ensure people can access the health services they need</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drug and alcohol use redefined as a health and social issue and expansion of treatment options</li> </ul>
<b>Affordable Living</b>	
<p>Everyone has a stable base, and safe environment. This includes a secure home which meets our needs and where access to basic human rights (food, healthcare, safety, justice, education and housing) are accessible and affordable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More social housing stock that works for households on the waiting list and stops people cycling through homelessness services</li> <li>• The private rental market as a viable option</li> <li>• Our planning systems work to incentivise affordable housing</li> <li>• Investment to address the backlog in maintenance of social housing</li> <li>• Targeted solutions to address the need of vulnerable cohorts including older women and youth</li> <li>• A 'housing first' approach that aims to end chronic homelessness in NSW</li> <li>• Investment to ensure families can meet rising cost of living pressures, including energy</li> </ul>
<b>Safety</b>	
<p>All children grow up in a safe environment, where violence against women and children is taken seriously and communities function on the principles of justice and fairness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for DFV support and prevention meets housing, health, justice and legal needs, and takes a whole-of-community, place-based approach</li> <li>• Investment in supports and services tailored to children and young people experiencing or at risk of violence</li> <li>• Investment in behavioural change programs for perpetrators</li> <li>• Greater support and funding for community legal centres</li> <li>• Improved access to professional help or services designed to support people leaving custody</li> </ul>
<b>Family and Connectedness</b>	
<p>People live in communities that are vibrant and inclusive, and where they have a sense of belonging and feel connected and supported.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of nurse-led home visiting programs to ensure vulnerable families are assisted and linked early on in life, and that there is a seamless support system throughout a child's life</li> <li>• Greater funding and support for early intervention programs. These are essential in providing people greater stability in their home environment, help avoid crisis, minimises the impact of trauma and reduce the number of children and young people being removed into care</li> <li>• Continued funding for disability advocacy and information services to ensure our society is inclusive of those with disability</li> <li>• Invest in accessible and community transport options</li> </ul>
<b>Lifelong learning</b>	
<p>Everyone, across their lifecycle, has access to the skills needed to be productive participants in society and adaptable to a changing world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in early childhood education and care, to ensure we get it right from the start</li> <li>• Better support for TAFE and vocational education programs</li> <li>• Increased financial literacy education, and education that has a gendered lens</li> </ul>

In all our consultations with communities across NSW, we have heard again and again about the critical importance of the early years in building a strong foundation for life and learning in children. That the key to building sustainable and resilient communities is by getting it right from the start.

But we also heard about the many children and young people who are falling through the cracks and not getting the support they need. In NSW, we know that 13.8% of children under the age of 15 are experiencing poverty – a rate higher than any other mainland state. This means almost 1 in 7 children are living in households below the poverty line.<sup>1</sup>



We know the key to the wellbeing of our broader communities is the supports and systems needed to ensure our children, young people and their families are able to thrive.

Our 2019 Election Platform will chart a road map to end child poverty in NSW and will reflect the intersectionality of issues through the priority areas identified through our community consultations:

**Health:** being physical, mentally and emotionally well. Poverty is linked with ill health as the most disadvantaged people in society are more likely to have shorter lives, have greater health risks and bear a greater burden of disease.

**Safety:** being free from harm or hurt such as physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect. Exposure to violence and abuse puts people at greater risk of developing a range of health and social problems.

**Affordable living:** having the economic resources and capacity to maintain a reasonable standard of living, including affordable housing. This provides a basis for people to manage other areas of their life, such as health, education and general wellbeing.

**Family and connectedness:** having supported personal relationships and a sense of belonging to a larger community. Connections to a social network and access to support are important protective factors for wellbeing.

**Lifelong learning:** having the skills needed to be productive participants in society and able to adapt to a changing world. Starting learning early, achieving at school and gaining qualifications are vital protective factors against unemployment and poverty.

## 2018 Regional Consultations



**Together we can build a NSW free from poverty and inequality!**

<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2011). Headline Indicators for Children's Health, Development and Wellbeing. Canberra