

Media Release

Tuesday, 19 September 2023

NCOSS CONCERNED NSW BUDGET WILL NOT TACKLE GROWING DISADVANTAGE IN NSW

Peak social services body NCOSS welcomed some of the investments in the NSW Government's 2023-24 Budget, but called for urgent support for those living in poverty.

NCOSS CEO Joanna Quilty acknowledged the significant financial pressures on the Budget, but expressed concern for those doing it toughest in NSW right now.

"It is great to see investment in schools and hospitals across Western and South Western Sydney. These are growth suburbs where families need ready access to these essential facilities," Ms Quilty said.

"But they are also the suburbs where we see the highest concentrations of disadvantage, where disadvantage is deepening and where cost of living pressures are hitting hardest.

"These areas desperately need access to essential social infrastructure – the network of social services that provide the support, assistance and care that can avert crises, keep households together and help families to get through tough times.

"As cost-of-living pressures ramp up and the affordable housing crisis grows, we need urgent, increased investment in front-line supports such as neighbourhood centres, tenants advice, domestic violence services, financial counselling and mental health supports.

"We acknowledge the significant financial pressures the NSW Government is currently under, but this Budget does not do enough to help those barely hanging on.

"While the \$224m investment in social and affordable housing signals the Government's intent, it barely scratches the surface. After years of neglect by successive governments, now is the time to turbo-charge investment in social housing, affordable housing and homelessness services."

The housing crisis is particularly impacting those on low incomes, who have to spend more of their budget on housing costs, forcing them to make terrible trade-offs.

Recent NCOSS research highlights that 70 per cent of low income households are in housing stress, paying more than 30 per cent of their income on housing, up from 63 per cent last year.

"As more people enter housing stress, we are seeing more people skip meals, forego medication and healthcare, avoid essential travel, and demolish what meagre savings they had available," Ms Quilty said.

[The research](#) shows that four in five (78 per cent) low-income households identified utilities as a cost item putting their budgets under the most pressure in the last 12 months, and that those unable to pay utility bills on time grew by 37 per cent.

"With rising energy prices impacting low income households, \$100m to support families most in need with their energy bills will be welcome news indeed. But more needs to be done to tackle underlying causes and provide struggling families with ongoing support to overcome challenges and get their lives on track.

"What's missing, and what we needed to see, was substantial investment in social and affordable housing, initiatives that would improve protections, conditions and security for renters, and bolstering the capacity of essential social services to meet rising demand.

"NCOSS will continue to work with the NSW Government to address the widening inequality in NSW."

Register to attend the NCOSS Post-Budget Breakfast on 26 September where the NSW Treasurer and Shadow Treasurer will pitch their economic case, and NGO sector leaders will respond.

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

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