



## Community response to the '98 State Budget

# AAA? Just some of the way

A future downturn in June's rosy State Budget economic and revenue growth projections will leave the State's one million disadvantaged extremely vulnerable to significant spending cuts by the next NSW Government.

NCOSS has welcomed the Budget's modest increases in community services, health and education and the retention of land and bed taxes, while being dismayed at the growing reliance of State Treasury on gambling taxes.

We fear, however, that unless genuine commitments are made by the Government and Opposition, tough times may be ahead for low-income families and those most reliant on government-delivered and funded programs.

Besides the lure of pre-election popularity, any projected decline in the State's economy in the next few years will make the sale of electricity assets more attractive.

If this occurs, it is critical that a credible proportion of the sale proceeds must be allocated to new infrastructure in urban and rural communities.

The Budget benefit from using some of the proceeds to retire debt, must be targeted to enhance essential public and community services, which will be under immense pressure in an economic downturn.

On first reading, the big increase in community services outlays was pleasing. However, it must be noted that only \$13 million is genuine new funding, with most of the extra \$91



million going to finally plugging recurrent DOCS deficits and blow outs in demand in 1997/98.

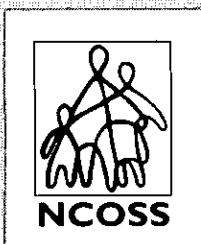
A closer inspection of the Budget has revealed mixed news for disadvantaged people and communities.

None of the \$13 million new community services spending goes to front-line family support, neighbourhood centres or non-

government core substitute care services. With Greater Sydney's homeless nearing 40,000, there is no effective increase in funds to supported accommodation services.

Additional capital spending on physically upgrading residential care facilities for people with disabilities, while welcome, is not matched by any genuine growth in community-

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# Olympics housing report: only telling half the story

NCOSS is calling on the Carr Government to implement all the recommendations of its *2000 Olympics and the Residential Tenancy Market Report*, which was released on 24 June.

To better protect private renters, the report urges the State Government to amend residential tenancy legislation, along with monitoring the rental market, and conducting high profile education campaigns aimed at dampening speculative accommodation ventures.

Significantly and unacceptably, the government has chosen not to include legislative reforms in its action agenda.

The report notes that Sydney's hosting of the Olympics will hasten the loss of boarding and guest houses which traditionally accommodate low-income people. It calls for legislation to give boarders and lodgers tenancy protection. This is an unfulfilled 1995 election promise, as well.

The government is also disappointingly silent on this recommendation. For more than 12 months, respective NSW Fair Trading Ministers have had legislative proposals from the Tenant's Union of NSW supported by NCOSS, the churches and other peak community bodies, which have been endorsed by this report.

While it concludes that the Olympics, of themselves, will not send rents soaring, it recognises that the Olympics will add to upward rent levels caused by urban consolidation and Sydney's boom housing market.

In mid-June, the State Government's long-awaited

By  
NCOSS  
Director  
Gary  
Moore



*The report recognises that the Olympics will add to upward pressures on rent levels*

Affordable Housing Taskforce report revealed the massive growth in unaffordability being experienced by hundreds of thousands of low-income private renters.

And since early 1997, the Olympics Social Impacts Advisory Committee has been asking the Department of Community Services to design a practical emergency accommodation strategy for the Olympics. Six months after this report was completed, there is still no plan.

The Industry Code of Practice for Olympic home-rental schemes is welcome. At the same time, the government must be forthcoming with extra resources for the Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Program to meet increased demand for tenant representation at the Residential Tenancies Tribunal, as the report suggests.

The government has, unfortunately, chosen only the soft options recommended by this report. It must urgently adopt the whole agenda to properly manage Olympics housing impacts.

## Aged and disabled in trouble again

NCOSS has condemned suggestions that the Commonwealth Government will force the frail aged and people with disabilities to pay more for their Home and Community Care (HACC) services in NSW.

In the May 1998 Commonwealth Budget, the Howard Government praised itself for increasing funding to the HACC Program by 5.4%.

However, one month later, senior government officials are hinting that this figure may be cut to 3.7% in NSW. This translates to \$3 million less for essential community care.

The Commonwealth is penalising NSW for refusing to force HACC clients, who are some of the most disadvantaged people in the community, to pay much more for their meals, home visiting, home maintenance, community transport and respite care.

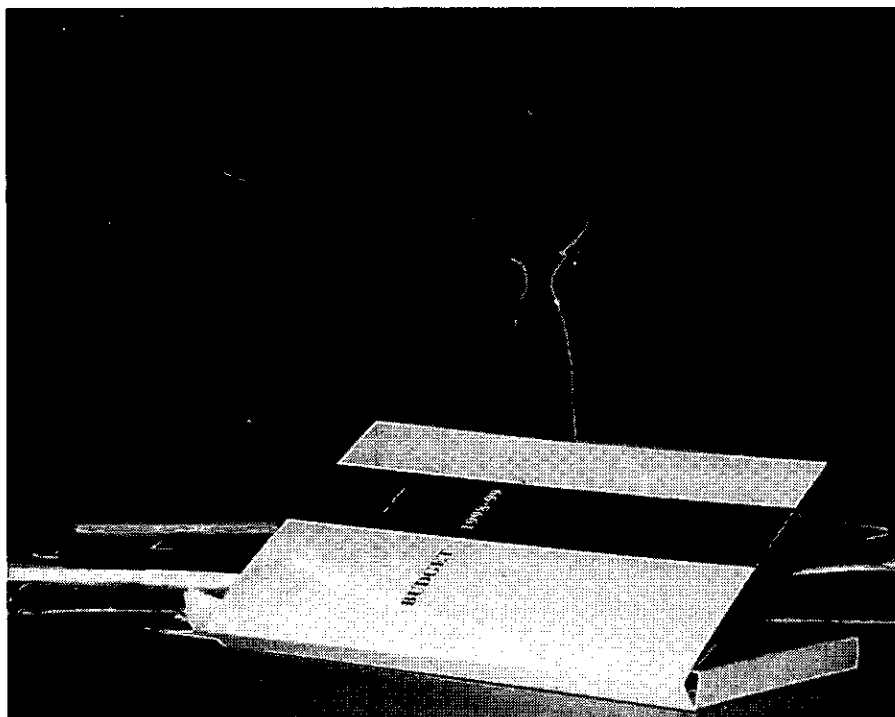
It is generally accepted that current HACC services can only meet 50 per cent of community demand. The number of new HACC clients grows by nearly 3 per cent each year.

This irresponsible action will take place as Warwick Smith's residential aged care reforms force further numbers into the under-resourced community care sector.

As the Commonwealth and State Governments provide matched funding for HACC, any Commonwealth reductions will also see the prowling gaze of NSW Treasury fixed on the State's share, potentially taking another \$1 million out of HACC in NSW.

NCOSS has urged Minister Smith to reject these proposed HACC funding cuts to NSW. It is in the public interest that we invest much more in community based care, for a far greater return, socially and financially in the future.

# State Budget: AAA just some of the way



*NCOSS director, Gary Moore with treasurer Carol Alcock looking over the papers at Parliament House on 2 June.*

### continued from page 1

based care. Where is the desinstitutionalisation agenda now heading? At the same time, the additional \$12 million for the Home and Community Care Program may be eroded by further Commonwealth Government attempts to shift service costs to clients.

While land tax has been capped for the highest value owner occupiers, the 7.5% share of land tax revenues going to Aboriginal Land Councils across the State has been scrapped.

At the same time as there is a \$130 million boost to the M5 East Motorway, there is no extension of pensioner concession fares onto private buses, which would have been of great benefit in Western Sydney and regional centres.

The continuation of the non-

means tested and administratively inefficient Back to School Allowance means that 915 additional teachers cannot be targeted to disadvantaged schools.

The lack of growth in critical prevention areas of the health budget is disappointing, although good progress continues to be made in new Aboriginal health commitments.

While there is an 11% growth in funding new juvenile detention centres, there is no expansion of critical youth training and support programs such as HELP, Circuit Breaker and Koori Youth.

After three years, the government is yet to produce its youth policy. Young people are forgotten in this Budget, but strongly targeted in other law and order activities.

At the same time, as community legal centres and the Women's Court Support Scheme just hold their own,

\$10 million is cut from the Victims Compensation Scheme, no funds are provided for the Administrative Decisions Tribunal and legal aid funding is at least \$12 million short of avoiding a major crisis before the end of 1998.

In vacation care, the Budget talks of more places, but with less funding. And no mention of funding for a Children's Commission (the bill for which is shortly expected) or reforms to the Children's Care and Protection Act (which seems to have taken a real back seat).

The welcome boost in spending on services and infrastructure in Western Sydney is not matched by similar increases in rural regions also experiencing major social, economic and environmental changes.

NCOSS welcomes the one off Rental Bond Board funding of affordable housing projects, although it must be emphasised this must be expanded in future years.

However, as the recently released Affordable Housing Taskforce and Planning Research Centre reports show, the dramatic growth of housing unaffordability for low-income people demands significant planning reforms, bolder financing packages and better public housing management.

The government has finally produced an overall budget for the cost, to NSW taxpayers, of the Sydney 2000 Olympics and Paralympics.

There are, however, serious questions to be answered about how the government agencies portion was calculated and whether actual staffing, administrative and services costs of these agencies in the year 2000 have all been included.

NCOSS has approached the Auditor-General, suggesting issues he may wish to cover in his assessment of the Olympics Budget Statement.

# Healing divisions in taxing times

**Pauline Hanson has certainly made her mark. She has not only won a bag of seats in the Queensland election but she's got the whole nation talking about her and her proposals.**

She has very successfully drawn attention to the fact that there are a lot of people throughout Australia who have missed out on the long-promised benefits of globalisation, foreign investment, privatisation and the dominance of the so called 'economic rationalist' policies that have been pursued with a vengeance by all State and Federal Governments in Australia for the last two decades.

The evidence is clear. The rich get (excessively) richer while the poor become more numerous. Unemployment has remained above the 8 per cent mark for almost a decade, but in some regions it is double that rate and in others just half the rate.

Regional and rural Australia is suffering particularly badly, with many towns having experienced a significant withdrawal of services and a subsequent loss of morale and viability. Little has been done to address the growing levels of inequality as measured by both income and wealth. Governments have withdrawn, revenue and services have been cut and user charges have been increased on much of what remains.

It is little wonder that in this environment many people feel insecure and very uncertain about their future. Some go further and lash out to blame Aborigines, immigrants and unemployed people on the grounds that they appear to be getting government support — 'but who's helping me?'.

The Federal Government has

**By  
ACOSS  
President,  
Michael  
Raper**



actually fanned this situation by attacking:

- ATSC and its funding;
- immigrants, through reduced numbers and the imposition of a populist, but disastrous, two-year waiting period for Social Security entitlement; and
- unemployed people by dishonest 'fraud' figures and the 'work for the dole' scheme.

There is also a straight out racist component backing One Nation, as well as a pro-guns component and apparently components of various other disaffected fringe groups. There is no doubt that the simplistic and divisive solutions suggested by Ms Hanson and her party in relation to these issues should be roundly and energetically rejected by political leaders, governments and all citizens while reasserting our fundamental values of tolerance and community.

But just because her policy solutions — such as putting up both goods and investment shutters around fortress Australia — are equally simplistic, impractical or unrealistic doesn't mean that the concerns behind them should also be ignored.

It is no good for the government

and Opposition to simply respond by saying that the lesson is to listen more and explain policies better but to remain focussed and fixed on the current policy path.

The lesson is not simply to listen but to change. We may not be able to change such things as globalisation, which we cannot control, but as I argued in this column in April:

...the biggest challenge is to ensure that globalisation does not place unsustainable pressure on the welfare state and its citizens through its impact on economic instability and increased inequality, higher unemployment and lower wages. Our Federal and State Governments must therefore work together to successfully counter these adverse impacts of globalisation by ensuring that our economic and social policies work hand in hand...

While unemployment, the most adverse impact, has no simple solution, the ACOSS seven point plan demonstrates that there is a comprehensive strategy that can be implemented. This involves more sensitive economic management along with industry and regional development policies and greater assistance for unemployed people to help them back into work.

It is not sufficient for any government to simply leave unemployment to the market to solve when it is obviously market failure that has caused the problem.

Our governments do have a choice: either seriously tackle the social problems caused by nearly two decades of economic restructuring, or allow the conditions for a tidal wave of bitterness, intolerance, scapegoating and social division.

# The community sector analyses the 1998 NSW State Budget

Every year, people from the community sector in NSW gather at NCOSS to dissect the State Budget.

## Putting disadvantaged families first, or last?

by Joy Goodsell, Sutherland Shire Family Support Services

**Once again there were no funding increases to Neighbourhood Centres and Family Support Services funded through CSGP in the State budget.**

The NCOSS Pre-Budget Submission (PBS) called for \$3m for Family Support Services and a substantial increase to the CSGP. Most small community-based services have been rapidly withering on the funding vine for the past 10 years. We had one small funding increase in 1996, and then small cost supplementation (CPI) to core funding in over a decade. This is an essential minimum.

But the PBS recommendation was ignored. What a cruel, unjust and unsustainable position for services, which work with the most vulnerable people in "Social Justice Labor NSW" — and in an election year!

Many people lobbied to increase numbers of workers in child protection and extra dollars for DOCS. Great — we won. It is much needed, but any extra people working on investigations, interventions and notification, will mean more work for the parallel services, the community partners, the ongoing support of families, who may need preventive solutions before things get worse.

