

Working Together for a Fairer Richmond - Tweed

The NCOSS policy platform sets out the opportunities to work together for a fairer Richmond - Tweed region¹ and the investments that will deliver benefits for the future.

The next NSW Parliament can act decisively to provide immediate cost of living relief, build resilience for vulnerable population groups, and improve conditions and opportunities for the female dominated social service sector.

This fact sheet highlights the issues that need addressing, the economic impacts of not addressing them, and provides links to the policy solutions that can drive the changes we need to see in our local communities.

We look forward to working with policymakers and elected officials to pursue opportunities which prioritise those most in need, deliver benefits for the future and set us on the path for a fairer Richmond - Tweed.

Quick Statistics for Richmond - Tweed

- 3.2% of the total NSW population or 257,061 people.
- 11,809 First Nations people.
- Higher rates of one parent families – 18.5% of families compared with 15.8% in NSW.
- Much lower median household incomes per week of \$1,329 compared with \$1,829 for NSW.
- Lower rates of renting, 25.9% of households, than for NSW at 32.6%.
- Lower numbers of households that speak a language other than English at home – 7.4% compared with 29.5% for NSW.²
- It contains the marginal electorates of Lismore and Tweed.

Key issues in Richmond - Tweed

- Energy and housing are two of the biggest cost items in low income households after food.³
- 11% of low income respondents to the [NCOSS Cost of Living Survey](#) were aware of the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) scheme but only 1.7% had accessed it.
- Across the state 21% of respondents were aware of the Low Income Household Rebate but only 4.7% had used it.
- 59% of respondents in the combined region of Coffs Harbour and Richmond - Tweed had trouble paying for household expenditure items over the last 12 months, compared with the state average of 58%. This included skipping meals, going without medication, health care, or dental.⁴
- Overall 1 in 5 people delayed going to the dentist because of cost concerns.
- Overcrowding was reported by 16% of respondents in Richmond-Tweed.
- Over 3000 homes were damaged in the 2022 floods.⁵

- 44.9% of households renting were in housing stress (35.5% in NSW).⁶
- The annual economic loss in the region due to flow-on impacts of housing stress on productivity and participation, is estimated at over \$10m dollars.
- Fourth highest increase in Domestic and Family Violence in the state – 33% over the course of the pandemic.⁷
- \$817m estimated costs in the region associated with this increase in violence over the period 2020-25 - including direct health and productivity costs and indirect costs due to pain, suffering and premature mortality.
- Across NSW, 2,402 women return to live with a violent partner because of a lack of affordable housing, and a further 2,410 become homeless because they cannot find secure and permanent housing after leaving violence.⁸
- The NSW Government per capita spending on Domestic and Family Violence is \$32.4 – one third of that spent by the Victorian government.
- Homelessness overall, across NSW, has risen by 10% since the start of the pandemic.
- NSW has experienced a 13.4 per cent increase in the number of children from low socio-economic areas who are developmentally vulnerable at the start of school (over 2020 to 2021).
- Over 2 in 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children compared to 1 in 5 non-Indigenous children started their schooling journey developmentally vulnerable (2021).
- \$396 m estimated lost lifetime earnings in the Richmond – Tweed region due to children missing face to face schooling over the pandemic.
- A decrease in the number of children at risk of significant harm in the Northern NSW District compared to the state average of 13.5%.⁹ Noting that this is accompanied by a 40% increase in Aboriginal children at risk of significant harm across the state.
- In the first half of 2022, NSW punters lost almost \$4bn playing the pokies.¹⁰
- An estimated \$230m could be lost in productivity over the period 2021-25 due to increases in poor mental health in the region - including anxiety and depression amongst the employed population.
- On average, NSW spends 33 per cent, or around \$53 less, on community mental health services per resident than other states and territories.

Our solutions

Our policy platform has been developed through close engagement with members and informed by a rigorous research agenda. For a summary of recommendations, click [here](#). To find a more detailed description of NCOSS's Policy Platform for a Fairer NSW click [here](#).

Contact Details

If you would like further information on the policy platform email advocacy@ncoss.org.au

¹ The Richmond - Tweed region is an ABS SA4 region incorporating the following LGA's: Ballina, Byron, Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond Valley, Tweed.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022 *Richmond - Tweed 2021 Census Quickstats* viewed 22 November 2022
<https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/112>

³ Institute of Public Policy and Governance 2022 *Tough Times, Hard Choices Struggling households and the rising cost-of-living in NSW* Sydney. Following statistics come from the Cost of Living report apart from where indicated.

⁴ This included one or more of - going without prescribed medication/healthcare, meals, or essential hygiene items, being unable to afford mobile data or internet at home, to travel for essential reasons, minimum credit card payments, being unable to pay their utility bills or rent/mortgage on time.

⁵ Impact Economics and Policy 2022 *Aftershock: Addressing the Economic and Social Costs of the Pandemic and Natural Disasters Report Three – Housing Security* Sydney. Following statistics come from the [Aftershock Report series](#) apart from where indicated.

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022 *Richmond - Tweed 2021 Census Quickstats* viewed 22 November 2022
<https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/112>

⁷ Based on AVO breaches from April 2020 to March 2022.

⁸ Equity Economics 2021, *Rebuilding Women's Economic Security – Investing in Social Housing in New South Wales, Sydney*

⁹ Department of Communities and Justice district.

¹⁰ Koziol, M (2022), *Average NSW pokes loss way above that of other states*. *Sydney Morning Herald*. 5 September 2022 <https://www.smh.com.au/national/average-nsw-pokies-loss-way-above-that-of-other-states-20220901-p5benb.html>

