

Media Release

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 3 July 2020

VITAL LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICES AT RISK FROM NSW GOVERNMENT FUNDING SHORTFALL

Community services providing vital supports to vulnerable people throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and bushfire crisis are now at risk because of NSW Government funding shortfalls.

The community services sector serves as a lifeline to vulnerable people in the community, providing emergency shelter, support to women facing family violence, and food for those in financial distress.

NSW Government indexation shortfalls over recent years mean many non-government organisations that are providing these supports will not be able to cover mandated minimum wage rises.

A 1.75 per cent increase in the minimum wage for these workers comes into effect from 1 July and the NSW Government's continual indexation shortfalls mean organisations will be forced to cut services and reduce staff at a time when demand for their services is increasing.

NCOSS CEO, Joanna Quilty said these organisations have stepped up and done the heavy lifting during the current crisis and must be supported and valued by the state government.

"We are urging the NSW Government to support those who have supported the most vulnerable through the COVID-19 pandemic and bushfire crisis," Ms Quilty said.

"These workers deserve to have their pay go up, they deserve to have their work valued, and they shouldn't have to beg the NSW Government every year to cover these modest wage increases.

"The government relies on these services to support the most vulnerable, and they should do them the courtesy of providing adequate funding that covers their wages each year. This should just happen.

"Politicians pay goes up on a regular basis, and so should the pay of workers in the community services sector, but they should not have to cut services to the most vulnerable to manage it.

"We have vulnerable people copping the brunt of the pandemic, we have JobKeeper and JobSeeker payments coming to an end, and these organisations are doing the heavy lifting.

"Now is the time for the NSW Government to step up and acknowledge the good work that this sector does and pay them adequately for it.

"These services already run on a shoestring and this is not the time to ask these services to do more with less.

“We have seen the NSW Government move decisively to support many vulnerable communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, and we urge them to provide the most basic level of funding to those helping the most in need.”

As well as this, a recent report by Social Ventures Australia (SVA) and the Centre for Social Impact (CSI) found substantial job loss could result as organisations struggle to fundraise and seek sponsorship during COVID-19.

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