

In Western Sydney the key priorities were underpinned by an even larger one – poverty, which affects everything. The key issues were housing, mental health and education. We need to see inclusionary zoning and shared equity schemes plus other measures to boost housing. Community housing models allow for better management, with a commitment to a specific community and can take account of a community’s culture, gender, age, and geographical needs.

This community wants to see early intervention with children and families to address mental health issues and more funding for education. Intensive family support is needed where there are mental health problems. There needs to be treatment and prevention measures in place because currently there can be a cycle across generations.

Cost of living

- Latest figure show the average annual personal income in the region was \$49,396, which is below the state average
- In the year to July 2015 an average yearly electricity bill cost \$2,100
- The latest median weekly rental figures for 2 bedroom dwellings range from \$235 in Blacktown, \$270 in Holroyd, \$330 in Parramatta, \$350 in the Hills, to \$420 in Auburn
- Latest figures show Local Government rate assessments in the region ranged from \$52 in Auburn, \$637 in Holroyd, \$697 in Parramatta, \$777 in Blacktown, to \$918 in the Hills, against a state median of \$672

Children and young people

- Latest figures show 27 in every 1000 children were involved in risk of significant harm reports and 4 in 1000 were in out-of-home care

“ We need early mental health intervention for 0-8 year olds, and a commitment for ongoing programs. ”

- The Sustaining NSW Families nurse home-visiting program is currently being implemented in Auburn and Parramatta. But there are children in need throughout the district. In Blacktown almost 1 in 10 children are developmentally vulnerable according to the Australian Early Development Census
- 27,999 children in the region living below the poverty line, with a child poverty rate averaging 20%. Auburn has one of the highest child poverty rates in the state at 26.1%
- Last year 261 young people aged 15-24 were hospitalised due to intentional self-harm
- On average, children age 5-6 years have 2.05 decayed, missing or filled teeth

Dental wait list

- 2551 children and 10,016 adults are on the NSW public dental waiting list
- Only 54.5% of children age 5-6 years are free of dental caries

Social Housing wait list

- The latest figures show there are 20,690 social housing units in Western Sydney, with 12,764 people still on the list waiting to be housed
- In the 12 months to 30 June 2015, 1,231 people were housed, with expected waiting times for those still on the list being 10 years or more, across the region

“ Housing is a fundamental need, inclusionary zoning needs to happen. Currently there is none in the Parramatta area and it is a lost opportunity. ”