

Nepean and the Blue Mountains identified homelessness and housing affordability, mental health and suicide, and the need for early intervention as the key issues that would make a difference to reducing inequality. All of these issues are linked, and that means the solutions need to be linked too. This community need ongoing mental health support services, particularly for children and young people, that are accessible to the whole region not just a small part of it.

There is not enough recognition of the significant and growing proportion of working poor in this community, who are spending 50% or more of their income on rent and transport costs. These community members cannot afford day to day expenses and need support to meet the rising cost of living.

“ Children presenting to services with issues related to suicide are getting younger. ”

## Cost of living

- Latest figures show the average annual personal income in the region was \$48,578, which was nearly \$3,000 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 \$240 in Lithgow, \$325 in Penrith, \$350 in the Hawksbury, to \$360 in the Blue Mountains
- Latest figures show Local Government rate assessments in the region ranged from \$574 in Lithgow, \$902 in Penrith, \$936 in Hawksbury, to \$1,091 in the Blue Mountains, against a state median of \$672

## Children and young people

- Latest figures show over 60 in every 1000 children were involved in risk of significant harm reports and 22 in 1000 were in out-of-home care
- 9,834 children in the region living below the poverty line at an average rate of 14%
- In 2014-15, 154 young people aged 15-24 were hospitalised due to intentional self-harm

## Dental wait list

- 1144 children and 9725 adults are on the NSW public dental waiting list
- Only 69.6% of children age 5-6 years are free of dental caries
- On average, children age 5-6 years have 1.04 decayed, missing or filled teeth

## Social Housing wait list

- Latest figures show there were 5,584 social housing units in the Nepean Blue Mountains, with 3,358 people still on the waiting list to be housed
- In the 12 Months to 30 June 2015, 460 people were housed, with expected waiting times for those remaining on the list ranging from 2-5 years in Lithgow, to 5-10 years or more in Penrith, Blue Mountains, and Richmond