

Working Together for a Fairer South Western Sydney

The NCOSS policy platform sets out the opportunities to work together for a fairer South Western Sydney¹ and the investments that will deliver benefits for the future.

The next NSW Parliament can act decisively to provide immediate cost of living relief, build resilience for vulnerable population groups, and improve conditions and opportunities for the female dominated social service sector.

This fact sheet highlights the issues that need addressing, the economic impact of not addressing them, and provides links to the policy solutions that can drive the changes we need to see in our local communities.

We look forward to working with policymakers and elected officials to pursue opportunities which prioritise those most in need, deliver benefits for the future and set us on the path for a fairer South Western Sydney.

Quick Statistics for South Western Sydney

- 17% of the total NSW population. Just over a quarter(26.3%) of the Greater Sydney population.
- 22,814 First Nations people.
- Slightly higher rates of one parent families than in Greater Sydney (15.2%) - 19.7% of families in South West Sydney, 17.9% in Outer South West, 16.9% in Inner South West.
- Lower median household incomes per week compared with \$2,077 for Greater Sydney - \$1,713 in South West Sydney, \$1,734 in Inner South West, and \$1,916 in Outer South West.
- Similar rates of renting to Greater Sydney (35.9% of households) apart from in Outer South West Sydney which was lower at 28.3%.
- Much higher proportions of households that speak a language other than English at home compared with 38.2% for Greater Sydney - 68% in South West Sydney, 64.8% in Inner South West, with a much lower rate for the Outer South West of 28.3%.²

Key issues in South Western Sydney

- 11% of low income respondents to the [NCOSS Cost of Living Survey](#) were aware of the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) scheme but only 1.7% had accessed it.³
- Across the state 21% of respondents were aware of the Low Income Household Rebate but only 4.7% had used it.
- Difficulty paying for household expenditure items was reported by more survey respondents in the Inner South West 69% and the South West 64% than the state average of 58% of respondents.⁴
- Overall 1 in 5 people delayed going to the dentist because of cost concerns.
- South West Sydney has the second highest public dental treatment waitlist in the state - 8,176.⁵
- More respondents living in South-West Sydney 70%, and the Inner South West 64%,

reported taking at least one action indicating financial hardship⁶ in the last 12 months, compared to the state average of 62%.

- Outer South-West (24%), Inner South-West (23%), and South-West (22%) reported high levels of overcrowding.
- Respondents from the Inner South-West (31%) were the second highest SA4 region in Greater Sydney to report negative changes to their housing arrangements.⁷
- 43.7% of renters in the South West Sydney region were in housing stress, 39.3% in the Inner South West, and 34.4% in the Outer West.⁸
- The annual economic loss in South Western Sydney, due to flow-on impacts of housing stress on productivity and participation, is estimated at \$55m - \$72m per annum.
- The NSW Government per capita spending on domestic and family violence is \$32.4 – one third of that spent by the Victorian government.
- The South West Sydney, and Inner South West regions experienced some of the highest increases in Domestic and Family Violence in the state over the course of the pandemic.
- Across South Western Sydney this represents over 10,200 women experiencing violence for the first time, and 7,800 experiencing an escalation in violence.⁹
- It is estimated that costs associated with this increase in violence in South Western Sydney will total \$3.5 bn over the period 2020-25 - including direct health and productivity costs of \$561m, as well as indirect costs due to pain, suffering and premature mortality.
- Across NSW, an estimated 2,402 women return to live with a violent partner because of a lack of an affordable housing, and a further 2,410 become homeless because they cannot find secure and permanent

housing after leaving violence.¹⁰

- Homelessness overall, across NSW, has risen by 10% since the start of the pandemic.
- NSW has experienced a 13.4 per cent increase in the number of children from low socio-economic areas who are developmentally vulnerable at the start of school (over 2020 to 2021).
- Over 2 in 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children compared to 1 in 5 non-Indigenous children started their schooling journey developmentally vulnerable (2021).
- 32.7 per cent increase in the number of children presenting at emergency departments with mental health concerns over 2020 to 2021 - five times the previous annual growth rate.
- Estimated lost lifetime earnings - due to missing face to face schooling - were largest in those local government areas, such as Liverpool and Fairfield, that had the combination of long lockdowns and a high number of low socio-economic status (SES) children.¹¹
- A 26.7% increase in children at risk of significant harm¹² in the South-Western Sydney District¹³ – much higher than the state increase of 13.5%.
- The total additional costs of this increase in cases of child abuse and neglect is estimated at over \$1.3bn for South Western Sydney.
- In the first half of 2022, NSW punters lost almost \$4bn playing the pokies.¹⁴
- It is estimated that across South Western Sydney \$1.25 bn could be lost in productivity over the period 2021-25 due to increases in poor mental health, including anxiety and depression, amongst the employed population.
- On average, NSW spends 33 per cent, or around \$53 less, on community mental health services per resident than other states and territories.

Our solutions

Our policy platform has been developed through close engagement with members and informed by a rigorous research agenda. For a summary of recommendations, click [here](#). To find a more detailed description of NCOSS's Policy Platform for a Fairer NSW click [here](#).

Contact Details

If you would like further information on the policy platform email advocacy@ncoss.org.au

¹ For the purposes of this fact sheet we have included ABS SA4 regions as follows: Sydney - South West, Inner South West, Outer South West.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics *Sydney South West 2021 Census Quickstats* viewed 17 November 2022 <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/127>

³

⁴ This included one or more of - going without prescribed medication/healthcare, meals, or essential hygiene items, being unable to afford mobile data or internet at home, to travel for essential reasons, minimum credit card payments, being unable to pay their utility bills or rent/mortgage on time.

⁵ Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Association (2022), The biggest dental deserts. https://cpsa.org.au/article/the-biggest-dental-deserts/?mc_cid=15a36e24e1&mc_eid=8401d56289

⁶ Actions included one or more of - pawned or sold something, used 'buy now pay later' to pay for essential, taken out a payday or short-term loan, accessed a no interest loan, sought financial assistance from friends or family, sought assistance from welfare or community organisations.

⁷ Negative changes include rent increases, moving homes due to costs, termination of rental lease and/or severe damage to home due to natural disasters.

⁸ Compared with 35.3% in Greater Sydney. Australian Bureau of Statistics *Sydney South West 2021 Census Quickstats* viewed 17 November 2022 <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/127>

⁹ Because these figures are based on the findings of a nationally representative study on the increased incidence of family and domestic violence across Australia in 2020, it is likely to underestimate the impact in South Western Sydney which has experienced more stressors in terms of both natural disasters and COVID-19 restrictions than other parts of Australia (excluding Victoria).

¹⁰ Equity Economics 2021 *Rebuilding Women's Economic Security – Investing in Social Housing in New South Wales Sydney*

¹¹ In the Liverpool Local Government Area (LGA) lost lifetime earnings are estimated at \$755m, and in Fairfield LGA \$1,222m.

¹² Figures compare the period 2020-2021 to 2018-2019.

¹³ Department of Communities and Justice district.

¹⁴ Koziol, M (2022), *Average NSW pokes loss way above that of other states*. *Sydney Morning Herald*. 5 September 2022 <https://www.smh.com.au/national/average-nsw-pokies-loss-way-above-that-of-other-states-20220901-p5benb.html>