

Media Release

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 23 July 2021

RISING DEMAND FOR BASIC SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THE VULNERABLE

Rising demand across Greater Sydney for basic goods and services, such as food relief, is highlighting the need for urgent financial support to vulnerable families and individuals.

NCOSS, Foodbank NSW and ACT, and frontline Fairfield NGO, Community First Step are urging the Federal Government to allow those on income support payments such as JobSeeker to access the more generous disaster support payments.

The organisations are also calling on the Federal Government to revisit the JobSeeker rate when Parliament returns so that it is above the poverty line.

Both Foodbank NSW and ACT and Community First Step are seeing rapidly rising demand for their services from families struggling with the economic and social impact of the current lockdown.

NCOSS CEO Joanna Quilty said the Federal Government needed to urgently increase financial assistance to those in desperate need across Greater Sydney.

“The Federal Government needs to step up to the plate and ensure that those on income support payments, many of whom have also lost work hours, have access to the more generous disaster payments, which would be a lifeline for households in desperate need,” Ms Quilty said.

“We know that many on social security rely on paid work to supplement their income support so that they can pay the rent and put food on the table. But despite losing work hours they can’t access the disaster payments available to others.

“This is unfair, putting already vulnerable households in impossible situations and leaving it up to community organisations to somehow come to the rescue.”

Foodbank NSW and ACT CEO John Robertson said demand for their food services was skyrocketing as families throughout Greater Sydney struggle.

“We are seeing a tsunami of need from families and individuals throughout Sydney as the lockdown drags on,” Mr Robertson said.

“What’s really noticeable is that this time around, there is no JobSeeker supplement taking the pressure off the really vulnerable households.

“Services will not be able to continue to meet this demand unless we see action from the Federal Government which lifts pressure off families who cannot put food on the table.”

Community First Step CEO John Gilmore said families and NGOs across South West Sydney were straining under the pressure.

“We are at the coalface of what is a crisis in South West Sydney. Vulnerable people need urgent support, and the Federal Government must come to the table,” Mr Gilmore said.

“Without access to disaster payments in the short term and a longer term fix to the JobSeeker rate, more people will slide into poverty across Greater Sydney.”

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

Media contact: Nick Trainor – 0407 078 138