

No Poverty

A roadmap for a fair NSW



ncoss
NSW Council of Social Service

Courage, Integrity,
Fairness, Inclusion

NCOSS Pre-Budget
Submission 2018/19



NCOSS Advocacy Kit

No Poverty

A roadmap for a fair NSW

Message from the CEO



Thanks for joining with NCOSS to progress our work together to ensure the needs and aspirations of people experiencing poverty are part of the NSW Government's agenda and that they get reflected in the allocation of funds in the upcoming State Budget. You will be joining with hundreds of NCOSS members across the State who will be meeting with their local member of parliament, talking to their local media, and participating in community campaign action. Together we can make real change happen. So let's get to it...

Step 1: Seeking a meeting with your local member

Whilst NCOSS meets with the Premier, Ministers, Shadow Ministers and more in Sydney, NCOSS members will be meeting with their local MPs across the State.

Included in your pack is a draft letter to your MP seeking a meeting regarding the NCOSS Pre-Budget Submission (PBS). We need all MPs to be hearing the same message – we need to act now on these key recommendations for our State. Contact details for your local Member of Parliament are on the NSW Parliament [website](#).

Step 2: Contacting your local media

We need to shape the public debate to raise awareness about what is needed to ensure our communities are strong and resilient and that people experiencing poverty and disadvantage supported.

Included in your pack is a draft Media Release about the PBS to be amended and sent to your local tv, print & radio.

Step 3: Advocating to your local member about the PBS

Your MPs need to hear about why these issues and recommendations are important to you and the people and communities in your area. They will need the details of the recommendations - what's needed and why/ what it will achieve - but also local stories about your experience or that of the communities you work with.

Included in your pack are speaking notes with a summary of recommendations, asks for MPs, and points on each recommendation.

Step 4: Endorse the [PBS](#)

Step 5: Share your stories and spread the word

We want to be kept in the loop at every step! When you write to MPs and media flick us a copy too. We'd love to hear stories about your meetings or about people in your communities. Once you have met with your local member share it on our facebook page: on.fb.me/ncoss and tweet using [#nopoverity](#), [#1in7](#) and [#nochildpoverty](#) and tag [@_ncoss_](#)

Make sure you post a pic with your MP and the PBS report/posters.

Then get the word out through your networks to join the campaign and for others to meet with their MPs.

Together, we can shape a better future for people experiencing poverty and disadvantage here in NSW.

Tracy Howe,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy Howe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

NCOSS CEO

Letter to MP

[your letter head if appropriate]

Dear [Title] [Candidate name],

I am writing to you on behalf of [the organisation you are associated with/ NCOSS members] in [suburb or district]. We are a [describe your service/organisation/ coalition of organisations].

I would like to request a meeting with you on a date convenient to you within the next 4 weeks.

Our organisation is supporting the NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS) Pre-Budget Submission (PBS) which outlines seven key recommendations for the NSW Government to make a very real difference to people experiencing poverty and disadvantage.

The [PBS](#) has identified seven key areas where the NSW Government can make distinct and targeted investments to improve outcomes for people experiencing poverty and disadvantage:

- Give all children and young people the best start in life;
- Create homes for our most vulnerable;
- Make energy more affordable;
- Boost support for people with mental health issues;
- Build a fair justice system for Aboriginal communities;
- Financially empower women throughout their life cycle and
- Give a voice to all people with disability.

The meeting would be an opportunity to discuss the PBS and why the recommendations in it are of particular importance to your electorate.

OPTIONAL

In particular, I believe the NSW Government should invest in [Choose one or more of the areas listed above for targeted investment]

This is because [say why you think this recommendation is important for your community specifically]

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you and hear your viewpoint. I believe if we work together we can improve outcomes for people in [your suburb/district].

I look forward to speaking to a member of your staff in the near future to organise a convenient meeting time.

Yours sincerely,

[your name and contact details]

[Organisation logos if joint letter]

Media Release Template

[DATE]

Local community backs plan to prevent persistent poverty rates

Local community organisations/[the name of your organisation] have/s today backed a new plan that shows a path forward for the NSW 2018/19 Budget to reduce the experience of poverty and disadvantage in [your region] and prevent it happening in the first place.

The plan is outlined in the NSW Council of Social Service Pre-Budget Submission and is the result of a state-wide consultation with health and community service organisations around the state.

[Your organisation] will today meet with [your local MP] to discuss the plan which identifies investment in giving children and young people the best start in life, creating homes for our most vulnerable, making energy more affordable, boosting support for people with mental health issues, building a fair justice system for Aboriginal communities, financially empowering women throughout their life cycle and giving a voice to all people with a disability as key priorities.

