

one in
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seven

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NSW Council of Social Service

In New South Wales, 13.8% of children under the age of 15 are experiencing poverty – a rate higher than any other mainland state. Almost 1 in 7 children live in households below the poverty line.¹

These statewide statistics mask a situation that is even more troubling in some towns and suburbs in our state. Country towns like Brewarrina (31.8%), Kyogle (28.2%), and Tenterfield (27.9%), and suburbs like Auburn (26.1%) and Canterbury (25.6%)² – among others – have child poverty rates that far exceed the statewide average. And we know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are overrepresented amongst children experiencing poverty and are particularly disadvantaged across a range of indicators.³

There is no shortage of research and evidence to show the prevalence and consequences of child poverty here in New South Wales. Children and young people who experience poverty and disadvantage are more likely to have health and behavioural problems, experience housing and food insecurity, and not achieve

at school.⁴ These childhood experiences have an impact across the entire life course, shaping their employment prospects, their health outcomes and wellbeing.⁵

There is also no shortage of evidence to point to the many causes of poverty. Unemployment and underemployment, jobs shortages, poor health, disability, dysfunction within a family, as well as the effects of racism and other forms of discrimination, can all contribute.⁶

But whatever causes a child to experience poverty, that child is not responsible.

Whatever causes a child to experience poverty, it shouldn't determine their life chances.

We also know that here in New South Wales, we can act to break the cycle of disadvantage and ensure that the 1 in 7 children who are experiencing poverty have the best chance in life.

Our 1 in 7 Campaign outlines five key actions the NSW Government could take to make a very real difference to the life chances of children and young people experiencing poverty and disadvantage.

These actions have been informed by extensive conversations with our members and other stakeholders across NSW – specialists in working with children and young people to break the cycle of disadvantage. Before we started these conversations we also gathered some data and spoke with 400 low and middle income families about their experience of the cost of living today. And they have also been shaped by a panel of experts and leaders in social justice.

In the coming months NCOSS and our members will be calling on the NSW Government to bring these actions to life. Working together, we can make a real difference and build a future where the life outcomes of children in NSW aren't determined by the poverty they experience in childhood.





Tracy Howe, CEO

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2011). Headline Indicators for Children's Health, Development and Wellbeing. Canberra
2. Ibid
3. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2011). Headline Indicators for Children's Health, Development and Wellbeing. Canberra
4. Considine, G. & Zappala, R. (2002). The influence of social and economic disadvantage in the academic performance of school students in Australia. *Journal of Sociology*, 38(2): 129-148.
5. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2011). Headline Indicators for Children's Health, Development and Wellbeing. Canberra: AIHW.
6. Aboriginal Disability Network (2007). A report on community consultations with Aboriginal people with disability and their associates throughout NSW, 2004-2005. Sydney: Aboriginal Disability Network, p. 26-27.

OUR CAMPAIGN RECOMMENDATIONS



HEALTH	<p>NSW children should get the healthiest start in life</p> <p>Recommendation: Invest an additional \$25 million per year in the state-wide roll-out of a nurse-led home visiting program for vulnerable families during the first two years of a child's life.</p>
EDUCATION	<p>NSW children deserve a better start to their education</p> <p>Recommendation: The NSW Government should increase investment in early childhood education and care (ECEC) so that all children experience a quality early education from the age of three. As a first step, the NSW Government should increase funding from \$193 per child to \$600 per child, bringing NSW into line with other States.</p>
SOCIO-ECONOMIC	<p>Eating healthy is central to a child's ability to learn and achieve</p> <p>Recommendation: Invest \$3.2 million in a Healthy Eating: Healthy Living Schools Fund to support schools in specific locations fund programs such as school breakfasts and other healthy food initiatives.</p>
CONNECTEDNESS	<p>Children and young people need to be connected to their families, friends and communities to thrive</p> <p>Recommendation: Invest an additional \$15 million per annum in activities and programs that ensure children and young people are connected to their families and communities.</p>
HOUSING	<p>Children and young people must have a safe and secure place to call home</p> <p>Recommendation: Ensure children, young people and their families can access affordable housing, by investing an extra \$711 million to increase social and affordable housing stock in NSW, reduce homelessness and properly maintain existing housing stock.</p>