

## JOINT MEDIA ALERT

8 March 2023

### CANTERBURY AND BANKSTOWN CANDIDATES TO ATTEND NSW ELECTION ROUNDTABLE

#### Event details:

- **Date:** Arrive at 12.55pm for 1pm start – Thursday 9 March 2023
- **Location:** Canterbury City Community Centre: 130 Railway Parade, Lakemba
- **Attendance:** Please confirm your attendance with our media contact Billy Briggs ([bbriggs@apa.au](mailto:bbriggs@apa.au) / 0474 697 235)

#### Run sheet:

- Walk through of Canterbury City Community Centre with candidates (images only, no interviews) – 20 mins
- Roundtable where candidates, NCOSS, LCSA and Canterbury Centre discuss key issues – 20 mins
- Media Q&A where journalists can ask questions of candidates, NCOSS, LCSA and Canterbury Centre – 10 mins
- Formalities conclude and media depart

Local candidates vying for the seats of Canterbury and Bankstown will attend a roundtable event on Thursday 9 March to hear from peak social services organisations about the need for core funding for Neighbourhood and Community Centres (NCCs).

Candidates Jihad Dib (LAB), Isaac Naesdra (GRN), Max Boddy (SEP), Sophie Cotsis (LAB), Bradley Schott (GRN), and Kacey King (AJP) will attend the event to hear from Local Community Services Association (LCSA), the NSW Council for Social Service (NCOSS) and Canterbury City Community Centre.

The key issue to be discussed is that NCCs in NSW must receive core funding from the NSW Government for the essential, local support they provide through programs and services, particularly in times of crisis and for those doing it toughest.

Despite the critically important role NCCs play in supporting local communities, there is no dedicated funding from the Government to keep the doors open.

Instead, these centres rely on program-based funding, one-off grants, fundraising and donations to cobble together sufficient funds to cover the cost of a manager and administrative support. NCCs are often not able to run community development programs at the scale required to the needs and aspirations of their communities.

NCOSS CEO Joanna Quilty said: “NCCs are well placed to provide a raft of services in response to local community need – be it food relief, disability support, social connection, immediate assistance for those experiencing homelessness or domestic violence, or referral to specialist services. But managing such a diversity of service offerings is complex and requires strong oversight and dedicated resources.

“During the floods, fires and pandemic, in many instances NCCs were first on the ground and stepped in as a quasi-emergency response team – providing urgent help to those in need.

“These services are critical during hard times including local emergency events, yet they don’t have any guaranteed core funding from the NSW Government that recognises this essential role and enables ongoing, sound management. This is completely unacceptable.

“That’s why we are calling on the candidates in Canterbury and Bankstown to commit to providing core funding for NCCs in the lead-up to the NSW election.”

LCSA Acting Executive Officer Anthony Brown said: “When faced with life’s challenges people turn to those they know and trust in their local community for support. Canterbury City Community Centre provides an accessible, inclusive, and non-judgmental space for people to achieve positive outcomes for their lives, thanks to the dedicated staff and volunteers who continue to go above and beyond each day to assist all those who walk through their door.

“Yet despite these efforts – centres are still left without proper resourcing or funding.

“We have joined forces with NCOSS and Canterbury City Community Centre to raise this issue with local candidates and advocate for change before the State election.

“It’s now time for the local candidates to tell us whether they support our call or not.”

Canterbury City Community Centre CEO Esta Paschalidis-Chilas said: “The last few years of incredibly challenging events has seen local neighbourhood and community centres like ours have provided a local and accessible point of contact for local communities to stay safe physically and emotionally.

“We need to be strong and sustainable to assist with the work needed to recover from such challenges. Secure and core funding is central to playing that role as best as we can”.

**Media contacts:  
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