[Your spokesperson] said [your organisation] would be focused particularly on [insert the recommendation/s of particular concern to your organisation]

[Insert lines here about why this/they are so important to your region/clients]

[Your Spokesperson] said recent figures released from the NSW Council of Social Service that show levels of poverty are becoming entrenched across Australia indicated the need to start doing things differently.

“Things aren’t changing and they desperately need to. This plan comes from our community and communities just like ours. It’s time our leaders listened to the solutions we are putting forward.

“If we are to make meaningful change we must break the poverty cycle and ensure all people have fundamental human rights and access to opportunity. We know that our communities are diverse, strong and connected and have the solutions to the wicked problems they face. Together we can build a community free of poverty. .” See [NCOSS Pre-Budget Submission](#)

Media contact: [your media contact]

NCOSS Contact: Stephanie Baker 0416 622 606

Talking Points

- Explain to your MP why these issues are important to you and the people and communities that you work with
- Talk them through the PBS recommendations – what is the issue and how these would make a difference in your electorate – see key points and stats below, and specific stats for [each region on our website](#)
- Provide your MP with a copy of the [NCOSS Pre-Budget Submission](#)
- If they need any further info you are not sure of get in contact with Ola Hamed at ola@ncoss.org.au

Ask your MP to commit to supporting the campaign by:

- Get a photo of yourself and your MP with a copy of the PBS. (Don't forget to send it to us!)
- Speaking in local media about how these policy changes would make a real difference for the people in your community
- Advocating for the Government to adopt these recommendations in the next Budget
 - *Coalition MPs* – advocating within the party room and to their colleagues in the party (including relevant Ministers and the Premier) on the importance of these recommendations for the members of their electorate
 - *ALP/ Greens/ Independents MPs* – advocating to Government regarding the difference these recommendations would make for people and communities experiencing poverty and disadvantage across the State. Asking questions of the Government regarding the rates of people experiencing poverty and their willingness to adopt these recommendations.

Give all children and young people the best start in life:

All children deserve the best start in life. However, too many of our children and young people experience poverty, violence, poor health and disadvantage. We know whole-of-family, whole-of-community approaches that provide early, targeted support deliver the best and most effective outcomes. We need to build and support safe, resilient families and communities so children can grow and thrive.

Recommendation: Establish a \$250 million Early Childhood Education Investment Fund to ensure vulnerable children access the full benefits of quality early education.

Invest \$3.5 million to fund the delivery of child-centred, trauma informed services targeting children and young people who are victims or have experienced domestic and family violence.

Invest an additional \$39 million in childhood obesity prevention with a focus on equitable access and opportunities in regional and remote NSW.

Create homes for our most vulnerable:

We all need a place to call home. Without a safe, secure home, people cannot work towards a better life for themselves and their families. But across NSW there is a chronic shortage of affordable housing, with an estimated shortfall of at least 130,000 dwellings³ and rental affordability is at an all-time low. The waitlist for social housing continues to grow and people are being forced to move away from services and opportunities, or live in conditions that fall well below basic human rights.

Recommendation: Allocate an additional \$97 million over four years to create homes that meet the needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Allocate \$45 million over four years toward developing at least five youth foyer models across NSW.

Invest \$22 million in new housing models for older women.

Commit \$30 million over four years toward a Housing First response to people experiencing chronic homelessness.

Make energy more affordable:

Energy use underpins all aspects of our daily lives. While high energy prices affect households across NSW, the stark reality for people living below the poverty line is that rising bills are impacting their health, wellbeing and quality of life. We know that 19% of children living in low-income households are going without food, and 33% of low-income households are going without medical treatment in order to pay their energy bills. They are sacrificing hot water for bathing, not heating their homes, and going to bed early in an effort to reduce their costs.

Recommendation: Invest an additional \$39 million in 2018/19 to reform energy rebates and deliver a single, expanded Low Income Household Energy Rebate equivalent to 17.5% of eligible household's electricity bills.

Boost support for people with mental health issues:

Good mental healthcare and wellbeing enables us to lead healthier lives, cope with the stresses of life more effectively and realise our full potential. But getting the right support at the right time is often out of reach for too many people living with poverty and disadvantage. Across NSW we heard key barriers include the rising cost of healthcare, a shortage of mental health workers and the persistent stigma around mental health issues.

Recommendation: Invest \$25 million over four years to expand the mental health peer workforce and support people at specific 'pressure points' in the mental healthcare system.

Build a fair justice system for Aboriginal communities:

Our Aboriginal communities are vibrant and diverse, with strong connections to community and country. Empowering these communities is key to addressing the challenges they continue to experience in health, education, employment, and the justice system. In particular, systemic barriers mean that Aboriginal people across our state are still 13 times more likely to go to prison than non-Aboriginal people. Shockingly, if they are under the age of 18 years, they are 15 times more likely.^s There are concerns a tipping point has been reached where imprisonment has become normalised, threatening the viability of our Aboriginal communities and their youth.

