

## Monaro By-election 2022: Issues for Communities

From housing and homelessness to family violence and inadequate income support, NCOSS is highlighting the social issues that must be addressed by the next state Member for Monaro.

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 Monaro electorate, as well as offering solutions for structural change.

### The need for solutions to tackle disadvantage in Monaro

NATSEM research commissioned by NCOSS, shows that most Monaro communities have lower levels of economic disadvantage than the state average<sup>i</sup>. However there are significant pockets of disadvantage with 14.7% of the population in the township of Cooma and a total of 5,700 people living in poverty across the electorate.

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 are higher with over *one in five* children in Cooma and East Queanbeyan living in poverty.
- First Nations households experience poverty rates of between 12% to 35% (for the Cooma Region) across the electorate.
- CALD communities also experience higher poverty rates in rural areas outside of the Queanbeyan area.
- House prices have risen significantly across the region, for example in Queanbeyan East, house prices rose by nearly 27% per cent in the last 12 months. Likewise in Cooma prices rose by 22%<sup>ii</sup>.
- 14% per cent of households were in mortgage or rental stress prior to these increases<sup>iii</sup>.
- In addition there is a severe and growing gap in social housing provision with an average wait time of 5 to 10 years for people to access subsidised housing. Wait times in Cooma for a 3 bedroom house are over 10 years<sup>iv</sup>
- Support for people experiencing disadvantage because of Covid has been impacted by the recent cuts to the Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment<sup>v</sup>.
- There has been a 9.8 increase in reports of domestic violence over June 2019 to June 2021<sup>vi</sup>.
- 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<sup>vii</sup>.
- Suicide rates in the Monaro electorate and surrounds are 1.5 times the NSW average<sup>viii</sup>.
- Communities are struggling with the impacts of recovery from multiple disasters: Drought, Black Summer bushfires, and Covid 19 - for many funding and expertise has been withdrawn too soon.<sup>ix</sup>
- Many local organisations have also been impacted by not being able to run fundraising and other community connector type events.<sup>x</sup>
- While the Monaro electorate has a high rate of volunteering, volunteers (and community leaders) are exhausted, dwindling due to Covid isolation, illness and other impacts.<sup>xi</sup>

## 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<sup>xii</sup>.

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.<sup>xiii</sup>

## Other Resources

[Overview of the Monaro Electorate](#)

[Disadvantage in the Monaro Electorate](#)

[Mapping Disadvantage interactive map](#)

[NCOSS Advocacy Toolkit](#)

[Rebuilding Women's Economic Security](#)

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

[Community Resilience Wellbeing and Recovery Project – Snowy Monaro Case Study](#)

## References

---

- <sup>i</sup> The percentage of people living in poverty across NSW is 13.3%
- <sup>ii</sup> CoreLogic 2022 *Property Prices In Queanbeyan/Cooma* viewed 20 January 2022  
<https://www.propertyvalue.com.au/map/queanbeyan%20east-nsw-2620/buy>  
and <https://www.propertyvalue.com.au/map/cooma-nsw-2630/buy>
- <sup>iii</sup> Australian Bureau Statistics 2021 *2016 Census Quickstats Monaro SED* viewed 20 January 2022  
[https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SED10053](https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SED10053)
- <sup>iv</sup> Figures for Cooma in 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>
- <sup>v</sup> 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](https://www.acoss.org.au/media-releases/?media_release=another-income-hit-for-casual-workers-massive-cut-to-pandemic-leave-disaster-payment)
- <sup>vi</sup> NCOSS 2021 *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/>
- <sup>vii</sup> Ditto
- <sup>viii</sup> Mental Health Commission of NSW 2022 *Community Case Studies – Snowy Monaro* viewed 19 January at  
<https://www.nswmentalhealthcommission.com.au/advocacy-work/community-resilience-wellbeing-and-recovery-project-resources>
- <sup>ix</sup> Ditto.
- <sup>x</sup> Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal 2021 *Heartbeat of Rural Australia Research Study November 2021* viewed 19 January 2022 <https://frrr.org.au/wp-content/uploads/FRRR-Heartbeat-of-Rural-Australia-Study-2021-FINAL.pdf>
- <sup>xi</sup> Ditto.
- <sup>xii</sup> United Nations 2020 *Inequality – Bridging the Divide* viewed 28 January 2022  
<https://www.un.org/en/un75/inequality-bridging-divide>
- <sup>xiii</sup> NCOSS 2021 *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/>