Life is tough for many families, and getting much tougher. Federal cuts are impacting on the most vulnerable — cuts to legal assistance,

public housing and child care availability. There is understandable fear among sole parents, unemployed people, Aboriginal communities, NESB families and low-income families who are trying to support young students and unemployed children. Alcohol and other drug use is on the rise and increasing gambling availability obviously impacts on people with children.

Family Support Services in the cities talk about increasing violence against women and children, sexual abuse, high numbers of families affected by mental illness, and housing related poverty among poor families in private rental.

Rural services have been saying for years that there are too many gaps in services, and that rural recession, unemployment, environmental degradation and climate change are causing serious insecurity among many people.

These are the same people who have watched with dismay and growing anger as rural opportunities, services and jobs have been cut by economic rationalism. Clearly, we have a major crisis on our hands. All the services at the cutting edge are under extreme pressure.

I am sick of being called a welfare whinger, when all I'm trying to do is to tell the government that services across the State don't have enough resources to meet demand from disadvantaged people in their communities. There will be a flow on to support services, and how can they continue to take these referrals?

**Last year, Family Support**

**Services in NSW worked with 39,000 disadvantaged families.** This is an increase to last year's numbers, but there is a limit to doing more and more with less and less.

Many services believe that they can no longer work unpaid overtime, cut back family worker hours, reduce programs, cut back on preventative work, reduce their intake criteria, sustain tired workers, keep taking more complex referrals, and be quiet any longer. We have been told by successive ministers and directors-general that we are valuable, cost effective and deserve additional funding.

We realise that we are a small budget item, but we do a substantial, significant amount of valuable work with families who are on the edge. We are beginning to feel that disadvantaged families are not a priority.

This budgetary omission is a mistake, a major oversight, an error, and an issue that has to be fixed, and quick!

So what do we want? What the NCOSS Pre-Budget Submission has been asking for years: \$3 million catch up, just to bring us to 1988 levels. This could be delivered through a supplementary payment this year and a promise of recurrent funding to next year's budget, so we can do our work without one hand tied behind our backs.

## Budget relies on optimistic assumptions

by Steve Rix, PIAC

**Projections of increased NSW Budget receipts are dependent on GDP growth of 3% and an inflation figure of 2.25%.**

This projected growth rate is also the latest projection from the Commonwealth Government. There are many who consider the growth projection to be optimistic. It is unlikely that NSW could achieve a 3% growth figure in isolation.

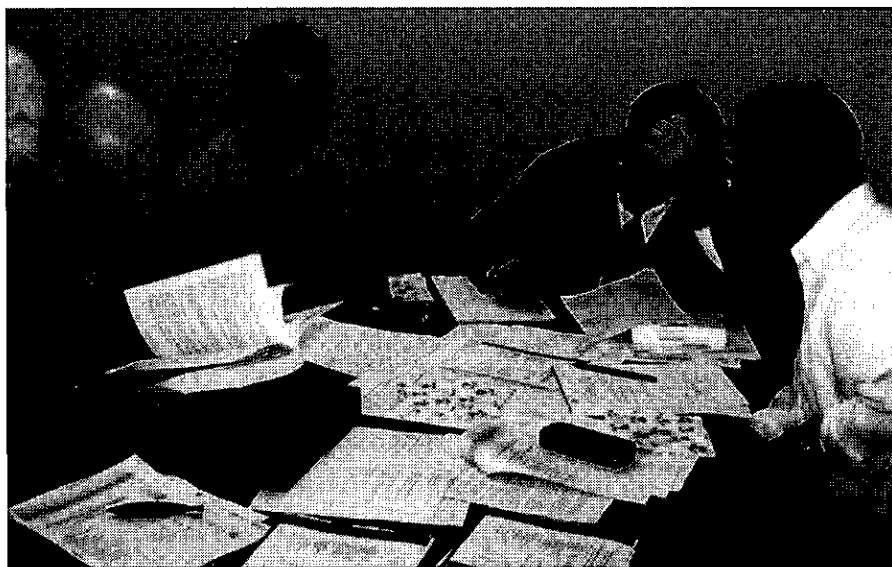
The figure is reliant on continued housing construction, property transactions and employment growth — taxes fees and fines are projected to increase by 5.7%.

It is not just an optimistic growth forecast which casts doubt on whether the NSW Government can achieve its Budget targets. A currency crisis, according to the Budget's own sensitivity analysis, would also threaten Budget outcomes. A 15% fall in the value of the Australian dollar (to US 55 cents) would result in a deficit outcome of \$275 million.

But the NSW Government has bitten the bullet and has maintained land tax in high-value, owner-occupied dwellings. The government was under enormous pressure to reverse the position it adopted in the previous Budget, but has managed to resist the pressure.

Reductions in State debt achieved over recent years will also reduce demands on current expenditure as interest payments decline (by \$237 million or 15% in 1998-99). TAB privatisation receipts will be used to reduce NSW debt to the Commonwealth. The interest on this debt is at constant, high real rates.

The impact of National Competition Policy on the State's



*The economics team of Richard Denniss, Tony Aspromourgos, Stephen Rix and Graeme White were pictured as they made head and tails of budget figures at NCOSS.*

finances are now starting to be felt, even without privatisation.

As NSW trading enterprises in the electricity industry have aggressively marketed to maintain market share against private Victorian companies, the State has lost both dividends and tax-equivalent payments.

Dividends from the generation sector are expected to decline by 83% and tax equivalents by 71%.

For Government Trading Enterprises (GTEs) as a whole, a reduction in dividend and tax equivalent payments of 10.9% is expected (\$153 million). A sustained decline in revenue from GTEs is currently being masked by a range of one-off payments resulting from efficiency savings and massive increases in LandCom payments.

Of these losses, \$13m will be recouped in the form of increased

debt guarantee fees (which appear as increases in taxes, fees and fines).

On the basis of the government's optimistic growth projections, current outlays are projected to increase marginally in real terms (0.05%). Capital payments will decline by 0.1% in nominal terms, or -0.15% in real terms. Much of this decline is accounted for in a decline in Olympic expenditures.

In short, the NSW Government has embarked in a high-risk strategy. If the underlying assumptions prove to be wrong, a government elected in March 1999 will feel it necessary to introduce a draconian mini-Budget.

**Team:** Associate Professor Tony Aspromourgos, University of Sydney; Dr Graeme White, University of Sydney; Richard Denniss, University of Newcastle; Stephen Rix, Public Interest Advocacy Centre.

## Expenditure programs: all the news

This commentary follows the departmental order of spending proposed in the 1998/99 Pre-Budget Submission. It should be noted that the advent of accrual accounting in this year's State Budget has posed significant extra challenges for those attempting to analyse the real changes in spending and commitments this year.

### Ageing, disability and carers

#### Carers

Despite the budget's theme of Families First, the government made no specific allocation or even mention of services to carers.

There appears to be no allocation for the development of counselling and support services for carers as recommended in the NCOSS PBS. Neither has the recommendation for resources to develop an assessment tool for carers been reflected either in allocations or priorities for 1998/99.

**Team:** Joan Hughes (Carers Association); Christine Regan (NCOSS).

#### Home and Community Care program

The HACC program is a joint Commonwealth and State program providing home support and other services to frail older people, people with disabilities and carers.

The 1998/99 Federal Budget offered 5.4% growth funds nationally, including about 1.5% indexation. The State has contributed a 4.92% increase over last year's HACC allocation. It is estimated that the HACC population is increasing at a



per annum rate of 2.7% and that, by government estimates, HACC services can only meet 50% of current demand. While the increased allocation is welcome, the growth funding cannot possibly address current unmet demand, soon to be compounded by anticipated increases arising from the aged care reforms.

The HACC budget analysis team estimates that about half of the 4.9% growth will go towards addressing the escalation of costs to service providers to maintain existing levels of supply. Service viability issues are a topical discussion item at HACC planning groups. Services need additional funding to meet escalating costs or they will be forced to either reduce service provision or, in some cases, close.

The potential pressure on HACC from aged care reforms is enormous. If not directly resolved, the viability issues desperately described by residential aged care providers will create unprecedented demand for

HACC and related services. Increased provision of Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs) by the Commonwealth government will contribute to service supply but the relationship between CACPs and HACC has still not been satisfactorily co-ordinated for many local service providers. Current overall demand still greatly outstrips the resources of both the CACPs and HACC in NSW.

For the Home Care Service, one-off savings from workers' compensation and branch amalgamations will be used to expand service provision in 1998/99. However, a budget deficit of \$2.3m, including a 5.6% increase in staff-related expenses, is also reported. It is unclear how this deficit will be funded and what effect the deficit will have on the promised service expansion.

The recommendation from the PBS that the NSW Government should maintain its share of a promised 6% growth rate in HACC has not been realised.



# State Budget '98

Similarly, from the PBS, there appears to be no allocation of \$0.5m over two years to support the recommendation of the NSW HACC Aboriginal Strategy and Development Committee to establish and fund a Senior Advisory Committee and to employ two full-time Aboriginal officers to progress this important issue. This is disappointing despite the declared HACC priority for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population group.

There is also speculation that the Commonwealth may reduce its 1998/99 HACC growth funding to NSW (and some other States), by up to \$3 million, forcing an increase in the level of client fees and charges to meet any shortfall in service.

ADD reports that its HACC priorities for 1998/99 are:

- services to people from non-English speaking backgrounds;
- meeting state-wide and local area planning priorities;
- service viability issues, including Meals on Wheels reform strategy;
- integration of capital facilities and recurrent planning, including promotion of multi-service outlets.

The NSW HACC service provision breakdown in 1997/98 was:

Program	%
Home Help	28.00
Program Support	17.24
Respite Care	15.63
Nursing	15.39
Community Development Projects	6.96
Home Modification and maintenance	6.21
Food services and delivered meals	5.30
Transport	4.13
Paramedical	1.14

**Team:** Eliane da Silva (North East Metropolitan HACC Forum); Roberta Flint (Neighbour Aid Assoc.); Lewis Kaplan (Council on the Ageing); Cheryl Kelly (Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development); Annette Grant (HACC State

Advisory Committee); Jeff Rowland (Aust. Society for Geriatric Medicine); Isobel Frean (Aged Services Assoc); Christine Regan (NCOSS).

## Disability services

DOCS reports that more than \$13m will be spent in equipment purchase, refurbishments and upgrades of departmental group homes and large residential units. Although better quality facilities are important, there is great concern that such an extensive commitment to large residential units could indicate a tacit recognition that there will be no further devolution of people with disabilities from large residential facilities into smaller community settings.

In the light of such desperate need for more respite and residential accommodation services, an allocation of \$5.7m to improve existing computer systems may not indicate a thorough understanding of the requirements of the Disability Services Act and the obligation of DOCS to its consumers.

## Priorities 1998/99

The introduction of a **small scale Support Co-ordination Program** appears to be a re-budgeted case management feasibility study outcome without an apparent allocation of funding attached.

The reshaping of the Post-School Options and Day programs into a **single adult training and support services program** is seen to be a positive move, assuming that the process consults and involves all relevant stakeholders. Again, no budget allocation has been shown.

**The Early Childhood Intervention Co-ordination Program** will undergo further development. Work to date has been a cross-government co-ordination activity not widely publicised throughout the sector or to those not actually participating. No specified dollars for 1998/99. NCOSS PBS recommended provision of 200 flexible packages to support children with disability and

their families.

ADD reports that a priority for 1998/99 will be the development of a **Disability Children's Services Policy Framework**. There is general support of the need to develop such a framework. This support, however, is tempered by the concern at the increasing prevalence of policy frameworks/documents without attached funding or administrative "clout".

Another priority for ADD this financial year is the **reshaping of School Therapy Services** in some areas. No corresponding allocation of funding is shown, neither are the implications for the Department of School Education, Health, DOCS and other ADD programs described.

Specific growth in 1998/99 to ADD will be:

- \$14m for crisis support and accommodation purposes;
- \$4.6m to Post-School Options (PSOP) for 1998 school leavers with disabilities

The growth funding to accommodation and crisis support is desperately needed and warmly welcomed. There are hundreds of people with disabilities permanently living in crisis respite accommodation. It has been suggested that ADD already has an investment of about \$10m in "one-off" packages for people in crisis.

If this is so, the remaining \$4m would fall far short of addressing the unmet need within this group, let alone the burgeoning need of others in urgent need of accommodation support. It consequently appears that these growth funds are committed to addressing last year's crisis and not the crisis of unmet need currently existing in the community. This growth allocation falls far short of the NCOSS PBS recommendation of \$25m for 300 additional supported accommodation places including 50 places for the Attendance Care Program.

Growth in PSOP this year is good news for 1998 school leavers with moderate to severe disabilities. The fact that PSOP does not appear in forward estimates is of great concern

# State Budget '98

to families of school students with disabilities as continuation of the program for each subsequent year is not guaranteed until the State Budget is returned.

It is imperative that, in a budget that claims to be "putting families first", the government continues its commitment to school leavers with disabilities beyond the 1998/99 allocation. No enhancement funding has been allocated to pre-1994 school leavers, many of whom are detrimentally at home and unoccupied. There is concern that the previously mentioned excellent policy initiative of a single adult training and support services program may be concealing a possible withdrawal of future investment in the PSOP.

While welcoming the essential growth to some areas of the ADD portfolio, the disability analysis team generally found the financial commitment to unmet need and ongoing development very disappointing.

