

MEDIA RELEASE

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GOVERNMENT MUST SUPPORT THE MOST VULNERABLE AND THOSE ON THE FRONTLINE DURING LOCKDOWN

Peak social services organisations are urging the NSW Government to ensure the state's most vulnerable populations and community services workers are supported during the COVID lockdown.

NCOSS and Homelessness NSW have welcomed swift moves to ensure rough sleepers can be moved into hotels until 12 July, and called for a plan to vaccinate frontline workers and their clients.

"The NSW Government is acting swiftly to support those sleeping rough, but we also need to ensure other vulnerable cohorts and frontline workers are supported," NCOSS CEO Joanna Quilty said.

"Central to this is developing an urgent plan to get frontline community service workers and vulnerable clients vaccinated – it is a farce that this has not happened yet, and we note that is not the fault of the NSW Government.

"Additionally, many services are over capacity already, and, if the lockdown continues, there will be increased need for crisis accommodation, food relief, family violence and mental health support, and other emergency measures.

"We also need to ensure that community services are able to draw on additional resources for deep cleaning and able to bring in temporary additional staff if people are unwell and isolating.

"We stand ready to assist the NSW Government on developing a package of supports that will allow the community services sector to meet rising demand and support those most in need."

Homelessness NSW CEO, Katherine McKernan said it was vitally important that there was contingency for homelessness supports to be extended if the lockdown extends.

"We welcome the NSW Government's efforts over the weekend to ensure those sleeping rough can get into hotels," Ms McKernan said.

"We need to ensure there is contingency for this to continue if the lockdown continues, and we need to get these vulnerable people vaccinated as a matter of urgency.

The peaks also acknowledged that the extra Together Home packages in the NSW Budget should mean that there are more permanent options available once temporary hotel arrangements finish.

For more information about NCOSS, visit www.ncoss.org.au

For more information about Homelessness NSW, visit www.homelessnessnsw.org.au

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