

Media Release

Monday, 13 November 2023

NCOSS CONVENES MEETING IN TAREE TO ADDRESS REGIONAL NSW CONCERNS

Peak social services body NCOSS is convening a meeting with members and local services in Taree on Tuesday 14 November to discuss the gaps in funding and services for the Mid Coast and Port Macquarie Hastings regions.

NCOSS members, local services, partner organisations, and government agencies will be traveling from Port Macquarie, Kempsey, Taree, Forster and surrounds to provide a range of perspectives.

The meeting aims to understand what regional service providers need to build community wellbeing, address disadvantage, and respond to increasing disasters due to climate change.

NCOSS has partnered with local hosts Zac Carter from Manning Valley Indigenous Community Support Services and Corinne Stephenson from Forster Neighbourhood Centre.

NCOSS Acting CEO Ben McAlpine said the event is an important opportunity to hear from frontline services about their experiences.

“Too often the regions are forgotten by our policy makers, and it is our job to ensure their voice is heard,” Mr McAlpine.

“Our members tell us that the perennial issue for the regions is that services are increasingly centralised when we know place-based approaches work best. At the same time, funding is fragmented and inconsistent, and nothing will change if the policies don’t.

“I am particularly looking forward to our discussion on risk reduction and disaster preparedness which will hone in on the importance of social connections and local networks for disaster recovery and preparedness.

“And later in the afternoon we will discuss the challenges our members face when connecting clients to the services they need – and how we can overcome those challenges and gaps.”

Ms Stephenson said: “Locally based services live and work in their communities and know from firsthand experience what the current and emerging local needs are, particularly in a region significantly impacted by floods, fire and COVID-19 in recent years.

“It is locals supporting locals that build community capacity to mobilise and respond in times of need. To have NCOSS as a partner to magnify the voice of our region is crucial to achieve adequate resourcing for essential local infrastructure such as Neighbourhood Services and community organisations.”

Mr Carter said: “Manning Valley Indigenous Community Support Services is pleased to work with NCOSS to support the connection for local services and our community.

“We are focused on building better opportunities for our local region, and that’s what we will be discussing today.”

Following the meeting, NCOSS will advocate to the NSW Government on the needs of these communities to ensure their concerns get a fair hearing from the State’s leaders.

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