Generally, the ADD budget with its aggregated line items of expenditure was difficult to interpret when comparing to last year's allocations. Many programs had been subsumed into more general headings which differed in presentation from 1997/98.

There was concern that such aggregated program areas as they appeared in this budget presentation made specialist programs difficult to track and new initiatives get lost in the headings, eg. uncertainty of allocations to the Brain Injury Program and the work in progress on ventilator-dependent people. NCOSS PBS recommended an allocation of \$1.2m for support packages to people with an acquired brain injury.

This State Budget provides no funds for transition of older style disability services to meet their requirements under the Disability Services Act. This lack of commitment to ongoing devolution is extremely disappointing. Many thousands of people with disabilities continue to live in sub-standard, dangerous conditions. Many non-



*NCOSS policy officer, Christine Regan was pictured going over the figures at Parliament House on June 2.*

government services will face very serious financial difficulties, raising the possibility of insolvency.

**Team:** Denise Ward (Brain Injury Association); Gabrielle Jones (ACROD NSW); Graham Catt (ACROD NSW); Joan Hughes (Carers NSW); Phillip French (People with Disabilities/NWS Council on Intellectual Disability); Digby Hughes (Australian Quadriplegic Association); Jacqueline Parmenter (Interchange Respite NSW); Christine Regan (NCOSS).

## Ageing

ADD reports the maintenance of \$2.646m funding to the ageing program which includes no growth funding. The Ageing program will focus on the following areas: elder abuse, dementia action plan, transport demonstration projects, community care demonstration projects, public education on age discrimination and recurrent funding for the transferred projects

supporting older people (from CSGP of DOCS).

The NSW Government has allocated \$500,000 for 1999 International Year of Older People (IYOP) covering launch, seniors achievement awards, a concert, an information kit, seeding grants to community organisations, etc. This allocation is welcomed but, when put in the context of the commitment of WA (\$1.5m) and Queensland (\$8m), it is a disappointing effort from the most populous State in Australia. NCOSS PBS recommended funding for a secretariat for NSW Coalition '99 as well as \$1.5m for local initiatives for IYOP.

This money will be administered by the Ageing Issues Directorate, announced by the Minister earlier this year and re-announced by ADD. The directorate has a budget of \$2m covering nine staff and projects and will work on strategic policy and planning advice, co-ordination of Commonwealth/State relations on aged care, projects under the Aged

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Care Policy Framework, NSW Health Ageing Framework.

Due to the new State Budget presentation of aggregated headings as line items, there is no mention of allocations to Seniors Week or Seniors Card. From 1 July 1998, when paying vehicle registrations Seniors Card Holders will be exempted (along with Family Allowance recipients and primary producers) from existing the \$43 Fund Levy which will be phased out by the year 2000.

A capital allocation of \$11.5m has been directed towards State government nursing homes. Given there are 27 nursing homes which will require upgrading to meet the new Commonwealth Standards for buildings by 2001, this money could surely only be an initial allocation.

But time is short if those nursing homes are to reach accreditation to be eligible to continue to receive Commonwealth funding. One suggestion has been that the State Government should sell most of these homes. This, however, will result in an \$8 per day per resident shortfall between what the State currently pays and what the Commonwealth will offer.

Therefore, the NSW Government's strategy regarding the status of these nursing homes is critical at this time.

The recent Federal Budget announced 30 new multi-purpose services nationally. NSW can expect 8 to 10 of these to be established here. There are no details of any State Government money to contribute towards these services.

The NCOSS PBS recommended an allocation of \$1m for community education initiatives to challenge negative perceptions, attitudes and practices towards older people. NCOSS further recommended \$1m for the development of information technology programs for older people in recognition of the increased difficulties faced by unemployed older people in joining and remaining in the workforce. There are no funding details on either of these issues in this budget.

**Team:** Eliane da Silva (North East Metropolitan HACC Forum); Roberta Flint (Neighbour Aid Assoc.); Lewis Kaplan (Council on the Ageing); Cheryl Kelly (inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development); Annette Grant (HACCSAC); Jeff Rowland (Aust. Society for Geriatric Medicine); Isobel Frean (Aged Services Assoc); Christine Regan (NCOSS).

## Guardianship Tribunal

Formerly known as the Guardianship Board, the tribunal does not show as a separate line item in the ADD budget, so actual allocations are difficult to identify.

At present the Guardianship Tribunal is subject to a review by the Council on the Cost of Government and the results are not yet known. The present bid from the tribunal is for \$1.5m recurrent additional funding. Originally, a 25% increase in applications (ie demand) was anticipated from the Commonwealth Aged Care Reforms but this estimate has not yet been realised.

The full impact of the reforms is yet to be determined. Regarding the existing backlog of applications before the tribunal, routine matters are continuing to be delayed for longer periods as demand continues to outstrip supply. Thus the increased funding is genuinely needed.

In previous years, the tribunal has received yearly one-off allocations which often result in short term hit-and-miss solutions. The tribunal is confident that the review will demonstrate and recommend the need for additional recurrent funding to facilitate appropriate planning.

*Christine Regan*

## Community Services Commission

The budget has maintained funding levels to the Community Services Commission.

Maintaining existing funding levels, however, does not recognise either the importance of the work of

the commission or the increasing demand for its services as unsatisfactory practices come to light and general client demand grows.

Further it does not recognise the views of a recent Premier's Department review, endorsing the need for enhanced funding for the commission. While details of the Children's Commission are not yet available, it is understood that the government has accepted the view that the functions, role and structure of the Community Services Commission should be maintained.

This budget result is, therefore, extremely disappointing.

*Christine Regan*

## Community, family and children's services

### Core funding for the Department of Community Services

The \$91m (\$13m for new initiatives) in the budget for DOCS is welcome. NCOSS is pleased that the continuing budget deficit of the department has been plugged, although, following closer examination of budget details, senior sector representatives are concerned about how little non-government services have gained from the budget.

### Child protection

Non-government agencies were again disappointed this year to find that the provision of adequate levels of appropriate high-quality substitute care places for vulnerable children and young people has not been given priority.

The needs of young people cannot be met by the non-government agencies without a substantial increase, estimated at \$15m in the NCOSS Pre-Budget Submission, but possibly closer to between \$20-30m. Enhancements for foster care case workers (departmental) and for buying high support

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*NCOSS policy officer, Linda Frow (right) and treasurer Carol Alcock study the budget papers for allocations to children's services.*

placements in non-government services in this year's budget (\$4m on top of the \$4m recurrent from last year) will not resolve the problem for those agencies currently working with half of the children who are in the foster care system.

Non-government services involved in substitute care are currently funded at a base fixed in 1993. Despite good independent reviews of their services, non-government programs are declining and their capacity to assist young people is diminished. At most all they will receive is 2.3% indexation.

It is understood that money for the standards and accreditation process will be carried forward into 1998/99 (last year both Substitute Care and SAAP contributed \$250,000 each to this project). While this is welcome, the department must now urgently get on with introducing the recommended service accreditation system.

The NCOSS recommendation for an additional \$3m to enhance

payments to foster carers has been ignored.

There are some enhancements to child protection services in this budget which are welcomed. In particular NCOSS commends the initiative of a statewide intake program to assist in providing a rapid response to notifications and to enabling district officers to provide services without being overwhelmed by crisis.

The only other new money is for a new Joint Investigation Team in North Sydney (\$300,000), more assistant managers in DOCS, 13 new district officer positions, and some additional funding (\$40,000 each) to Far North Coast, Central West, Orana Far West, Southern Highlands, New England, Riverina Murray and Hunter regions to meet an anticipated demand for Child Protection Services in regional NSW.

**Team:** Louise Voigt (Barnardo's); Rhonda Stien (Burnside); Nigel Spence and Eric Scott (ACWA); and Linda Frow (NCOSS).

## Family services

Family Support Services once again found themselves out in the cold in this budget. While welcoming indexation, this will not be enough to even cover the full costs of workers compensation, superannuation increases, the long overdue award increases due next year, and the low-income workers increase from last year.

The bottom line for family support is no increases to base funding capping off a decade of decline for services who are now working with 37,000 families across the State.

Trish Menzies and Joy Goodsell of the Family Support Services Association stated on budget night that:

"Increases to child protection in DOCS is overdue, but welcome. What the policy makers fail to realise is that improved investigation and intervention will identify more families in vulnerable circumstances. What will the department do with these families when over half of all notifications need ongoing support? This support in the main is provided by non-government organisations."

The initial funding to the new Families First Initiative was welcomed, but it represents only \$250,000 in the first year.

While recognising that this project will, for the first time, provide new funds to preventative services, there is concern that the immediate needs of existing preventative services have not been identified as a priority and it is unclear at this stage how the money will be distributed and whether it will ever become a State-wide program.

Families First will operate in three Regions: South West Sydney, the Far North Coast and Mid North Coast with total funding over three years of \$19 million, \$7.65m of which will go through DOCS funded programs.

**Team:** Roy Bishop (LCSA); Trish Menzies, Joy Goodsell (FSSA), Linda Frow (NCOSS).

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## Community Services Grants Program

This program is now difficult to find in the budget papers, spread as it is throughout the Child and Family Services pages. The bulk of program funding goes to family support services, neighbourhood centres and youth services, none of which have received more than bare indexation, if that, in this budget.

It is acknowledged that additional funding to the Department of Community Services is important and that the \$91m will support the department to:

- cover its past deficit;
- re-build its services to meet current needs;
- pay Workcover premiums;
- update technology.

However, according to Roy Bishop of LCSA, community-based services feel that they have been left to "wither on the vine". "The decay and decline of community organisations will continue until there is recognition of the increasing costs they face in both running their services and meeting increasing demand."

The NCOSS Pre-Budget Submission contained modest requests of \$2.8m additional for existing services, \$1m for additional services, \$1m for regional organisations and infrastructure, and a small increase to the child care component of the family initiative fund. The only increase was \$15,000 for the family initiative fund (we asked for \$340,000).

## Children's services

The NSW Children's Services Forum welcomed the establishment of a discrete children's services unit under the name of the Office of Child Care. We are hopeful that this will provide a policy focus for a co-ordinated approach to children's services.

The total funding to children's services in 1998/99 of \$103.2m represents an increase on last year's

budget (\$99.5m). This increase largely rests in staffing costs (\$0.5m), \$2.7m for long-day care/pre-schools (an increase of 3.5% over the previous budget figure and of 2.4% over the actual expenditure for 97/98); and some additional capital funding for the establishment of new places (capital up \$600,000 on last year) which is welcomed. Around \$700,000 of this is for the new rural initiative.

The situation for vacation care is less clear. While places have increased from 15,000 to 15,800, funding has decreased slightly to \$3.386m from \$3.488m. We would also have expected to see Commonwealth funding of some \$1.5m drop out representing the Commonwealth block grant that has now been withdrawn and it does appear that allowance has not been made for this.

Concerns continue to be felt in the children's services sector at the lack of movement on issues around the affordability of State-funded services.

**Team:** Alannah Ball (Community Child Care); Judy Kynaston (Country Children's Services); Frances Press (NACBCS, NSW); Judy Finlason (Network); Linda Frow (NCOSS).

## Crisis and supported accommodation

The SAAP budget continues to be difficult to assess on budget night given its single line item. NCOSS apologies for any misinformation surrounding predictions on SAAP figures. In general, 'no growth in SAAP' continues as the mantra. The overall projections for 1998/99 are at \$83.329M.

Most SAAP services would have received a statement from the Department of Community Services on 4 June which clarified the budget situation. The recurrent funds for the program remain stable and indexed by \$1.835m. Non-recurrent funds for 1998/99 of \$1.8m (part of previous years rollover) have been allocated to projects such as: SAAP training, Aboriginal case management pilot, SAAP/CAP Innovations Initiatives.

Last year's expenditure includes recurrent funding plus one-off funding of \$7.1m for superannuation increase, upgrading information technology and SAAP training.

There appears to be no allocation for implementing the reforms included in the draft NSW SAAP Evaluation, due out shortly and covering the period up until the end of the current SAAP Agreement (end of 1999). Next year's budget will be all but too late to allocate funds to the substantial reforms posed in the draft report. Further, while it is understood that previously allocated funds for implementing SAAP accreditation will be carried forward into 1998/99, it is unclear about how quickly the department will move to start this process.

The draft NSW SAAP Evaluation (due for finalisation shortly), indicates \$36m is needed to address unmet demand from homeless people for service provision. Clearly, the 'no growth' mantra will need revision well before the next budget in order for any real progress on meeting demand.

**Team:** Ross Bennett (2010); Pamela Foster (Women's Refuge Working Party); Carol Alcock (St Vincents de Paul); Kate Lee (NCOSS).

## Employment and training

As NSW economic growth is predicted to slow to 3% in 1998/99, employment growth is expected to rise by 1.5% during the year. Unemployment is projected to remain around 8%, with many regions of the State continuing to experience rates double this figure, and some groups, such as indigenous people, facing jobless rates above 30%.

Unemployment rates among 15-19 year olds seeking jobs will continue unabated well above 20%. In NSW, as elsewhere, the long-term unemployed will edge further above 30% of the total numbers unemployed, with people aged over 45 forming an ever increasing

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proportion.

While the State Government's business, regional and Olympic investment attraction efforts are resulting in some foreign firm expansions in NSW, the number and spread of new jobs is not able to match the demands of the unemployed. The lack of a coherent Commonwealth jobs strategy and the impacts of economic difficulties in Asia make significant employment growth targets more difficult.

In this environment, it is disappointing that few budget initiatives have been taken to foster employment creation or enhance vocational training and labour market assistance for the unemployed.

