

**In NSW almost 1 in 7 children are living in households below the poverty line.**

We know that we need to act now to break the cycle of disadvantage for these children and ensure their experience of poverty doesn't determine their life outcomes.

NCOSS has visited over 20 different cities, suburbs and towns across NSW and spoken to over 250 representatives from social and community services.

We have heard from communities and NCOSS members about what actions would make a difference for the 1 in 7 children living in poverty in our State. We have heard about what solutions are working in communities and what the NSW Government could do to make a difference.

This is what you've said:

- **Socioeconomic:** How do we ensure that families can afford a decent standard of living here in NSW?
  - Provide breakfast programs in high needs primary and high schools across the State
    - Evidence demonstrates that these programs deliver outcomes
    - A number of organisations already run these programs in NSW but it is not consistent across the State and often relies on one committed teacher or volunteer
    - There must have ongoing, sustained funding
    - Can be used as a soft entry point through which children can connect with services
    - Opportunity for Government to partner with business
    - Should involve young leaders
  - Implement an Education Allowance to help low-income families with school-related expenses – for example Internet and excursions
  - Support with the cost of transport
    - Concessions on vehicle registrations for low-income earners
    - Public transport concessions
    - Petrol vouchers
    - Community transport for medical appointments
  - Support with cost of energy bills
    - % based energy rebates better support large families/people with unavoidably large bills and responds to fluctuating prices



- **Education:** How do we ensure that all children – including children experiencing poverty – get a world class education, and have world class educational outcomes?
  - Universal access to quality early childhood education and care in the two years before school
    - Universal free access or low/ no cost for children from disadvantaged families
    - Need to change the conversation to reflect the importance of access to education in two years before school rather than the current focus on parental workforce participation
    - Increase spending on early education
    - Community-based preschools now only receive funding for preschool places for three-year-olds from low-income/Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
    - The current funding model, though targeted at funding for access for vulnerable children, means services are closing because they are not viable, especially mobile children's services
    - Major funding discrepancy between NSW and other States
    - There are a number of rural/ remote communities that do not have childcare, for example Wilcannia
    - Need to link in to current campaigns in this space
  - Education for young people in out of home care
    - Package to support children in care accessing education – for example funds for tutoring
    - Review of school suspension policies to provide more leniency
    - Increase number of Educational Officers, currently 10 funded under Keep Them Safe
  - Programs that work with parents
    - Shopping, cooking, literacy skills, assistance with raising teenagers
    - Need Aboriginal specific programs
  - To promote early detection of learning challenges there needs to be an awareness campaign and incentives for parents to bring children to counsellors
  - Better information about what is available for early-childhood support/intervention
  - Advocate for needs based funding/implementation of Gonski reforms
  - Program to ensure children attend school - in some regional areas previous programs were working where school officer went door to door and ensured children ready for school and on bus to school

- **Connectedness:** How do we ensure that all children, including children experiencing poverty, are safe, and connected with their communities and the world around them?
  - Access to social spaces and activities for young people
    - There have been cuts to funding in this area
    - Children from low socio-economic backgrounds are missing out on diverse activities/ want access to places they can go to connect with others
    - Lack of access to digital supports impacting education and employment outcomes - youth spaces needed that provide access to internet in a space young people would want to use
    - Investment needed in after school programs - for example sport, PCYC
  - Increase funding for early intervention and prevention services
    - Review of Targeted Earlier Intervention Programs currently underway (within existing funding envelope)
    - Concern that funding for whole-of-community interventions is at risk
  - Integrated /wrap-around services:
    - Co-located child and family centres in areas of identified disadvantage
    - Link services to anti-natal care
    - Link services to GPs
    - Services in schools and places people already go
  - Support for young children leaving school needed as this is a gap for children at 15
  - Increased phone and connectivity in rural and remote communities
  
- **Housing:** How do we ensure that all children and families have a safe, secure, decent and affordable roof over their head?
  - More social housing dwellings
    - Situating social housing near schools and public transport - making social housing appropriate to childrens' needs
  - Planning and development should have a focus on children
    - Social infrastructure around housing
    - Developers encouraged to consider housing for families and children
  - Stronger protections for renters
  - Security of tenure
  - Preferential access to priority social housing for young people leaving care
    - In Western Australia young people leaving care can register automatically for priority housing from age 15
  - Gap area of need is 12-15 year olds who are homeless
  - Lack of support for OOHC children who are transitioning to independence

- **Health:** How do we ensure that all children are healthy, and have access to the health services they need when they need them?
  - Home visits from nurse for vulnerable families with children age 0-2
    - Some programs already in place, but coverage is patchy – for example there is a good program in Wagga
    - This is currently being trialled in Victoria
    - Some indication that there has been a withdrawal of health services to families with new babies
  - Fix Mental Health Service Gaps:
    - Invest in services in rural and regional locations, especially for young people.
    - Service gap for children under the age of 14
    - Services for children with mental health problems
  - Access to dental treatment
    - Children are eligible for free dental treatment, but long waiting lists means many miss out on timely and effective treatment
    - Introduce dental health and speech pathology programs in schools
  - Extend Tele-health in rural and remote communities
  - Outreach programs linking services to community access points where people are engaging, for example schools, childcare centres, link other services to GPs
  - Support services for teen pregnancy – continuing education
  - Refugee health screening program should be extended to include children

Over the next few weeks we will be back visiting many communities across the State seeking further input and talking next steps. We will then pull together your campaign asks and our Steering Committee will finalise the 5 campaign asks.

If you have input, want to get involved in the campaign, or want more info on when we are in your area contact us at [1in7@ncoss.org.au](mailto:1in7@ncoss.org.au)

#### Steering Committee

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| ➤ ABSEC                                      | ➤ Foodbank  |
| ➤ Anglicare                                  | ➤ Playgroup NSW                                   |
| ➤ Association of Children Welfare Agencies   | ➤ Save the Children                               |
| ➤ Benevolent Society                         | ➤ Smith Family                                    |
| ➤ CREATE Foundation                          | ➤ UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families |
| ➤ Early Childhood Australia NSW              | ➤ Y Foundations                                   |
| ➤ Early Childhood Intervention Australia NSW | ➤ YWCA/ YMCA                                      |
| ➤ FamS                                       | ➤ Youth Action                                    |