Recommendation: Invest \$44 million over four years to help Aboriginal communities reduce contact with the justice system:

Invest an additional \$24.4 million over four years in community-based Aboriginal legal assistance services.

Commit \$4 million over four years to reducing young Aboriginal people's contact with the criminal justice system.

Invest \$15.6 million over four years in culturally appropriate post-release programs, focusing on continuity of support to re-establish connection to community and reduce re-offending.

Financially empower women throughout their life cycle:

Financial security and literacy empowers us to access life's essentials, opportunities, and freedom of choice. But systemic workforce issues mean women are generally concentrated in sectors and occupations that pay less and are less secure. Their careers are also more likely to be interrupted due to caring responsibilities. These tendencies compound into financial disadvantage across their life, resulting in lower superannuation levels and retirement savings, and a greater risk of poverty and disadvantage than men.

Recommendation: Invest an additional \$7.8 million over three years in the delivery of the Financial Counselling Services Program and gender-specific material to better assist vulnerable women.

Give a voice to all people with disability:

We all want the opportunity to fulfil our potential. The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a huge and positive reform, giving people choice and control over their disability supports. But we know that only 10% of people with disability will be eligible for NDIS packages. We also heard right across the state that people with disability need information and active assistance from advocates outside the NDIS to help them take control of their lives and have a voice in shaping policy. This is particularly important given one in four of the households experiencing poverty that we spoke to had someone with a disability. It is also vital for Aboriginal people and communities to have advocates who understand their culture and community, and are easy to access face-to-face.

Recommendation: Invest \$13 million to maintain funding beyond June 2018 to organisations providing representation, advocacy and information to people with disability and their families.

Recommendations Summary

Give all children and young people the best start in life: Establish a \$250 million Early Childhood Education Investment Fund to ensure vulnerable children access the full benefits of quality early education.

Invest \$3.5 million to fund the delivery of child-centred, trauma informed services targeting children and young people who are victims or have experienced domestic and family violence.

Invest an additional \$39 million in childhood obesity prevention with a focus on equitable access and opportunities in regional and remote NSW.

Create homes for our most vulnerable: Allocate an additional \$97 million over four years to create homes that meet the needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Allocate \$45 million over four years toward developing at least five youth foyers across NSW.

Invest \$22 million in new housing models for older women.

Commit \$30 million over four years toward a Housing First response to people experiencing chronic homelessness.

Make energy more affordable: Invest an additional \$39 million in 2018/19 to reform energy rebates and deliver a single, expanded Low Income Household Energy Rebate equivalent to 17.5% of eligible household's electricity bills.

Boost support for people with mental health issues: Invest \$25 million over four years to expand the mental health peer workforce and support people at specific 'pressure points' in the mental healthcare system.

Build a fair justice system for Aboriginal communities: Invest \$44 million over four years to help Aboriginal communities reduce contact with the justice system:

Invest an additional \$24.4 million over four years in community-based Aboriginal legal assistance services.

Commit \$4 million over four years to reducing young Aboriginal people's contact with the criminal justice system.

Invest \$15.6 million over four years in culturally appropriate post-release programs, focusing on continuity of support to re-establish connection to community and reduce re-offending.

Financially empower women throughout their life cycle: Invest an additional \$7.8 million over three years in the delivery of the Financial Counselling Services Program and gender-specific material to better assist vulnerable women.

Give a voice to all people with disability: Invest \$13 million to maintain funding beyond June 2018 to organisations providing representation, advocacy and information to people with disability and their families.

Background

Our Pre-Budget Submission (PBS) draws together the lived experience of people experiencing or at risk of poverty and disadvantage, the knowledge and experience of our members from the community sector across the state, the expertise of our advisory panels and our NCOSS team's research and analysis.

We have heard that the priority areas for action are:

- Children, young people and families
- Housing and homelessness
- Gender equality and domestic violence
- Health
- Access to justice
- Disability

This year we held six conferences and two additional consultations, 38 workshops total, in regions across NSW. We conducted a deeper conversation in each of these priority areas to gain insight into regional challenges and solutions. We spoke to approximately 570 people across the state:

- Coffs Harbour
- Orange
- Kiama
- Wagga Wagga
- Parramatta
- Newcastle
- Wilcannia
- Broken Hill.

We asked 3 questions: What is keeping us from making the progress we want? What are the kinds of things that would make a difference? What is working well in your community?

We have used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to gather these perspectives and have developed seven costed recommendations that start the journey to end poverty in NSW. Over the past three years our consultations have been guided by the Harwood methodology of community conversations seeking to develop public knowledge based on experience. We have used this framework to understand the shared aspirations of a given community, their barriers to achieving this, their challenges or issues, and the changes or solutions that would assist in achieving their aspirations. Our data collection also included an online survey of our membership to canvass their priorities for action.