The government has maintained spending on youth assistance programs such as HELP and Circuit Breaker and the Mature Workers Program, and has, after much debate, extended the Specialist Migrant Placement Officer Program.

However, as with the New Careers for Aborigines Program, there are no additional funds, at a time of worsening labour market difficulties, for all the client groups of these programs.

The focus of additional budget spending in the Education and Training portfolio is clearly on school education (see comments elsewhere), where new literacy funding and the maintenance of effort in rural education are welcome.

However, the government has not chosen, in that area, to implement any more recommendations of the Premier's 1997 Youthforce, particularly for early school leavers and those most likely to face the teenage labour market in an unprepared and unsupported manner.

The Adult Migrant English Service (AMES), recently stripped of a significant amount of Commonwealth funding, has not been able to attract further State funding in the budget. Funding assistance to Adult and Community Education is maintained, while equity and community-based

programs in TAFE will continue to struggle to hold their own during 1998/99.

**Team:** Paul Mortimer, Astrid Perry, Gary Moore (NCOSS).

## Health

Once again, the most outstanding feature of the health budget is the extraordinary lack of clarity in the reporting.

Questions which cannot be answered from the budget papers include the amount of funding for community health services, for NGOs, and for all specialist services other than mental health and Aboriginal health.

It is difficult to place much confidence in the budget figures which are provided. In virtually every program area, there was significant over or under spending last year, as there has been for several years.

At the departmental briefing, emphasis was placed on the allocation process which is to take place over the subsequent month. This process would determine allocation of funds between regions and affect program allocations. This suggests that the budget figures are merely preliminary estimates, rather than clear statements of where health funds will be allocated in the coming year.

Overall, the health budget gained another \$303 million in recurrent funding, an increase of 4.8% in real terms. Overspending for the portfolio as a whole last year was a substantial \$122.6 million.

As usual, the bulk of new money went to the hospital budget which absorbs 63% of the total health budget. Another area to benefit was emergency services which received additional funds for new ambulances.

While the budgeted figures must be approached with caution, the papers indicate additional recurrent funding for mental health, an increase of \$19.6 million or 2.3% in

real terms. Disappointingly, funding for mental health NGOs appears to have fallen by \$1.6 million from last year's budgeted figure.

Recurrent funding for Aboriginal health has fallen slightly from last year's budgeted figure and capital funding has dropped by 31.5% in real terms. It is extremely disappointing to see underspending in the Aboriginal health budget of \$3.3 million last year, which is 18% of an already tiny budget for an extremely disadvantaged population.

The allocation to the Primary and Community Based Services program increased by \$20.8 million, but there is insufficient information in the papers to determine where these funds are going. A particular problem is the lack of information on the funds going to community health centres.

Resources for the NGO program appear in most program areas in the budget under the line items "Grants and subsidies — Voluntary organisations". While the total allocated to voluntary organisations was unchanged, the resources were moved between program areas. No explanatory notes were provided. NSW Health has affirmed that funding for the NGO program has been maintained.

Income from patient fees and charges is anticipated to increase, but there is no indication of how this is to occur. It is a surprising projection given the declining proportion of private patients in the public hospital system.

The budget papers placed great emphasis on the inadequacy of Commonwealth funding in meeting the growing costs of health care.

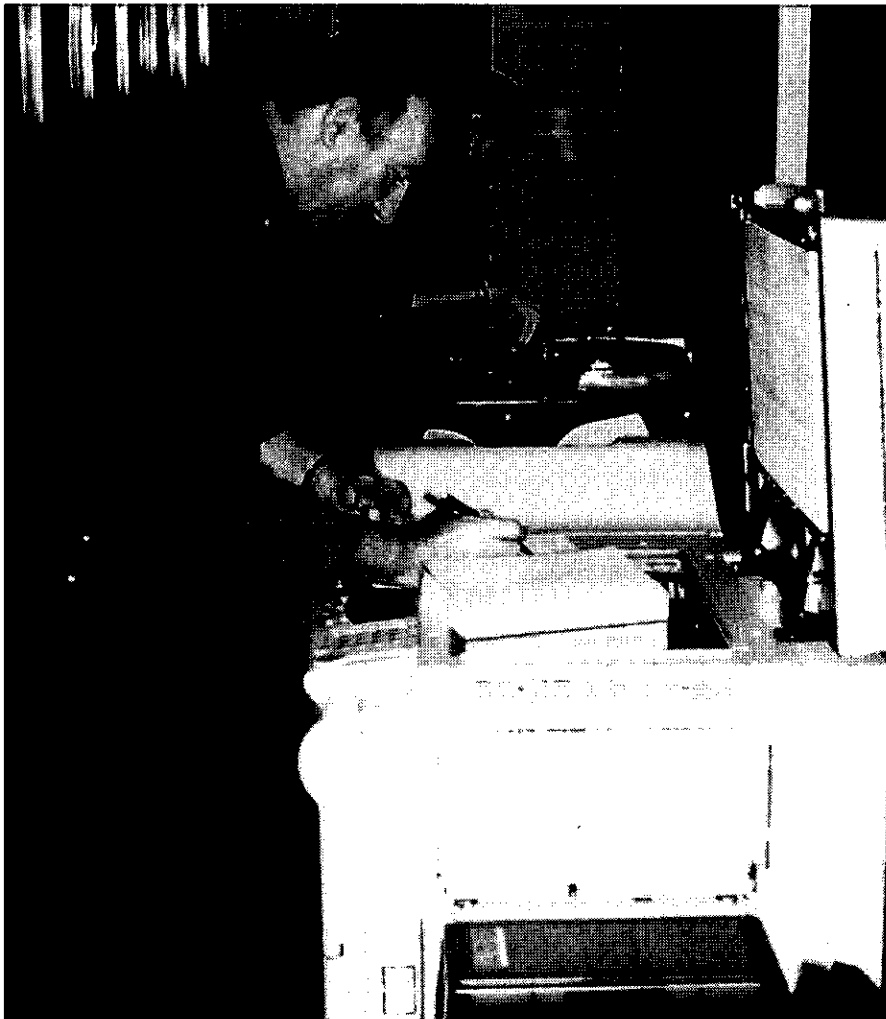
*Ros Bragg*

## Housing

Generally speaking, the NSW Government has attempted to maintain a stable housing budget given the heavy impact of continuing Commonwealth cuts in recent years. NSW will lose \$21m in

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# State Budget '98



NCOSS librarian, Bill Pope was pictured as he sorted the budget papers for the various teams on budget night. Bill also prepared the corrective services analysis.

Commonwealth funding in 1998/99. NSW spending will be up about 2.3%, and in the areas of community housing, Aboriginal housing, Department of Housing (DOH) supply. Asset management (maintenance of DOH stock) will see a decrease of 7% in real terms.

\$30m has been added to the housing budget from the Rental Bond Board (interest paid on tenants accumulated bond monies) for three new programs: new community housing funds for re-development; headleasing program (450 properties); affordable housing projects (details announced on 18 June 98, following recommendations of the Ministerial Affordable Housing Taskforce).

In relation to recommendations in the NCOSS Pre-Budget Submission,

the government has: maintained its funding commitment to the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement; supported the establishment of an independent Aboriginal Housing agency and transferred housing stock to it for management (as of 18 June 98); and supported affordable housing initiatives (including involving local government as suggested).

However, the government has failed to address home ownership issues for low-income rural people or introduce tenancy protection for boarders and lodgers.

**Team:** Eleri Morgan-Thomas (NSW Federation of Housing Associations); Rod Plant (Shelter); Peter Phibbs (Sydney Uni); Karin Shellshear (ARCH); David Ramsay (Tenants Union).

## Law and justice

### Legal Aid

From July 1 1997 the Commonwealth Government cut its contribution to legal aid by \$12.4m and the joint funding agreement between the Commonwealth and State was terminated. The Legal Aid of NSW became an independent State funded body providing legal assistance in matters arising under NSW law.

The commission entered an agency agreement with the Commonwealth which enabled it to provide legal assistance for matters arising under Commonwealth law in accordance with guidelines set by the Commonwealth.

During 1997/98 the Legal Aid Commission faced a continual crisis as demand for its services outstripped the resources available and it enforced tighter eligibility guidelines. It is now clear that the crisis in funding is not only related to Commonwealth matters, but that the funding provided for State matters is also inadequate.

In its Pre-Budget Submission NCOSS recommended that an additional \$12 million be allocated to the NSW Legal Aid Commission in order to enable it to operate at 96/97 levels. In 1997/98 the NSW Government allocated \$2m non-recurrent and the Solicitors Trust Account Fund provided another \$2m non-recurrent. In this year's budget these same allocations have been made again for one year and on a non-recurrent level.

This is well short of what is needed. The community can expect tighter eligibility criteria to be introduced during the coming year.

In the PBS, NCOSS also argued that legal aid impact studies should accompany all major initiatives of the NSW Government which have the potential to impact on people's needs for legal aid. During the last year the Government has introduced a number of pieces of legislation which



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will create additional demands for legal aid and has not adjusted the legal aid budget.

**Team:** Janet Loughman, Monique Hutler (Marrickville Legal Centre); Mary Perkins (NCOSS).

## Community Legal Centres

Centres provide free legal advice and assistance to disadvantaged people. As the cutbacks to legal aid are being felt they are picking up the extra demand.

In the PBS, NCOSS argued for an increase in the funding for CLCs in order to update the funding formula, incorporate a CPI adjustment of 1.5%, fund all centres for a minimum of three positions and provide recurrent funding for the management support project (total recommended was \$1,090,000). Other than a small adjustment for CPI, the budget did not provide any enhancement for the Community Legal Centre Program.

*Mary Perkins*

## Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme

This scheme provides assistance to women seeking Apprehended Violence Orders. It operates in 42 courts around the State. In the PBS, NCOSS requested additional funding of \$1.2 million. The budget included an increase of \$230,000 — well short of the amount needed.

*Mary Perkins*

## Juvenile Justice

Juvenile Justice looking good, but nothing startling. The numbers of young people detained in detention centres is down from 510 on any one day to 350-60. A capital program has enabled new and smaller centres to be built.

The Youth Justice Conferencing Scheme has been established, however funding for legal advice for young people has not been provided in the budget.

The allocation for grants to non-profit organisations has increased from \$1,786,000 to \$2,940,000.

**Team:** Janet Loughman (Marrickville Legal Centre).

## Corrective services

This year there is a slight reduction in expenditure in the prisons budget, from a total of \$433m actually expended in 1997/98 to \$420m budgeted for 1998/99. However this reduction is not a result of lower numbers of people in prison, as the numbers are forecast to remain at about 6,300 in full-time imprisonment.

The largest cuts are in the area of employee expenses, and seem to have coincided with a general reduction in hours out of cells for inmates. For example, at the new Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre time out of cells has now been reduced to about eight hours.

Other jails have also seen their hours cut. This gives savings in having less shift overlaps and overtime for custodial staff, but it is reversing the recommendations of the Nagle Royal Commission purely as a cost cutting measure. There is a suspicion that it is an "Olympic Efficiency Tax."

The recommendations of the Sentencing Review by the Law Reform Commission, which if implemented should divert less serious offenders to alternatives to full-time imprisonment, are still with Cabinet, and are likely to stay there until after the next election.

In the meantime, numbers are not going to decrease, and there are indicators that the projected 6,300 daily average inmate population could increase. Numbers going before the courts are increasing, representation by legal aid is decreasing, delays are growing, and sentences are increasing.

This all points to an impending blow out in prison numbers, and a corresponding blow out in expenditure.

The department is continuing to develop some worthwhile programs, although not at the rate they could if

money was not so tight and numbers not so high. The Long Bay staged redevelopment program is for the creation of a series of special units for groups such as sex offenders or the developmentally disabled. Of the \$37m budgeted for the five years from 1997 to 2002, \$3.767m was expended up to June 1998, and only \$3.583m is allocated for 1998/99. The Sex Offenders Program is allocated \$2.25m, which will probably mean delays in the progress other programs, such as the moving of the Developmentally Disabled program from its present inappropriate accommodation in the witness protection unit.

The commitment to the Indigenous Action Plan and alternatives to full-time custody is shown by the \$2.8m allocated to it in 1998/99, over and above the \$1m provided in the previous budget.

The new money will be used to fund the "Second Chance" program in western NSW to allow Aboriginal inmates to maintain their family and community links, and will address the employment needs of mainly indigenous youthful offenders.

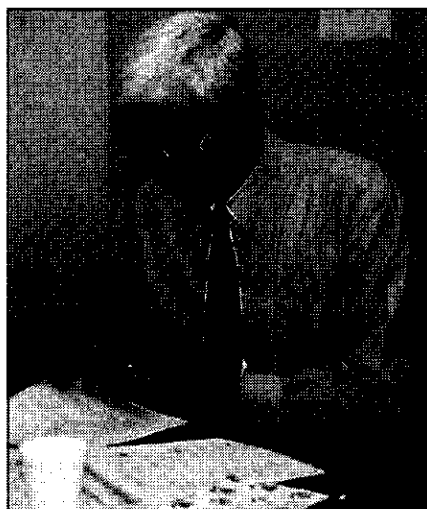
On the other hand, the department has again underspent the money allocated for the Aboriginal Ex-Inmates Post Release Program. In the 1997/98 budget the \$343,000 allocated was revised down to \$72,000 actually spent. In the 1998/99 budget, the allocation is now only \$100,000. This underspending is probably not even a saving for the Department, as the money is from a Commonwealth grant.

