

## Working Together for a Fairer Central Coast

The NCOSS policy platform sets out the opportunities to work together for a fairer Central Coast<sup>1</sup> 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 impact 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 Central Coast.

### Quick Statistics – Central Coast

- 4.3% of the total NSW population or 346,596 people.
- 17,047 First Nations people.
- Higher rates of one parent families - 19.2% compared with 15.8% for NSW.
- Lower median household incomes per week \$1,507 compared with \$1,829 for NSW.
- Lower rates of renting, 27.5% of households, than for NSW at 32.6%.
- Lower numbers of households that speak a language other than English at home - 9.6% compared with 29.5% for NSW.<sup>2</sup>
- It contains the marginal electorate of The Entrance.

### Key issues in the Central Coast

- Energy and housing are two of the biggest cost items in low income households after food.<sup>3</sup>
- 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.<sup>4</sup>
- Across the state 21% of respondents were aware of the Low Income Household Rebate but only 4.7% had used it.
- A higher proportion of respondents in Central Coast (69%) had trouble paying for household expenditure items over the last 12 months, compared with the state average of 58%.<sup>5</sup>
- Going without prescribed medication or healthcare including dental, was most reported by respondents living on the Central Coast (35%).
- Overall 1 in 5 people delayed going to the dentist because of cost concerns.
- Central Coast currently has the third highest public dental treatment waitlist in the state - 7,168.<sup>6</sup>
- One in five respondents living in the Central Coast reported that they could not afford essential travel.

- Households in the Central Coast (35%) were some of those most impacted by negative changes to housing.<sup>7</sup>
- The Central Coast (88%) had the highest proportions of low-income renters in NSW experiencing rent increases.
- 42 % of households who are renting in the Central Coast are in housing stress, compared with 35.5% in NSW.<sup>8</sup>
- 18% increase in Domestic and Family Violence in the Central Coast over the course of the pandemic.<sup>9</sup>
- It is estimated that costs associated with this increase in violence will total \$1.12 bn over the period 2020-25 - including direct health and productivity costs as well as indirect costs due to pain, suffering and premature mortality.
- The NSW Government per capita spending on Domestic and Family Violence is \$32.4 – one third of that spent by the Victorian government.
- Across NSW, 2,402 women return to live with a violent partner because of lack of affordable housing, and a further 2,410 become homeless because they cannot find secure and permanent housing after leaving violence.<sup>10</sup>
- Homelessness overall, across NSW, has risen by 10% since the start of the pandemic.<sup>11</sup>
- 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).
- \$829m estimated lost lifetime earnings in the Central Coast due to children missing face to face schooling over the pandemic.
- The increase in the number of children at risk of significant harm in the Central Coast District <sup>12</sup>is unexpectedly low at .4% compared to the state average of 13.5%,<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup>
- The Central Coast Local Health District had a 48% increase in the number of presentations for self-harm or suicidal thoughts in young people (12 – 17 years) over the course of the pandemic - the second highest increase in the state.<sup>15</sup>
- In total, over the period of 2021-2025, the additional costs associated with the increased rates of anxiety and depression amongst the working population in NSW could reach \$7.4 billion.<sup>16</sup>
- 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](mailto:advocacy@ncoss.org.au)

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<sup>1</sup> Central Coast SA4 area is aligned with the Central Coast Local Government Area.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022 *Central Coast 2021 Census Quickstats* viewed 22 November 2022 <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/102>

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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 this report apart from where indicated.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Association (2022), *The biggest dental deserts*. [https://cpsa.org.au/article/the-biggest-dental-deserts/?mc\\_cid=15a36e24e1&mc\\_eid=8401d56289](https://cpsa.org.au/article/the-biggest-dental-deserts/?mc_cid=15a36e24e1&mc_eid=8401d56289)

<sup>7</sup> Negative changes to housing included a rent increase, moving in with family or friends due to cost, rent leave being terminated, moving house due to cost, damage to home due to a natural disaster and experiencing a period of homelessness.

<sup>8</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022 *Central Coast 2021 Census Quickstats* viewed 22 November 2022 <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/102>

<sup>9</sup> Based on AVO breaches from April 2020 to March 2022. Impact Economics and Policy 2022 *Aftershock: Addressing the Economic and Social Costs of the Pandemic and Natural Disasters Report Two – Domestic and Family Violence* Sydney. Following statistics come from the [Aftershock Report series](#) apart from where indicated.

<sup>10</sup> Equity Economics 2021, *Rebuilding Women's Economic Security – Investing in Social Housing in New South Wales, Sydney*

<sup>11</sup> Since the start of the pandemic, there has been no update to the publicly available data on the number of people experiencing homelessness. Impact Economics and Policy utilised the number of people seeking Specialist Homelessness Services and currently experiencing homelessness to conservatively estimate the growth in the number of people experiencing homelessness.

<sup>12</sup> Department of Communities and Justice districts.

<sup>13</sup> Figures compare the period 2020-2021 to 2018-2019.

<sup>14</sup> 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-wayabove-that-of-other-states-20220901-p5benb.html>

<sup>15</sup> Increases are from 2018 to 2021.

<sup>16</sup> For the Central Coast NCOSS estimates, on a proportional population basis, indicate that costs in the region could reach over \$310 million.