

THIS ELECTION – LET'S MAKE IT

# A Fairer NSW

What's often missed in public debate, especially around election time, is the simple idea of fairness.

Everybody wants a strong and fair NSW - where people have a decent standard of living; where kids are healthy and succeeding in school; and where people doing it tough have the support they need to get back on their feet.

We all want a community in which everyone can participate, where people feel safe and where people get a fair go.

To make this a reality, the incoming NSW Government must deliver:

- The best start in life for all our children;
- Quality services for all people in NSW, including country NSW;
- Services that are affordable and available when they are needed;
- Sustainable infrastructure;
- Smart investment in our public and community services.

The Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS) has identified 15 simple things that the incoming NSW Government could do to make NSW a fairer place. Not all of them cost money. Many are about changing the way government works. All of them will make life better for the people of NSW.

To find out more visit our website: [www.AFairerNSW.net](http://www.AFairerNSW.net)

Action

1

## A better start in life for all kids

Children and young people deserve a chance to thrive.

- By investing in pre-schools to guarantee 2 days a week early learning in the 2 years before school we can set our kids up for life.
- By investing in child and family centres in disadvantaged areas we can combine quality early education and care, home visiting, parent education and health screening services for kids who currently miss out.
- By investing in a network of respite care services for children at risk we can prevent abuse and support strong and stable families.

Action

2

## Support for kids who can't live at home

Kids in care often end up unemployed and homeless. We can prevent this by making sure these kids have a stable and secure home, finish school, access training and job opportunities, health care and other basics - just like any good parent would. With a guarantee for kids in care we can make sure they start their adult lives on the right foot.

Over 800,000 people in NSW live in poverty. NCOSS works for them. NCOSS is an independent non-government organisation and is the peak body for the non-government human services sector in NSW. NCOSS works with its members on behalf of disadvantaged people and communities towards achieving social justice in New South Wales. Through current membership forums, NCOSS represents more than 7,000 community organisations and over 100,000 consumers and individuals.



Action

3

## A fair go for working people

Living in NSW is expensive. Too many people are working

hard but still struggling to put food on the table, pay the rent or mortgage, and pay the bills. These are the “working poor” who are on low wages or are in part time or casual work.

Whilst the NSW government can't do much about petrol and food prices, they can help working poor people through concessions. This is what happens in Victoria.

Providing concessions on transport and utilities would help 145,000 working people make ends meet.

Older Aboriginal people, who tragically die 20 years earlier than other Australians, should be eligible for a Seniors Card when they reach 45.

Action

4

## Health services for everyone

Poverty is very bad for your health. The health gap between

rich and poor in Australia means that up to 3,700 people die needlessly every year. Making our health system fairer is the whole of the Government's job, not just the Department of Health. There is a very clear link between where you live, your housing, your education, your income and your health. If we don't get these basics right, people's health suffers.

We can help to fix the terrible health inequity between Aboriginal people and other Australians with health centres that focus on prevention of chronic diseases, like Type 2 diabetes.

No one should worry about how to get to a medical appointment. Nor should people routinely miss health appointments because they cannot pay to get there. We need to think and act smarter if we are to erase transport as a barrier to good health, particularly in country NSW.

With a modest investment in health transport the NSW Government can make sure everyone gets to the health services they need.

Action

5

## More affordable housing

Strong government means facing down the big challenges

and delivering on them – affordable homes to rent and buy are urgently needed. With over 300,000 people in NSW paying more than 30% of their income on housing, and one in three households in Sydney in the same boat – many people can no longer afford to live here. Recent rises in rents and interest rates can only make this problem worse.

Bold investments in creating more affordable housing would reduce this stress on families and help to prevent homelessness.

As we get older, more housing that is accessible to all people is a must. Making sure at least 10% of all new housing is accessible is an investment in the whole communities housing future.

Action

6

## Investing in people

Some people in NSW are missing out on Australia's prosperity. We can invest in their education and training so they can get real jobs with decent pay.