The Community Grants Program allocation for community groups is pretty well unchanged at \$1.171m. This is still only less than 0.3% of the department's expenditure, and probably should be expanded to fulfil unmet needs. There has been no significant enhancements for three years, and no new organisations funded in the life of this government. However, there is an evaluation of this program by an outside consultant about to start, and we are hopeful of a positive outcome.

**Team:** Jim Mellor (CRC Justice Support); Bill Pope (NCOSS).



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*Harry Herbert was at NCOSS on budget night to decipher budget allocations for the Olympics.*

## Local government

In December 1997, the State Government introduced a regulation requiring all Councils in NSW to prepare and review social plans on a regular basis as part of their overall management planning activities.

In its PBS, NCOSS recommended that \$0.6 million be made available, in consultation with the Local Government and Shires Associations and the Local Government Reform Taskforce, to assist councils in their development of high quality social plans. Unfortunately, the budget was silent on this proposal.

Similarly, NCOSS had proposed that a program of training and technical support be established to assist councils manage the social impacts of corporatisation and competition policy implementation. The government has not responded to this proposal, which NCOSS will now further pursue.

**Team:** Gary Moore (NCOSS).

## Olympics

The government's long-awaited Olympics related Budget Statement, was released in conjunction with the budget papers on 2 June.

There are three different elements of Olympic budgets:

- the SOCOG and SPOC budgets

for actually running the Olympic and Paralympic Games events. Recent disclosures about the potential impacts of Asian fiscal problems on corporate sponsorship and ticketing prices have direct relevance for these budgets;

- the Olympic Co-ordination Authority (OCA) budget for constructing and preparing games facilities; and
- the cost to other NSW Government departments and agencies of providing facilities and services before, during and after the games.

The SOCOG budget is currently being revised, with the stated aim to continue to achieve a small (\$30 million) surplus, and predicted revenue shortfalls to be met by expenditure savings. If there is a deficit on the SOCOG or SPOC budgets, the NSW taxpayer will be liable.

The Olympics budget statement estimates that the total cost of OCA construction and related spending is \$3.27 million, which is offset by \$1.63 million of revenue, leaving a net costs of \$1.64 million.

The Olympics Budget Statement estimates that the total cost of Olympic related activities to departments and agencies is \$408m.

The statement suggests that the aggregate of OCA and these other costs will be further offset by an additional \$602 million of revenue collected by the NSW Government because of increased economic activity generated by Sydney staging the games.

There is no doubt that aiming to pay for the games at the front end is placing significant pressure on each State Budget in the run up to the year 2000. The government claims that it has been able to increase funding to the human services portfolios during its term despite this pressure. While this is true, there are many who point to critical recurrent and capital services and projects to meet escalating social needs which have missed out.

The government, through

responses to the Olympics Social Impacts Advisory Committee, has maintained that all Olympic generated facilities will be fully available for community use, at affordable prices after the games with no additional burden to NSW taxpayers. Due to commercial confidence provisions, it is not possible to examine contractual arrangements for facilities construction and ongoing operation to verify the validity of these claims.

The NSW Auditor General will be examining the Olympics Budget Statement, tabled on 2 June. NCOSS has asked him to carefully assess whether all the costs to government agencies have been included and to look at social impacts management costs not included in the budget.

**Team:** Harry Herbert (Uniting Church Board for Social Responsibility); Amanda Cornwall (Public Interest Advocacy Centre); and Gary Moore (NCOSS).

## Population groups

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

There has not been any major enhancements to programs providing for the specific needs of indigenous people and programs.

Notably an Independent Aboriginal Housing Agency has been established, however, this was created by transferring funds and housing from the program previously administered by the Department of Housing and did not involve the allocation of new money.

Over several years, \$200m was allocated to the Aboriginal Communities Development Program to provide water and sewerage infrastructure and housing for Aboriginal communities across the State (\$10.75m of this was allocated for 98/99). However this programs is not new as it was announced before the budget and is comprised in part of funds transferred from another

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*Janet Loughman, Jane King and Soraya Kassim were on hand at NCOSS to work their way through the many pages of the budget notes.*

sub program.

Some underspending in Aboriginal program areas has also occurred. The Aboriginal health budget was underspent by \$3.3m and the Aboriginal Ex-Inmates Post Release Program within the Department of Corrective Services was underspent.

Significantly, the recurrent funding for Aboriginal health has fallen slightly while capital funding has dropped 31.5% in real terms.

It is disappointing that some key recommendations made by NCOSS in the PBS were not adopted.

- Funding for the Aboriginal Lands Council is down from \$44m to \$13m. In January 1998 the agreement whereby the NSW Aboriginal Land Council received 7.5% of land tax collected in the previous year ceased. In its PBS NCOSS argued that the Land Council should receive 7.5% of land tax for another five-year period.
- In HACC the NCOSS PBS recommended the allocation of \$0.5m to further develop and implement the Aboriginal Strategy. This recommendation was not adopted.

- Additional funds to the Aboriginal Womens' Legal Service has not been specifically provided.

## Older people

See Ageing and Disability section.

## People from non-English speaking backgrounds

Ethnic communities in NSW did not suffer any real cuts in this year's State budget, however, there was no substantial increase in funding allocated to the Ethnic Affairs Commission.

Ethnic communities were also disappointed to learn that no funding would be allocated for a much needed women's policy officer for immigrant women in NSW.

Existing and successful programs such as Circuit Breakers and the existing \$600,000 allocated to anti-racism education in schools were maintained, but did not receive any increase in funds.

Ethnic communities welcomed the budget provision to fund the Special Migrant Placement Officers (SMPO) program for another year.

The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW also welcomed the 18 additional community language teaching positions in primary schools and the substantial additional funding which was allocated to the Transcultural Mental Health Centre for programs targeting NESB. Carnivale also received an increase in funding of \$55,000.

AMEP teachers who were made redundant as a result of the Federal Government's decision to contract out the service were allocated \$16 million towards redundancy assistance.

The inclusion of separate Greater Western Sydney budget papers, presented for the first time, is an important initiative, given the significant proportion of Australians from non-English speaking backgrounds residing in this region.

We must now wait and see whether individual government departments will ensure that disadvantaged ethnic communities are prioritised throughout the year in terms of allocation of budget funding as required by the NSW Government's Ethnic Affairs Action Plan.

*Dominique Hansen, Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW Inc.*

## People with a disability

See Ageing and Disability section.

## Women

Funding for the Department for Women remained static, but on a very low base.

Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme provides assistance to women seeking Apprehended Violence Orders. It currently covers 42 courts across NSW. In the NCOSS Pre-Budget Submission, an additional \$1.2 million was sought for the scheme. While the additional \$230,000 granted in this budget is welcome, it is insufficient to address the high level of unmet need.

Disappointingly, additional funding for the Aboriginal Women's Legal Service was not apparent in the

# State Budget '98

budget. Resources for this service, which focuses on women and children who are or have been victims of violence, were identified as one of two key priorities for women during preparation of the Pre-Budget Submission.

NCOSS has consistently argued for funding for a community-based policy position to address settlement issues for newly arrived immigrant women. The introduction of the two-year waiting list is having a disastrous impact on immigrant women, creating barriers to accessing services such as refuges in cases of domestic violence and resulting in appalling poverty when families are unable to find work.

NCOSS had recommended that the position be based at Immigrant Women's Speakout and there is no evidence of new resources.

Funding for Department of Industrial Relations remained stable. The Working Women's Centre, a community-based organisation working on a range of issues related to women and work, receives some funding from the department and NCOSS understands that this was maintained. Unfortunately, there is little information in the budget papers about the range of specific women's equity projects undertaken by the Department.

The budget papers suggest some change in the funding of the Domestic Violence Advocacy Service, however it has not been possible to confirm this.

Further accounts on budget allocations for women are also detailed in children's services, public transport, rural and remote areas.

## Young people

There is little that is new for young people in this budget. Most of the "initiatives" touted in the press release relate to existing money for existing programs. This is particularly disappointing in relation to the youth assistance programs (HELP, Circuit Breaker, Time Out, Koori Youth program). NCOSS argued the need for a doubling of the current funding to

meet existing demand, the costs of running the programs and to assist young people affected by the new Youth Allowance restrictions.

Nor is there an allocation in this Budget towards a Children's Commission, although we understand proposals for its establishment are being considered.

New money that has been made available includes:

- \$4.6m for the Post School Options program. However, this is one-off funding made on an annual basis - there are no guarantees for 1999.
- \$5m for police youth liaison officers to support and promote programs under the Young Offenders Act.
- \$200,000 for the Youth in Sport program, but this is a tiny amount.
- \$400,000 for post-release support and housing scheme for young offenders which is an initiative that should be built on.
- There appears to be some additional funding in the mental health budget targeted to the youth area. This may include 160 additional health workers to provide specialist mental health services to children and adolescents; \$120,000 to promote mental health among NESB young people; \$40,000 for consultation; and \$480,000 for an Aboriginal Health Strategy focusing on Aboriginal youth suicide.

It is impossible to decipher from the papers whether all of this is new or simply reannounced. They are all good initiatives however which would benefit from additional resources in the next budget.

## Regional, rural and remote social development

### Department of Agriculture

On July 1, the Agriculture Advancing-Australia package (AAA)

replaced the Rural Adjustment Scheme (RAS) as the main Commonwealth/State funded program assisting farm business enterprises to improve farm productivity, sustainability and profitability.

The Commonwealth has allocated \$50m nationally over three years for the Farmbis component of AAA. Farmbis will focus on training and skills development. Under the State/Territory component of Farmbis, the Commonwealth will match the funding contribution of each State. There is no State Budget allocation in 1998/99 towards the Farmbis component of the AAA package. At this stage it appears unlikely that Farmbis will start on 1 July which will result in further difficulties for farming families seeking to increase skills and access training. The State Government needs to put in place transitional arrangements.

Rural Financial Counselling has been retained under the Commonwealth's AAA package under the Rural Communities component (RCP). Community groups such as Rural Counselling are encouraged under the RCP to identify priority community projects and expand their service to rural communities. The Commonwealth will fund up to 50% of any such project. The 1998/99 State Budget allocation for the Rural Counselling Program saw a slight increase in the program from \$903,000 to \$930,000. This increase is less than indexation and gives no additional funding towards rural counselling services for the implementation of community identified projects to meet priority needs.

The Drought Regional Initiatives Program (joint Commonwealth-State funded) will increase from \$2.4m to \$3.1m to 1998/99. This is a real increase of 25%, on last year's budgeted figures. The 1998/99 allocation includes the \$2m for water storage grants announced by the government in April 1998, as part of the drought relief package. These funds have already been allocated through a grants approval process and no further funds will be made available during the rest of 1998/99,

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*NCOSS policy officer, Kate Lee talks about the budget allocations with Rod Lake of Ettinger House.*

unless a request for additional Commonwealth funds is granted. This is of concern given the demand in the program.

The number of businesses to be assisted is expected to fall this year from 920 in 1997/98 to 770 in 1998/99, due to an increase in the funds to be allocated per grant.

## Premiers Department

The Office of Regional Communities (previously the Office of Rural Communities) will maintain its current funding levels in 1998/9 at about \$619,000. This amount is significantly below that proposed by NCOSS in the Pre-Budget Submission of \$1.1m. In the last Budget, the ORC was based in the Department of Agriculture but has now moved across to Premier's Department as part of the Strategic Projects Division.

There continues to be no separate Budget allocation for ORC funds. The ORC is responsible for facilitating whole of government responses to regional issues and

supporting co-ordination of government service delivery to regional communities. It resources the Rural Communities Consultative Council (RCCC) and manages the Government Access Centres (GAC) Program in regional centres. Funds allocated to the RCCC will be \$150,000 for 1998/99.

In relation to NCOSS Pre-Budget Submission suggestions, the ORC is currently undertaking a study of transport needs in rural NSW, but is giving no commitment to expanding the GAC program until it is reviewed in late 1998.

## Transport

Budget announcements on rural transport comprise primarily of roads spending. More than half the total roads budget will be spent on country roads and the government will also allocate 60% of the 3x3 program to regional NSW. There are no real new announcements on the public transport front, however, the government continues to fund upgrading and maintenance of non-

commercial lines and the Country XPT fleet, subsidies for freight, subsidies for pensioners on Countrylink and School Students Transport Scheme.

The Office of Regional Communities is currently undertaking a study of transport needs in rural and regional NSW.

The small increase in the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme appears to indicate that there has been no move to increase the limit of the Taxi Subsidy from the maximum of \$25 for a \$50 fare.

This figure has not changed for many years, even though taxi fares have increased. It also does not recognise the higher costs for taxi fares in rural areas. Once again, those unable to use public transport and least able to afford transport by taxi have missed out.

Overall the State Budget has very little to recommend to the 700,000 (approx: ABS data) people with restricted mobility in NSW. Many will continue to rely totally on the segregated, unreliable and expensive Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme for their mobility, until more wheelchair accessible buses are put into service both publicly and privately.

Minimal increases in CityRail's budget indicates that no increase in the program of accessibility at railway stations is planned in the coming year.

*Ian Cooper (PWD)*

## Health

See general health section.

## Regional development

The government announced additional spending of \$18 million for funding to new programs established under its regional development directions statement, **Rebuilding Country NSW**.

Over the next three years, \$5 million per year is designated for the Regional Economic Transition Scheme which aims to assist rural

# State Budget '98

centres experiencing sharp economic impacts from structural change in key industries. This is a welcome initiative, although it should have been matched by funding increases to existing programs such as Main Street, Small Towns, and the Regional Business Development Scheme.

