

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12.00am AEST Tuesday 5 February 2019

NSW COMMUNITY SECTOR ALLIANCE CALLS FOR MORE ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO ADDRESS INEQUALITY

People can't live in a stadium; they would prefer plans to drive down electricity costs rather than new tollways that drive up the cost-of-living; and new train lines can't connect them to services like mental health support if those services don't exist.

18 community organisations announced today they will campaign to ask all political parties ahead of the NSW election to prioritise building great communities for a fairer NSW.

“NSW is a rich state in a rich country, and there is no excuse for people here being left behind,” said NCOSS CEO, Joanna Quilty.

“CommBank’s recent *State of the States* report went as far as to put NSW’s economy as number one thanks to factors like our job market, retail spending and business investment.

“But these benefits and advantages are not spread evenly, and the evidence is clear in many areas.

“Homelessness has increased by 37% since the 2011 census and we’re seeing greater unmet need for essential supports and services such as community-based mental health services and tenancy advocacy services.

“In recent years we have also seen dramatic increases in the number of people with mental health issues presenting at emergency departments and homelessness services.

“We should all be working together across government, the community and private sectors to build great communities, and this requires financial investment by Government as well as partnerships.”

Dana Clarke, the Chair of Absec, said dramatic improvements are needed for not just Aboriginal people, but all disadvantaged sectors of the community, including in the regions.

“Strong, resilient communities are built on more than infrastructure in urban areas, they are built on equality and respect for all,” Dana said.

“Inequality in Australia is on the rise, and as the gap widens, Aboriginal people are affected the most.

“These divisions if ignored, will only cause further harm to society. I am here to tell you that Aboriginal people need a change.

“The solutions lie in Aboriginal communities themselves. We know that outcomes for Aboriginal children and families are greatest when Aboriginal people develop and drive the solutions.

“We need to work together to ensure all people experiencing disadvantage have access to essential services. Everyone deserves a roof over their head, an education and healthcare.”





For a fairer NSW

Karen Walsh, the Chief Executive Officer of Shelter NSW, said, “With 60,000 households on the NSW Social Housing Register, one in two low income renters experiencing rental stress and the number of people living in overcrowding increasing by 74%, its evident that we need urgent action from Government.

“We need a 20-year housing strategy that includes funding to build at least 5,000 social housing homes every year, mandated targets to deliver social and affordable homes in new residential developments, and for 100% of social and affordable housing to be accessible for people with disabilities.”

“We also need better policy settings and legislative reform so that we can provide people with assistance to prevent them becoming homeless,” Karen said.

Together the community sector is calling for the next NSW Government to enable families and communities to thrive, ensuring:

- Everyone has a decent, affordable, accessible and safe place to call home.
- Children and families have the supports and resources they need to cope with challenges and thrive.
- Young people are supported to reach their potential.
- Women are safe everywhere - their families, workplaces, in public and online.
- Aboriginal people decide their future and are strong in culture and identity.
- People with disability are included and can fully participate in all aspects of community life.
- Everyone has access to justice and legal help in times of need.
- The whole community is engaged and empowered.

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The Building Great Communities campaign is supported by NCOSS, Fams, Homelessness NSW, AbSec, Yfoundations, Association of Children’s Welfare Agencies, Domestic Violence NSW, Community Housing Industry Association NSW, Community Legal Centres NSW, Shelter NSW, People with Disabilities Australia, The Centre for Volunteering, Financial Inclusion Network, Youth Action, Tenants Union of NSW, Local Community Services Association, CREATE and Churches Housing.