Enhancing TAFE and reviving depressed neighbourhoods will bring more full time jobs into neglected postcodes and stop the cycle of poverty.

Action

7

## Getting people out of homelessness

A coordinated approach to homelessness, led by the Premier,

would intervene early, support people with mental health or substance problems, and deliver proper homes to the 13,500 NSW children who are currently without somewhere safe and secure to live.

Action

8

## Rights for people with disability

Investing in equipment and the physical environment will allow people with disability to participate in and contribute to the wider society.

This needs to be backed up with long overdue legal protections for people living in boarding houses.

Both sides of politics need to guarantee that the current commitment to invest \$1.2 billion in disability services rolls out over the next five years.

Action

11

## Fixing peoples teeth

Problems with teeth can stop people eating, socialising and getting a job. 2.3 million Australians have put off going to the dentist because they can't afford it.

Urgent funding is needed for public preventative and emergency dental services. We also need to invest in training of more dental professionals.

Action

9

## Fairer fares

700,000 people in Western Sydney face transport disadvantage. The situation is even worse in country NSW where there are very few services.

Public transport can be very costly if you need to use several different services to get to a destination. Some transport trips cost twice as much as others, even though they are the same distance. By having a simple \$10 day fare for Sydney, everyone will be able to get where they need to go, at a price they can afford. This same principle could be extended to regional transport systems.

Action

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## Reducing violence and abuse

Prevention and early intervention are the best ways to reduce domestic violence and abuse. We also need to work to prevent abuse of older people.

We need urgent investment in front-line services like women's refuges, counselling and support services for kids so that the long term damage done by violence can be reduced.

Action

10

## Respecting older people

Older people are a great resource for our community.

Better transport, community care and proper discharge from hospital can support people to be active and involved citizens.

Action

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## Reducing crime

We can reduce crime by working hard with people leaving prison to make sure they don't go back, stopping them becoming homeless and committing more crime. People with a mental illness or disability should get the help they need so they don't end up in prison in the first place.

Action

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## Introducing human rights laws

Human rights belong to all of us, particularly people

having a hard time. They are a form of democratic insurance that keeps government accountable to those that elect them.



You can take action to make NSW a fairer place for everyone

**You can tell NSW politicians about what needs to be done to tackle disadvantage.**

After extensive research and consultations, NCOSS has developed a series of proposals - *A Fairer NSW: Bold Solutions and Real Results*.

**Now you can play your part.**

Each proposal has a detailed fact sheet available to download from the A Fairer NSW website. A full copy and summary of the policy document is also available.

You can use the website to write directly to members of the NSW Government, the Opposition and other candidates, urging them to support these proposals.

Action

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## Assistance for the community sector

### ■ Less red tape in dealing with government

Different government departments have different ways of funding community programs. This is confusing and time consuming for people who are caring for our most vulnerable. A sensible and consistent funding system would cut red-tape for NGOs.

### ■ Address the skills shortage

The community sector in NSW looks after many people for the government. We need highly skilled staff that are well trained and supported. A plan for the future backed up by resources, would mean better community services.

### ■ Support for country services

Regional community services miss out on resources such as IT, financial advice and training. We can create local jobs and share services for these NGOs by creating regional service hubs.

### ■ Research

All industries need research, and the community sector provides the ideal place to understand what are the best programs and support that we can provide.

### How to use the website:

- 1 Go to: [AFairerNSW.net](http://AFairerNSW.net)
- 2 Click on: 'Action'
- 3 Fill in your name and select your electorate
- 4 An automatic list of politicians, including the Premier, Opposition Leaders and your local member, will be generated
- 5 Choose which politicians you want to send your letter to
- 6 Click: 'Send'

**And you will have done your bit to make NSW a fairer place to live in!**

For more information about the Fairer NSW campaign, or NCOSS, please contact us on (02) 9211 2599 or visit [www.AFairerNSW.net](http://www.AFairerNSW.net)



# AFairerNSW.net