Despite the range of government services initiatives emanating from the Office of Regional Communities and departments such as health, the government, in this budget, has still not addressed the challenge of putting into place a regional social development program.

**Team:** Fran Rowe (Lachlan Rural Advisory Group); Chris Wilson (Northern Rivers Social Development Council); Angie O'Brien (Mid North Coast Regional Council); John Humphries (La Trobe Uni); Val Symons (Albury Wodonga Council of Social Service); Kate Lee (NCOSS); Gary Moore (NCOSS).

## School education

The budget contains no real surprises for school education. Total recurrent spending is expected to increase by \$279m or 5.9%. This is accounted for by part of the teachers' salaries increase (\$140m), by anticipated increases in student numbers and by extra teachers towards meeting the government's election promise of 1405 new positions during the first term. Capital works funding is unchanged from last year, after a 26% cut in the previous two years.

A 3.4% increase is projected in school global budgets, but this increase is entirely due to inflation, student numbers, schools share of salary increases and technology funding announced elsewhere. After savage cuts justified by reference to "over funded" utilities, there is no word on adjustments to those utilities (telephone especially) where costs have escalated dramatically over the past few years.

It will be just as hard as ever to

balance school budgets.

The Back To School Allowance remains, at a cost of \$60m. This amount is equivalent to nearly 1000 extra teachers, and is more than the whole of the expenditure targeted to socio-economic disadvantage.

The Back To School Allowance is a voucher — a universal equal entitlement. Vouchers take money away from those who need it most and deliver it to those who need it less or not at all.

Much of this money would be better spent within the Education portfolio in areas such as socio-economic disadvantage and better support for students from a non-English speaking background.

Another worrying trend is the diversion of staffing funding to necessary physical resources. Schools have, under these arrangements, a right to choose whether they will have extra technology teachers, or extra hardware.

Thus the odd situation of computers being supplied to schools without any funding for cabling is dealt with by offering schools the choice between doing without extra teachers or raising the necessary money privately.

Both vouchers and flexible staffing arrangements pose serious threats to equity within schools and between schools.

**Team:** Rodney Molesworth (Federation of Parents and Citizens Association of NSW).

## Transport

The 1998/99 Transport budget held few surprises and answered few of the questions raised in the NCOSS Pre-Budget Submission. Broadly, the total budget was slightly down, \$100m, on actual expenditure last year, a drop of 0.5%. However the budgeted amount is the same as last year. In March this year, the government released its air quality management plan, *Action for Air*, with strong commitments to public

transport prioritisation. It is significant that in this, the first budget since, there are few dollars attached to this commitment.

Almost a year since the government's release of its Greater Western Sydney Public Transport Strategy, there remain no clear indications for funding.

There continue to be costs relating to redundancies for CityRail during its seemingly endless restructuring, and clearly these redundancies have impacts outside of this budget, particularly in rural and regional NSW. The community transport program received an extra \$200,000 over CPI, as had been suggested in the Pre-Budget Submission. An investigation of rural and regional transport needs by the Office of Regional Communities will be carried out.

The Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme receives a small increase in funding, impossible to identify accurately from budget papers. As part of the bus replacement program, STA receives 124 low-floor natural gas buses, to be wheelchair accessible. In addition STA receives \$24 million in extra funding. No new capital works were announced, though a number of projects have been announced recently.

The much vaunted security improvements for CityRail begin in July, at a total cost of \$55m over two years. These involve private security guards on night trains and more closed circuit TV cameras on stations. The effectiveness of these measures in addressing actual crime and fear of crime on trains remains to be seen.

NCOSS priorities around the needs of (particularly bus) public transport users in non-STA areas were largely ignored. The pensioner excursion ticket has still not been made available in these areas, despite the obvious inequity. The Hoxton Park bus transitway recently announced it will have minor work this year. Concerns over the reason for preference of bus over light rail are mounting, however. In addition, the current regulatory regime for bus services will make it virtually

impossible for the transitway to be used effectively, through its focus on exclusive access and monopolies within contract areas which the transitway will traverse.

The M5 East will start construction this financial year, with \$130m made available. This is money now unavailable for public transport initiatives, and running contrary to the government's stated commitment to reducing the amount of vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) as part of its air quality improvement plan, *Action for Air*. Generally speaking, the budget served to re-announce existing programmes. This may not be surprising given the pending election and the need to retain some good news announcements.

**Team:** Rob Lake (Ettinger House); Christine Laurence (Smogbusters); Jeff Angel (Total Environment Centre); Jane Salmon.

## Urban development

Significant population growth continues in several urban regions such as South Western Sydney, the Central Coast and regional coastal cities such as Coffs Harbour and Ballina.

In parts of the Sydney Metropolitan area, housing, both rental and home ownership, is rapidly becoming more unaffordable for low-income people, especially east of Parramatta where urban consolidation is gathering pace.

At the same time, much still needs to be done to provide adequate levels of community facilities and human services for communities on the urban fringe.

The budget provides few initiatives to tackle these above problems. The commitment of \$10m from Rental Bond Board funds for affordable housing pilot projects is welcome. This needs to be quickly built on and supplemented by many of the measures recommended in the recently released Affordable Housing Taskforce report.

The Area Assistance Scheme has been maintained, with reforms to its operations being finalised following recent reviews. NCOSS is disappointed that the government

did not support its proposal to extend the AAS to all regions experiencing significant structural social and economic change.

NCOSS is pleased that the Regional Co-ordination Scheme has been extended to Western Sydney. The government should now move to complete coverage of metropolitan Sydney with this initiative.

**Team:** Jo Gardner, (Southern Sydney Development Corporation); Jon Hall, (Planning Research Centre); Gary Moore (NCOSS).

## Utilities

### Electricity and water assistance

There are three utilities assistance programs funded by the State Government: Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) and Pensioner Electricity Rebate (both funded by DCS) and the Water & Sewerage Assistance Program (funded through DUAP).

EAPA only saw a slight increase in allocated funds due to indexation. The number of vouchers to be allocated for the coming year is predicted to increase reflecting an increasing trend towards both vouchers issued and number of people assisted over the last three years. Last year's expenditure looks as though it was almost \$700,000 over the budgeted expenditure, however according to the department, this reflected payments for reimbursement to suppliers in 1996/97 which had not been adequately documented in last year's budget.

The Pensioner Electricity subsidy allocation this year is down on last year's budget by 0.2% in real terms. However compared to actual expenditure in 1997/8, it is down by 3.7%, around \$650,000. The use of this program does fluctuate given that pensioners are required to demonstrate they meet additional criteria on top of pensioner eligibility, however a predicted decrease in use is difficult to explain given the demands on the program in 1997/98.

Water and Sewerage rebates for

pensioners dropped slightly from budgeted predictions last year. However this year's allocation is up on last year's actual expenditure by about \$1.5m.

Kate Lee (NCOSS).

## Agreement signed

by Christine Regan

The revised HACC Agreement between the Commonwealth and State Governments comes into effect in NSW from 1 July 1998 after being signed by the Federal Minister for Family Services and the State Minister for the Ageing & Disability Services. The NSW Agreement was signed on July 1.

The revised HACC agreement replaces the 1986 Agreement which contained cumbersome project-by-project administrative arrangements.

The revised HACC agreement:

- reduces duplication in the administration of the HACC Program between State and Commonwealth departments;
- places greater emphasis on agreed regional planning targets;
- enhances the capacity of the State and Commonwealth to pursue reform in the community care sector.

The revised Agreement contains a revised set of objectives for the HACC Program, consistent with program directions outlined in the 1995 Effectiveness and Efficiency Review. New national HACC guidelines will shortly be released.

The definition of organisation eligible to receive HACC funding is altered to include for-profit agencies.

The revised agreement complements NSW efforts to streamline State administration of the program. On 1 July 1998 the transfer of administration of home modification and maintenance services from the Dept of Housing to the Ageing & Disability Department becomes effective, reducing the number of State Departments administering the program to three.

*Summarised by Christine Regan using Fact Sheet 1, Department of Ageing & Disability, July 1998.*

# Disability legislation changes: your chance to respond

by Christine Regan

## There is to be a review of the State Legislation covering disability services and community services complaints.

Legislation passed in 1993 provides for reviews of the *Disability Services Act* (DSA) and the *Community Services (Complaints, Appeals and Monitoring) Act* (CAMA) to be presented to State Parliament by 8 April 1999. The primary focus of the review is to determine whether the policy objectives of the two Acts remain valid and whether the existing provisions are appropriate for securing those policy objectives.

The Disability Safeguards Coalition is encouraging all people and services interested in responding to this important Review to tell the Law Reform Commission the key issues which should be addressed.

Using the terms of reference as embodied in the Act, the Law Reform Commission will conduct the review, investigating both Acts and all attached regulations. For the DSA, the State Government has included an additional term of reference *"conduct the review, with consideration given to the resource or finance implications of the current legislation and regulation and any proposed legislative or regulatory amendments."*

The NSW Legislation is considered to be the strongest DSA in Australia. The challenge for proponents of both pieces of legislation is to safeguard the strengths, while identifying and promoting solutions for gaps and weaknesses. Jim Simpson, in addressing a meeting organised recently by the Disability Safeguards Coalition, identified the strengths and weaknesses of the DSA.

At the preliminary meeting into this issue of the Disability Safeguards Coalition, several key issues were identified which contribute to a strengthened and

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STRENGTHS OF DSA	WEAKNESSES OF DSA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides a clear rights basis</li> <li>• embraces a range of ideologies</li> <li>• provides a clear obligation on the Minister to ensure conformity</li> <li>• there is some cross-government application</li> <li>• is complemented by CAMA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Act does not guarantee funding</li> <li>• it has a service provision focus rather than a people focus</li> <li>• there are limitations on services ie. Minister can exempt services, much of HACC is excluded</li> <li>• no restrictions on funding private for-profit organisations</li> <li>• narrower than desirable definition of disability</li> <li>• are specific provisions needed for children?</li> <li>• limited recognition of families and carers</li> <li>• many points lack clarity</li> <li>• cross-government applications lacks commitment to implementation</li> </ul>

CAMA and the commission are essential to ensure the rights of people with disabilities. This is the most powerful legislation in Australia. Jim Simpson identified the strengths and weaknesses of CAMA:

STRENGTHS OF CAMA	WEAKNESSES OF CAMA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• independence</li> <li>• annual reports direct to Parliament</li> <li>• accessibility</li> <li>• capacity to conciliate</li> <li>• the commission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>specialist focus;</li> <li>does not need a complaint to action;</li> <li>flexibility;</li> <li>mandate to work with the community;</li> <li>commissioner has political immunity.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• the tribunal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>specialist focus;</li> <li>can make binding decisions;</li> <li>comparatively investigative, informal and non-legalistic.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Visitors — clarifying the extent of their roles</li> <li>• Tribunal cannot make decisions against government decisions or resource allocations specialist focus does not need a complaint to action</li> <li>• should CAMA bodies be more independent?</li> <li>• Does the Community Services Review Council have useful role?</li> <li>• Should Act specify government structures?</li> <li>• more from International Human Rights Conventions</li> <li>• does not embody Disability Council</li> <li>• no provision for independent funding to advocacy</li> </ul>



improved vision for the future.

For the DSA these include:

- strengthen and protect the principles and applications;
  - for each of the principles and applications, acknowledge differences between people with various disabilities;
  - increased funding of individuals;
  - identify and agree on gaps in the legislation, services and population groups;
  - find agreement within the sector on the core elements of the legislation;
  - increase the primacy of individuals over services;
  - strengthen links to CAMA.
- For CAMA, these include:
- strengthen and protect the principles and applications;
  - specific monitoring and enforcing of the principles and applications;
  - protect the legislative and political independence of the commission;
  - Transition: defining, monitoring and enforcing the process, eg. non-conforming services should not

automatically be in "transition";

- move to continuous improvement for services;
- the use of peer assessment: accreditation service improvement, ownership of processes towards compliance.

The Law Reform Commission is planning the following timetable:

1. Preliminary submissions to be submitted by 17 July 1998. These should be short, describing the key issues for review as well as any shortcomings and improvements in the legislation.
2. Publication of an issues paper by 30 September which sets out the full range of matters to be addressed by the review.
3. All written and oral submissions to be submitted by 18 December 1998.
4. Preparation of the final report by April 1999.

Submissions, in no particular format, should be sent to :  
Law Reform Commission  
GPO Box 5199 SYDNEY NSW 2001  
ph: 02 9228 8230 fax: 02 9228 8225  
email: nsw\_lrc@agd.nsw.gov.au

## **NCOSS seeks transport report**

NCOSS has recently requested under FOI, a copy of an interdepartmental report which discusses the possibility of extending the \$1 pensioner excursion ticket to users of private bus operators, which operate primarily in Western Sydney and regional/rural areas.

NCOSS understands the report has been around for some time but not formal consultation of the proposals has occurred.

As soon as we have access to the report, NCOSS will convene a meeting of interested community sector organisations to discuss how we can co-ordinate to support the extension of the program, for parity among all pensioners in NSW as well as for others in receipt of income support, such as unemployed people.

## **Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency**

In the next three decades, the proportion of the population aged over 65 will grow from less than two million Australians in 1991 to more than five million in around 2030, from 11.2% to 19% of the total population.

From January 2001, accreditation will be compulsory for Australia's 3000 hostels and nursing homes if they are to receive any Commonwealth funding.

