



In the Illawarra and Shoalhaven housing, young people and the cost of living were identified as key issues people faced. People in this region are having to make difficult choices as they cannot afford the increasing cost of living. They cannot afford to put food on the table and in particular older people are having to choose between paying a utility bill and buying food. This community want to see more investment in concessions and rebates for people on low incomes, particularly people on NewStart allowance.

There is a lack of affordable housing in this region. There needs to be more local affordable housing so that people can stay in their own area and better use of existing stock, for example holiday homes. But there also needs to be more ongoing support, it cannot just be providing a roof over someone's head but giving them the support to sustain this. Early intervention for young people was also identified as a key need, particularly for pre-adolescents.

“ We have a large number of people paying more than 50% of their income in rent, with transport costs on top of that – that doesn't leave much to put food on the table. ”

Cost of living

- Latest figures show the average annual personal income in the region was \$47,196, which was nearly \$4,000 less than the state average
- In the year to July 2015 an average yearly electricity bill cost \$2,100
- Latest median weekly rental figures for 2 bedroom dwellings range from \$285 in the Shoalhaven, \$340 in Shellharbour, \$360 in Wollongong, to \$380 in Kiama
- Latest figures show Local Government rate assessments in the region were \$760 in Shoalhaven, \$921 in Shellharbour, \$1,012 in Wollongong and \$1,175 in Kiama, against a NSW median of \$672

Children and young people

- Latest figures show over 50 in every 1000 children were involved in risk of significant harm reports and nearly 16 in 1000 children were in out-of-home care
- 10,363 children in the region living below the poverty line, with a rate of child poverty rate higher than the state average, at 15.1%
- In 2014-15, 158 young people aged 15-24 were hospitalised due to intentional self-harm

Dental wait list

- 460 children and 4779 adults are on the NSW public dental waiting list
- Only 71.3% of children age 5-6 years are free of dental caries
- On average, children age 5-6 years have 0.79 decayed, missing or filled teeth

Social Housing wait list

- Latest figures show there were 11,101 social housing units in the Illawarra Shoalhaven, with 3,683 people still waiting to be housed
- In the 12 months to 30 June 2015, 593 were housed, with expected waiting times between 5-10 years across much of the region, and exceeding 10 years in Ulladulla and Shellharbour

“ A house, a home underpins everything – you can't have good health if you don't have a roof over your head. ”