

Working Together for a Fairer Northern Beaches

The NCOSS policy platform sets out the opportunities to work together for a fairer Northern Beaches¹ region 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 Northern Beaches.

Quick Statistics – Northern Beaches

- 3.2% of the total NSW population or 263,554 people.
- 1,706 First Nations people.
- Lower rates of one parent families – 11.9% compared with 15.8% for NSW.
- Higher median household incomes per week \$2,592 compared with \$1,829 for NSW.
- Lower rates of renting, 26.9% of households, than for NSW at 32.6%.
- Lower numbers of households that speak a language other than English at home – 19.7% compared with 29.5% for NSW.²
- It contains the contested electorates of Pittwater and Manly.

Key issues in the Northern Beaches

- 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.
- 50% of respondents in the Northern Beaches had taken at least one action indicating financial hardship in the last 12 months, compared with the state average of 62%.⁴
- Overall, in NSW, 1 in 5 people delayed going to the dentist because of cost concerns.
- Low income respondents in the Northern Beaches reported the second highest levels of housing stress (77%) compared to the state average (60%).
- 37.3 per cent of households who are renting in the Northern Beaches are in housing stress, compared with 35.5% in NSW.⁵

- Over the course of the pandemic the Northern Beaches had a surprising decline in reported Breached Apprehended Violence Orders – against the trend across the state. However the cost of the impacts of Domestic and Family Violence are still high with estimated costs of \$245m over 2020 – 2025 - including direct health and productivity costs as well as indirect costs due to pain, suffering and premature mortality.⁶
- 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.⁷
- Homelessness overall, across NSW, has risen by 10% since the start of the pandemic.⁸
- 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).
- The increase in the number of children at risk of significant harm in the Northern Sydney District ⁹was 22.4% over the course of the pandemic - much higher than the average increase across the state of 13.5%.¹⁰
- In the first half of 2022, NSW punters lost almost \$4bn playing the pokies.¹¹
- The Northern Sydney Local Health District had a 37% increase in the number of presentations for self-harm or suicidal thoughts in young people (12 – 17 years) over the course of the pandemic.¹²
- 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 Northern Beaches SA4 area is aligned with the Northern Beaches LGA. It contains the electorates of Wakehurst, Pittwater and Manly, as well

² Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022 *Northern Beaches 2021 Census Quickstats* viewed 8 December 2022
<https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/122>

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 – seeking financial assistance from family or friends, using Buy Now, Pay Later for essential goods, pawning or selling something because they needed cash, seeking assistance from welfare or community organisations, taking out a payday or short-term loan, accessing a no-interest loan.

⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022 *Central Coast 2021 Census Quickstats* viewed 8 December 2022
<https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/122>

⁶ 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.

⁷ Equity Economics 2021, *Rebuilding Women’s Economic Security – Investing in Social Housing in New South Wales, Sydney*

⁸ 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.

⁹ Department of Communities and Justice districts.

¹⁰ Figures compare the period 2020-2021 to 2018-2019.

¹¹ Koziol, M (2022), *Average NSW pokies 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>

¹² Increases are from 2019 to 2021.