The Aged Care Standards Accreditation Agency is an integral part of the Commonwealth Government's Aged Care reform strategy and will:

- manage the residential aged care accreditation process;
- assist services to improve quality;
- conduct audits;
- strategically manage services not yet ready for accreditation;
- advise the Department of Health and Family Services regarding services which clearly represent a

serious risk to the health, safety and well-being of the residents.

The agency is a body independent of government, managed by a board drawn from a variety of backgrounds, and chaired by Dr Penny Flett.

While quality improvement is an essential element of each standard, there are four accreditation standards:

- management systems, staffing and organisational development;
- health and personal care;
- resident lifestyle;
- physical environment and safety systems.

The accreditation process for residential aged care providers involves:

- a self assessment against accreditation standards;
- application for an audit to obtain accreditation;
- an audit of achievements against accreditation standards using a

desk audit and a site audit;

- the agency will decide whether to grant accreditation and whether the accreditation is for 1 or 3 years;
- feedback performance;
- publicly publishing information about achieved standards;
- support visits between audits.

The agency envisions that accreditation will engender cooperative working relationships with and within the residential aged care industry. It will elevate the status of aged care in the health context. Consequently, service provision should become more consumer oriented in a competitive and aware market within a context of continually improving quality of care.

For more information contact Ross Bushrod, NSW Manager, Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency, phone 02 9633 2099, fax 02 9633 2344.

*Compiled by Christine Regan from Aged Care promotional material.*



# Electricity privatisation: locking in environmental protections

by Richard Denniss

**The NSW Government is trying to do a lot of things to the electricity industry, unfortunately, a lot of them are incompatible.**

Lower electricity prices, improved environmental outcomes and privatisation cannot all occur simultaneously. Unfortunately, if the goal of privatisation is achieved, it may be the consumers and the environment which loose out.

The 'deregulation' of the electricity industry in NSW has been underway for several years now. It has been broken up into many smaller generation and distribution companies that compete with each other, and companies in other States, to generate and distribute electricity.

This deregulation has resulted in a large fall in the wholesale price of electricity. Lower prices have been passed on to big business consumers, but they have not yet, and may never be, passed on to consumers.

Lower electricity prices may be good for individual consumers, but they are likely to be harmful to the environment.

If we want to reduce the greenhouse effect, we have to reduce our consumption of coal-generated electricity. And if we want to reduce the consumption of coal-generated electricity then we have to increase its price, not decrease it.

Current government policies are therefore incompatible.

Electricity companies are currently marketing a product called 'Pure Energy'. Pure energy allows customers to pay a higher price for their electricity in order to contribute to funding towards electricity from 'green sources'. While the intention may be a good one, the solution is at best a token gesture. Once again, if we want to encourage the use of something we charge a lower price, not a higher price.

The solution to this problem is

simple — electricity produced from polluting sources should be taxed. Prices don't even have to rise. As mentioned above, the benefits of competition are pushing prices down. Rather than pass on lower prices to business and consumers (which would increase greenhouse gasses), a small tax can be imposed and prices held constant. With such a policy, there is no price to pay for protecting the environment.

But what's all that got to do with privatisation? As well as wanting lower prices and a cleaner environment, both the NSW Government and Opposition both want to privatise the electricity industry. If privatisation occurs neither a clean environment or low prices are likely to occur.

The problem for the environment is that if the government sells the industry before it introduces some real environmental improvements, then it will be virtually impossible to ever do so. It is much cheaper and easier to introduce such improvements while the government still owns the industry, but if it did, it would reduce the price it would get for selling the assets.

And if those assets are sold, electricity prices are unlikely to remain low, even without the environmental improvements. Remember when third party green slips were privatised? Prices fell rapidly, but soon began to rise again, as did the profits of the businesses selling them. Large players in the electricity industry are already talking about the future 'consolidation' of the industry through mergers.

The NSW electricity industry is at an important cross road. Real opportunities currently exist for protecting the environment and consumers. These opportunities will be squandered though if the industry is privatised without consideration to these important issues.

*Richard Denniss lectures in economics at the University of Newcastle.*



## Tax Reform debate

Registrations are coming in for our Tax Reform seminar, to be held on Thursday 30 July at Furama Central Hotel, Surry Hills. It will feature representatives from Federal Government, Federal Opposition, the Australian Democrats, ACOSS, State Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Labor Council of NSW and the Nature Conservation Council of NSW and will cover a broad range of tax reform issues which could have far-reaching implications for the whole community.

Cost is \$40 for NCOSS members and \$60 for non-members. Further details are available from the enclosed flyer.

## Just Relations

The third edition of Just Relations should be available from our office at the end of this month. Written with community organisations in mind, it looks at the ingredients for good industrial relations in the workplace, how you can avoid disputes, and what to do if there is a dispute at your organisation. There are suggestions of where to get assistance and advice, as well as a glossary of terms used in the industrial arena.

## Work experience

Sharmaine Wood, a fourth-year social work student from the University of Western Sydney is on her final placement at NCOSS until November. She is working with Christine Regan and the Disability Safeguards Coalition on the review of the Disability Services Act and CAMA. Sharmaine can be contacted at NCOSS on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

# Sector snippets

## Hammerton award

Marianne Hammerton, general manager of Home Care, has been awarded the Telstra NSW Business Women's Award, in the Corporate and Government category.

Home Care is the NSW Government's program which helps the elderly and people with disabilities by providing home-delivered services such as housekeeping, personal care, shopping and house maintenance.

The award recognises improvements in Home Care's occupational health and safety. In the last two years the organisation has been able to reduce its workers' compensation bill by \$5.35 million and it is expected that this money will be channelled back into services.

Ms Hammerton said that by involving all staff, improving their training and assessing the homes which they visit contributed to health and safety improvements.

## A voice for tenants

The Tenant and Community Initiatives Program is a tenant-driven program to ensure public, community and Aboriginal housing tenants get their say.

Funded by the Housing Office of the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, the program aims to inform tenants about issues and give them the opportunity to respond. The groups are resourced by Regional Tenant Resource Services, which produce an independent information, advocacy and advice service to all public, community and Aboriginal housing tenants and applicants.

A State Advisory Committee

(SAC) oversees the development of the program and advises ministers on policy and service delivery issues from a tenant point of view. SAC has just completed drawing up a funding grants program of \$240,000 for small tenant-run projects from around the State.

Further details about this program can be obtained from TCIP management team on (02) 9319 2169.

## Early intervention conference

The Benevolent Society's Centre for Children is hosting an international conference to mark 10 years of work with young children and their families through its early intervention programs. The conference will be held in Sydney on 14 and 15 September.

The aim is to help create links between those involved with child protection, infant-parent psychotherapy and those concerned with the social conditions affecting young families in order that effective early intervention strategies can be identified and further developed

for the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

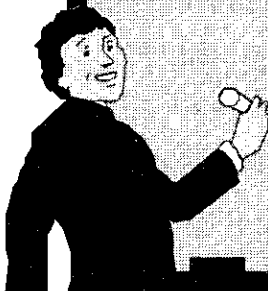
Further information is on the web site: <http://www.bensoc.asn.au/innerworlds>

## Reclaim the night

The annual international march and rally against sexual violence for women and children will be held this year on Friday, 30 October, with a focus on restoring funding to women's services.

If you would like to play an active part in the march you can join one of more than 40 collectives around Australia which come together to organise the event in their area. Women don't need any special skills to be part of the collective, just energy and a desire to speak out against the violence.

Stall holders, performers, speakers, printers, media contacts and similar people are all needed to help make the march as successful as it has been in past years. More information about the march and collectives is available on the web site: <http://www.isis.aust.com/rtn>



**IF YOU have something interesting to share, please contact Justine O'Leary at NCOSS**  
tel 9211 2599, fax 9281 1968  
email [<justine@ncoss.org.au>](mailto:justine@ncoss.org.au)  
or write:  
NCOSS, 66 Albion St  
Surry Hills NSW 2010

# Conferences and seminars

## **PIAC Introduction to Advocacy**

Work the system one-day training workshops

This workshop aims to provide community and consumer representatives with the knowledge and skills to be effective advocates.

Sydney: 12 August

Coffs Harbour: 23 September

Cost: \$110 per person. Lunch, morning and afternoon teas provided

Enquires to Cathie Sharp or Sarah Mitchell on (02) 9299 7833 or fax: (02) 9299 7855

## **Family support services association annual conference**

21-23 July 1998

Charles Sturt University, Bathurst  
Celebrating the Journey: Keying into the future.

More information available from Margaret Mayes, (02) 9743 6565, fax: (02) 9743 5841, email: fssa@world.net

## **Breaking the boundaries: the second A&NZ conference on sexual misconduct, exploitation and offending by trusted practitioners, including clergy**

July 22-25, Melbourne. International speakers include Gary Schoenrer (Minneapolis USA); Ray Wyre (Dir Lucy Faithfull Found, UK); Roman Paur (St John's Univ, Minnesota USA)  
Details: In Good Faith & Assoc, tel (03) 9326 5991; fx (03) 9326 5992

## **Health matters for women over 60**

July 27 to Aug 6 at Centacare, Glebe  
This 8 day program developed to train and prepare health workers and community educators working in women's and/or older people's services to conduct Health Matters for Women Over 60 in their local communities.

Details: Lesley Garton, tel (02) 9840 3737, fx (02) 9840 3754

## **Homelessness conference**

3-4 August 1998

Sydney, Masonic Centre, Goulburn St.

Further details are available from Shelter on (02) 9267 5733 or email <sheltnsw@dot.net.au> or from John South at Sydney City Mission, (02) 9219 2012.

## **NCOSS tax reform conference**

July 30, Furama Central Hotel, Albion St Surry Hills

Hear key non-government proponents put forward their views on the tax debate; speakers will include the Evatt Foundation, ACOSS and the Labor Council.

Details: Kirsten Forrester, tel 9211 2599, ext 110, fx 9281 1968, email <info@ncoss.org.au>

## **Relationships Australia: Domestic Violence conference**

August 12-14, Masonic Centre, Sydney

Theme: Current responses; future directions. Aims to critically analyse policy directions and service delivery issues; to develop methodologies and skills for professional practice; and reflect on how outcomes of current research may inform best practices.

Details: tel (02) 9418 8800; fx (02) 9418 8726; email <relatnsw@matra.com.au>

## **Uniting Church National Community Services Conference**

August 12-14, Wesley Centre, 220 Pitt St Sydney

Theme: A Uniting Vision. The Uniting Church has been providing community services for many years, but as yet, a uniting vision which incorporates all sectors has not been developed.

Details: Australian Convention and Travel Services P/L tel (02) 6257 3299; fx (02) 6257 3256; email conf@acts.ccmil.compuserve.com

## **The 1998 ACWA conference: Improving services for children, youth and families**

August 24-26, Sydney Airport Hilton

The premier national conference for the child, youth and family services sector. International speaker: Dr Larry K Brendtro, former president of the Starr Commonwealth, serving troubled children and families in Michigan and Ohio.

Details: Sharyn Low, tel 4572 3079, fx 4572 3972, email <sharyn.low@acwa.asn.au>

## **Council on the Ageing annual conference**

3 and 4 September 1998

Central Coast Leagues Club in Gosford. Independent or Burden? Growing older at home.

More information is available from Ann Storr at COTA NSW on (02) 9299 4100 or fax (02) 9299 4414

## **12th International Congress of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect: Protecting children: innovation and inspiration**

Sept 6-9, Auckland

The emphasis will be on the new directions which child abuse protection must take to deal with the crisis in the care of children.

Details: tel (64 9) 360 1240, fx (64 9) 360 1242, email: <ispcan@tcc.co.nz>, web: <http://www.nzhealth.co.nz/ispcan98>

## **Benevolent Society conference: Inner Worlds; Outer Realities**

Sept 14-15, Bondi Beach, Sydney  
Theme: Prevention through early intervention.

Details: Suzanne Donnelly, Maria Merle or Judith Edwards tel (02) 9365 7999, email: <mailben@bensoc.asn.au>. Conference information and registration forms also available on the conference website [www.bensoc.asn.au/innerworlds](http://www.bensoc.asn.au/innerworlds)

## **Alzheimer's Association of NSW World Alzheimer's Day Seminar**

"Dementia: A race against time"

21 September, Parramatta Parkroyal Hotel, 10am-12noon.

This free seminar is about dementia warning signs, proper assessment and new dementia research. Speaker: Dr Sid Williams, Director of Aged Care Psychiatry, Braeside Hospital, Auburn.

IF YOU have a conference to advertise, please contact Justine O'Leary at NCOSS tel 9211 2599 ext 115 fax 9281 1968 justine@ncoss.org.au NCOSS, 66 Albion St Surry Hills NSW 2010

# Jobs on the Web

Let everyone know by advertising your position on the NCOSS internet site.

Millions of Australians now have access to the internet — young people, students, administrative staff, managers, policy and advocacy workers.

All you need to do is either email us the details of your position, or post us a disk (unformatted text or MS Word 6). There is no limit on the length of your ad.

Unlike the daily papers, your ad won't appear for just one day — it will remain on our site until after the closing date — all for as little as \$30!

You can send your job advertisement via email to <justine@ncoss.org.au> or post a disk to Webjobs at NCOSS, 66 Albion Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2010. Terms and conditions are also available from Justine O'Leary, tel: (02) 9211 2599 ext 115.

## Tax reform

half-day seminar

**Thursday, 30 July 1998**

Furama Central Hotel

Albion Street, Surry Hills

Hear the key perspectives on this hot topic.

