

Working Together for a Fairer Inner West

The NCOSS policy platform sets out the opportunities to work together for a fairer Inner West¹ 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 Inner West.

Quick Statistics – Inner West

- 3.8% of the total NSW population or 304,771 people.
- 2,210 First Nations people.
- Slightly lower rates of one parent families – 13.3% compared with 15.8% for NSW.
- Higher median household incomes per week \$2,250 compared with \$1,829 for NSW.
- Higher rates of renting 41.7% of households, than for NSW at 32.6%.
- More households that speak a language other than English at home – 46.9% compared with 29.5% for NSW.²
- It contains the marginal electorate of Strathfield.

Key issues in NSW and the Inner West

- 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.
- A higher proportion of respondents in the Inner West (62%) had trouble paying for household expenditure items over the last 12 months, compared with the state average of 58%.⁴
- Nearly 1 in 4 Inner West respondents reported going without prescribed medication, dental or healthcare over the last 12 months.
- Overall, across NSW, 1 in 5 people delayed going to the dentist because of cost concerns.⁵

- Households in the Inner West (31%) were some of those most impacted by negative changes to housing.⁶
- Low income households in the Inner West reported the third highest levels of housing stress (73%) compared to the state average (60%).
- Nearly a third of all households 32.3% who are renting in the Inner West are in housing stress (compared with 35.5% across NSW).⁷
- The Inner West had the highest increase in Domestic and Family Violence - 54% - over the course of the pandemic compared to any other area in the state.⁸
- It is estimated that costs associated with this increase in violence will total \$390m 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 a lack of affordable housing, and a further 2,410 become homeless because they cannot find secure and permanent housing after leaving violence.⁹
- Homelessness overall, across NSW, has risen by 10% since the start of the pandemic.¹⁰
- 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).
- Over \$60m estimated lost lifetime earnings in the Inner West due to children missing face to face schooling over the pandemic.
- A 12.1% increase in the number of children at risk of significant harm in the Inner West (state average 13.5%).¹¹
- In the first half of 2022, NSW punters lost almost \$4bn playing the pokies.¹²
- The Sydney Local Health District had a 35% increase in the number of presentations for self-harm or suicidal thoughts in young people (12 – 17 years) over the course of the pandemic.¹³
- 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.¹⁴
- 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 Inner West SA4 area is an inner urban area comprising the following LGA's: Burwood, Canada Bay, Strathfield (most of), Inner West (part of), and a small part of Canterbury-Bankstown.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022 *Central Coast 2021 Census Quickstats* viewed 8 December 2022
<https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/120>

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 NSW Council of Social Service (2020). Mapping Patient Experience and Economic Disadvantage in NSW.
<https://www.ncoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Online-Mapping-Patient-Experience-and-Economic-Disadvantage-in-New-South-Wales-report-2.pdf>

⁶ 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.

⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022 *Central Coast 2021 Census Quickstats* viewed 8 December 2022
<https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/120>

⁸Based 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.

⁹ Equity Economics 2021, *Rebuilding Women's Economic Security – Investing in Social Housing in New South Wales, Sydney*

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ Figures compare the period 2020-2021 to 2018-2019.

¹² 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>

¹³ The Sydney LHD roughly aligns with the Inner West SA4 region. Increases are from 2018 to 2021. Total presentations for men, across NSW, declined during this period.

¹⁴ Rough estimates based on proportional population estimates for the Inner West indicate that costs in the region could reach \$280 million.