

Strathfield By-election 2022: Issues for Communities

From responding to housing and homelessness to addressing family violence and inadequate social supports, NCOSS is highlighting the solutions needed to drive down poverty and disadvantage in Strathfield.

This fact sheet has been developed specifically for our members and other interested parties. It highlights ongoing and emerging issues for people experiencing poverty and disadvantage in the Strathfield electorate, as well as offering solutions for structural change.

The need for solutions to tackle disadvantage in Strathfield

Strathfield has a large CALD population with over 65% of people speaking a language other than English at homeⁱ. NATSEM research commissioned by NCOSS, shows that there are significant pockets of disadvantage across the electorate. It estimates that there is a total of over 11,000 people living in poverty in the electorateⁱⁱ.

It is worth noting that these figures are based on data from the 2016 Census – now, with two years of a pandemic behind us we know that disadvantage and inequality have most likely grown, with impacts hitting some groups harder than others.

Key issues include:

- The poverty rates for children in some areas are as high as one in five children living in poverty (Homebush, Burwood and Croydon).ⁱⁱⁱ
- First Nations households experience poverty rates of between 15% to 43%^{iv}.
- While median rents stayed steady until October 2021 they have now started to rise.^v Median house prices have been long out of reach for ordinary families in the Strathfield area, with unit sales not far behind.
- Nearly one in three households (27%) were in mortgage or rental stress prior to the pandemic^{vi} and one in five private renters were living in poverty.^{vii}
- In addition there is a severe and growing gap in social housing provision with wait times of more than 10 years for people to access subsidised housing in the Strathfield area.^{viii}
- Support for people experiencing disadvantage because of Covid has been impacted by the recent cuts to the Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment^{ix}.
- There has been a 9.8 increase in reports of domestic violence over June 2019 to June 2021^x.
- There has been a consequent sharp rise in the number of people seeking specialist homelessness services due to domestic violence.
- 61 per cent of job losses since May 2021 have been in female dominated industries.^{xi}
- There is an emerging crisis in health translation services for CALD communities with wait times of up to an hour on the phone and some people missing out all together.^{xii} The suburb of Strathfield has one of the highest rates of Covid 19 cases per 100,000 people in the state.^{xiii}

The solutions

Communities are working hard to address issues and concerns that affect them and implement positive ideas for change. It is imperative that they are able to access the support and services that they need. The evidence is clear that by adequately resourcing communities and addressing inequality, resilience, mental health and physical wellbeing improve, and economies and innovation thrive^{xiv}.

In our recent Pre-Budget Submission NCOSS outlined recommendations for change, developed in response to engagement and consultation with the many NCOSS members, other frontline services and peak organisations who have supported communities through bushfires, drought, floods, multiple COVID-19 outbreaks and associated economic and social dislocation. See the full discussion [here](#).

As a first step, we need to:

- Ensure people have a safe, healthy, accessible and affordable place to call home
 - Build 5,000 additional units of social housing every year for the next 10 years
 - Upgrade inefficient fixtures (water, heating and cooling) and improve the thermal performance of existing social housing stock
 - Renew and expand the NSW Appliance Replacement Offer program to support lower-income households to replace inefficient appliances
 - Mandate minimum accessibility standards (Silver Level Livable Design) in NSW building regulation
- Invest in essential support, social cohesion and job security for women by boosting recurrent baseline funding for the social services sector by 20 per cent
- Embed place-based NGOs in emergency management systems to improve local emergency responses and recovery.^{xv}

Other Resources

[Disadvantage in the Strathfield Electorate](#)

[Strathfield Electorate Overview](#)

[Mapping Disadvantage interactive map](#)

[NCOSS Advocacy Toolkit](#)

[Rebuilding Women's Economic Security](#)

[After the Pandemic: building a more resilient and inclusive NSW](#)

References

- ⁱ Australian Bureau Statistics 2021 *2016 Census Quickstats Strathfield SED* viewed 20 January 2022 https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SED10077?open=document
- ⁱⁱ NCOSS 2022 *Economic Disadvantage in Strathfield Electorate Among Different Groups* <https://www.ncoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/20220128-Strathfield-Mapping-Disadvantage.pdf>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Ditto
- ^{iv} Ditto
- ^v CoreLogic 2022 *Property Prices In Strathfield* viewed 20 January 2022 <https://www.propertyvalue.com.au/suburb/strathfield-2135-nsw>
- ^{vi} Australian Bureau Statistics 2021 *2016 Census Quickstats Strathfield SED* viewed 20 January 2022 https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SED10077?open=document
- ^{vii} (insert link to Bega Stats page to be loaded onto website)
- ^{viii} Figures for Strathfield area Department of Communities and Justice 2020 *Expected Wait Times* viewed 20 January 2022 <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/applying-assistance/expected-waiting-times>
- ^{ix} ACOSS 2022 *Another Income Hit for Casual workers* Viewed 20 January 2022 https://www.acoss.org.au/media-releases/?media_release=another-income-hit-for-casual-workers-massive-cut-to-pandemic-leave-disaster-payment
- ^x NCOSS 2021 *After the Pandemic: Building a more resilient and inclusive NSW Pre-Budget submission 2022-23* viewed 19 January 2022 <https://www.ncoss.org.au/policy-advocacy/policy-research-publications/ncoss-pre-budget-submission-2022-23/>
- ^{xi} Ditto.
- ^{xii} Rachwani M 2022 *Patients left without crucial information as Covid puts pressure on NSW interpreting services* The Guardian 23 January 2022 viewed 28 January 2022 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/23/patients-left-without-crucial-information-as-covid-puts-pressure-on-nsw-interpreting-services>
- ^{xiii} Fitzsimmons C 2022 *The Sydney suburbs bearing the brunt of the Omicron wave* Sydney Morning Herald 28 January 2022 viewed 28 January 2022 <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/the-sydney-suburbs-bearing-the-brunt-of-the-omicron-wave-20220120-p59pzh.html>
- ^{xiv} United Nations 2020 *Inequality – Bridging the Divide* viewed 28 January 2022 <https://www.un.org/en/un75/inequality-bridging-divide>
- ^{xv} NCOSS *After the Pandemic: Building a more resilient and inclusive NSW Pre-Budget submission 2022-23* accessed 19 January 2022 at <https://www.ncoss.org.au/policy-advocacy/policy-research-publications/ncoss-pre-budget-submission-2022-23/>