**Register today by completing the registration form or calling NCOSS on (02) 9211 2599.**

**Mark this in your diary now**

## Shifting Ground

NCOSS Policy and Practice conference

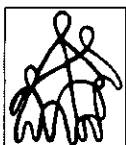
**8 and 9 October 1998**

Gazebo Hotel, Kings Cross

Keynote speaker is Dr Bill Cope, Director of RMIT's Centre for Workplace Communication & Culture.

**More information, including registration details will be in future issues of NCOSS News.**

## Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS)



### POSITION VACANT

### Publications Officer

with IT support role

NCOSS is the peak body for the social and community services sector in NSW. NCOSS works with its members, on behalf of disadvantaged people and communities, towards achieving social justice in NSW.

We are seeking to fill the position of Publications Officer. The position's main duties include:

- preparation and layout of monthly newsletter
- design and layout of publications, including Annual Report
- computer support (Win95 workstations)
- web publishing
- print purchasing

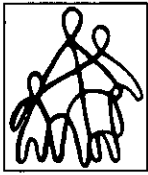
The successful applicant will demonstrate:

- skills and expertise in desktop publishing in a Windows environment
- high level of written English language
- expertise in computer network support or willingness to be trained
- some knowledge of internet publishing
- ability to perform tasks independently
- capacity to work as part of a team, with competing priorities and tight deadlines.

Annual salary of \$36,070 (plus super).

Call 02 9211 2599 for an information package and selection criteria.

Written applications marked "Publications Officer — Confidential" should be received by 5pm on Monday 20 July 1998 at NCOSS, 66 Albion Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010.



## Collins and Carr must be responsible on land tax

by Gary Moore

**In late February, NCOSS called on both the Carr Government and the Collins Opposition to put the interests of the State's 1 million disadvantaged first and reject the scaremongering campaign against land tax being run by the real estate industry.**

Land tax on investment property and luxury residential properties is one of the fairest and most efficient forms of revenue measures currently available to State Governments.

With \$15 billion of revenue annually now being lost from the national tax base due to tax loopholes, minimisation schemes and avoidance, revenue strapped State Governments must ask the better off in our community to contribute a little more for essential public and community infrastructure and services.

The NSW Opposition is being irresponsible if it panders to the lowest political interests in the land-tax debate.

Mr Collins should think about the substantial negative gearing gains many residential property investors currently make, the historic low housing interest rates enjoyed by those same investors and the substantial increase in property value and equity such investors have also obtained in the current boom market.

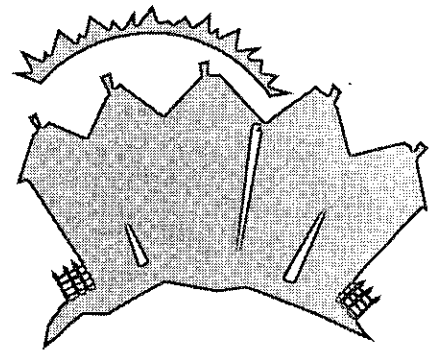
NCOSS recognises that there are people who are asset rich, but income poor and who will find it difficult to start paying land tax. To this end, NCOSS has, and will continue to support appropriate hardship and exemption procedures.

Both the Government and the Opposition should be obliged to identify a similarly equitable revenue source to match that lost if land tax were to be reduced.

Or is the Opposition and the real estate lobby quite happy to cut spending on community services, health, education, rural services and the like at a time of escalating social need?

We, of course, are also urging both sides of politics at the State level to support fair, effective and viable tax reform, which, over time, repairs the revenue base of all Governments and provides real benefits to low-income and disadvantaged people. Such national tax reform can take pressure off State Governments to expand or

***Is the Opposition and the real estate lobby quite happy to cut spending on community services, health, education, rural services and the like at a time of escalating social need?***



introduce measures such as in the current land-tax situation.

NCOSS, the Tenant's Union and many other peak community agencies are also gravely concerned at suggestions that exorbitant rent increases will occur because of the State Government's land tax measures.

Not only do we doubt the validity of these claims but we believe that the State Government should move to require landlords to prove the validity of sought-after rent increases before the Residential Tenancies Tribunal. Such proof must be based on real cost increases, not simply a statement about market rent movements.

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**NCOSS**

The Council of Social Service of New South Wales represents more than 7000 service delivery and consumer groups through its organisational membership.

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**Visit the NCOSS website at <http://www.ncoss.org.au>**

# Winners and losers in the Employment Assistance Market

By the time that this edition of *NCOSS News* arrives in your mailbox, Federal Employment Minister David Kemp will have announced the successful bidders in the first tendering round of employment placement services.

In 1997, the Commonwealth Government moved to competitively tender employment placement services for all unemployed people at the same time as corporatising the Commonwealth Employment Service, now called Employment National.

Historically, Commonwealth Government labour market program assistance for the unemployed had been either provided by and through the CES or by community sector providers funded by the Commonwealth.

The creation of the Employment Assistance Market will enable private, for-profit providers to enter this area of service to the unemployed for the first time.

By  
NCOSS  
Director  
Gary  
Moore



During the past month, there has been considerable speculation about the impact of this first tendering round on existing community sector providers, both small and large. There have been suggestions that more than 50 per cent of these providers, such as Skillshare organisations, have not received an offer of funding, with several others being offered funding not consistent with their bid or being offered a level of assistance which will make their operations financially unviable.

There are suggestions that even large community sector providers have fared badly. Unfortunately, due to confidentiality requirements in the bidding process, it is not possible to publicly verify this situation until the Commonwealth Government makes its announcements.

Of serious concern also is the suggestion that some communities and some significantly disadvantaged groups among the unemployed will either not get an employment placement service or receive a poor quality one because of the marketisation of these activities. Competition, far from delivering greater consumer choice of affordable and quality services, may result in the opposite occurring for many consumers.

Many in the community sector eagerly await the opportunity to fully analyse what has occurred in this first tender round of the Employment Assistance Market. It may have some sobering lessons for other human services areas.

## A sensible policy on cost required

**D**uring 1997, many community organisations, small and large, reported significant actual or proposed increases in their workers' compensation premiums.

Such was the level of concern raised that the Department of Community Services (DOCS) undertook a consultancy to examine the situation, its causes and what might be done to address difficulties arising for community organisations.

These cost pressures, in some cases as large as a doubling of

premium level, are hitting the community sector at the same time as rents for premises in several parts of the State are significantly increasing, or in some areas, where the availability of affordable and appropriate premises is just drying up.

On this latter matter, some investigations are now underway by the NSW Cabinet Office, the Committee of NSW Human Services Departments' Director Generals and the Social Justice Reference Group.

The jump in workers' compensation premiums is significantly due to Workcover reclassifications of occupations within the community sector, some of which is being driven by commercial imperatives. A minor cost contribution is the occasional large claim from a part of our sector.

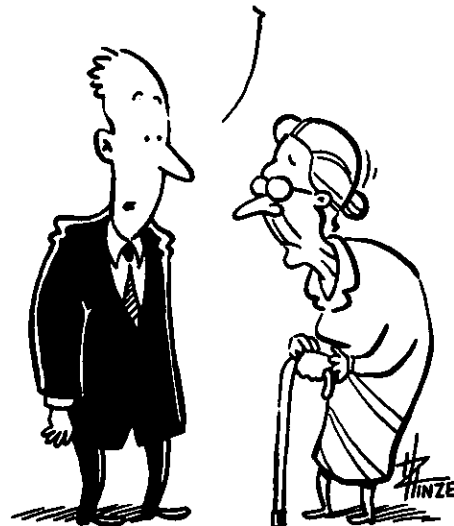
The loss of affordable rental premises for community organisations is principally due to

*Continued on page 6*

**THIS BUTTON ALERTS THE  
CHANGE-MANAGEMENT-COMPETENCY-  
CONSULTANT... THIS ONE'S FOR THE  
EMPOWERMENT-VISION-RESOURCE-  
ALLOCATOR... AND THIS ONE  
REACHES THE CORE-VALUE-  
CULTURE-ACTUALISER!**



**NURSE?...  
WHAT NURSE?...**



## News from Macquarie Street

### Safer streets for women

*Plan it safe: A guide to making public places safer for women*, has been produced by the Safe Women Project with funding from the Women's Grants Program. It tackles one of the most frequently nominated problems experienced by women around Australia — feeling unsafe in public places.

"Women often stay at home at night rather than walk through car parks, train stations, bus interchanges and empty streets, because these public places feel unsafe. Sometimes they are," said Minister for Women, Faye Lo Po.

Liz Reedy, who chairs the Safe Women Project, said, "Poor design, poor maintenance and poor management of public places is the problem. Improvements in these areas are desperately needed. Simple changes — including asking women what they need — would make a huge difference."

Kits are available from the Safe Women Project on (02) 9607 7536.

### Rural banking crisis

NSW Premier, Bob Carr is asking the Federal Government to ensure banks continue to provide services in country towns. "Regional communities across NSW have suffered from 106 bank branch closures. Thirty six towns have been left without any bank branch," Mr Carr pointed out.

This means that many people have to travel 50 or 100 kms to do their banking — which is inconvenient and expensive. "It's hard on families, older people and those who do not own cars," the Premier said.

The NSW Government has made a submission to a House of Representative's Standing Committee into Regional Banking Services, which recorded bank closures across NSW during the past three years.

The NSW Minister for Fair Trading, Brian Langton, said banks did not tell local communities or give adequate notice of the closures.

### Bogus jobs warning

Job seekers should be wary of employment and training offers which seem 'too good to be true', warned Fair Trading Minister, Brian Langton.

"Some employers see times of high unemployment as opportunities to prey on desperate job seekers, including inexperienced school leavers who are particularly vulnerable," he said.

Dishonest operators are also warned that misleading job advertisements are criminal offenses under the Trade Practices Act and the NSW Fair Trading Act.

Some of the key phrases to look for in dubious ads are: 'big bucks for hard workers', 'no experience needed', 'easy money' or 'opportunities for free travel'.

The Minister also warned about private training and advised job seekers to check a trainer's qualifications and if the course will actually help get the job.



# Leadership and division

**There is an increasing tendency among our political leaders to pander to and exploit misconceptions held by the public rather than to seek to inform and counter those views.**

In part, this results from the undue weight given to opinion polls which are designed to 'tap into voter thinking' in order to enable politicians to say and do what voters think, at that moment, needs saying and doing. And, while we all support efforts by our leaders to be responsive to public opinion and to be democratically accountable, there are obvious limits to this approach to national policy formulation.

The limits are most apparent when our leaders consciously foster the fears and insecurities which lie behind the short-sighted responses of those polled, making bad policy decisions which exacerbate existing problems and widen social division.

## Divisive claims

Those who care about the health and welfare of people on low incomes or who are otherwise disadvantaged, have been particularly galled by the way government leaders have continuously sought to distinguish between social security recipients and taxpayers.

When social security overpayment figures in millions are ruthlessly portrayed as 'fraud' every three months and exploited for political advantage on the grounds of a government hard at work actively protecting 'the taxpayers' it is dishonest and divisive.

On closer inspection there is no divide between them and us. Social security recipients *are* taxpayers.

By  
**ACOSS  
President,  
Michael  
Raper**



They pay taxes on their earnings and if they do not have earnings now, the majority have been taxpayers in the past and will be again. ACOSS research shows that in fact many social security recipients pay the highest effective marginal tax rates of all taxpayers. Distortions in the tax and social security system mean that those who can supplement their income support with earnings from work may lose up to 84 cents in the dollar from their social security payments for every dollar earned.

This situation is particularly ironic when income tax loopholes and shelters which benefit those on much higher incomes continue to thrive and cost all taxpayers about \$8 billion in lost revenue each year.

## Ignorance exploited

Unemployment is another area in which our leaders have exploited public ignorance and a prejudice that many youth would rather get the dole than work. The real facts of the situation provide an entirely different picture:

- The *size of the problem* is often misrepresented. While 28 per cent of the teenage *labour force* is looking for work, because the majority of young people are in

education or training this amounts to only 6 per cent of all teenagers. This is a significant problem, nevertheless.

- The *nature of the problem* is also not about purported 'youth idleness', it is about the collapse of the untrained teenage labour market. Employers do not want untrained, unskilled or under-educated workers.
- The *solution to the problem* is thus not about instilling a 'work ethic' in young people, it is about the crucial role of schooling and education to develop literacy and relevant knowledge and skills. Work experience and real labour market programs are needed to assist this process.

However, the government prefers to exploit the issue for popular point scoring by focussing on a compulsory 'work for the dole' scheme based on a facade of 'mutual obligation'. Where is the mutuality when government reduces expenditure on labour market programs (\$1.8 billion in the 1996-97 federal Budget) such that only 1 in 4 unemployed people now have access to intensive assistance at any point in time?

We need a sea change in this approach to national policy. Australians need leadership which does not seek to divide and conquer but seeks unity and cohesion. Divisions between employed and unemployed people, social security recipients and other 'taxpayers' ought to be lessened, not widened.

To do this, our leaders must honestly face up to the problems confronting Australians who are on low incomes or are disadvantaged and build consensus and conviction around solutions which we can pursue with commitment, as a nation.

## **A sensible policy on cost required**

*From page 3*

the rental impacts of urban consolidation and the growing prevalence of market based asset management policies of State Government departments and local government.

The end result is that many community organisations, particularly, though not exclusively small to medium sized ones, are struggling to meet such increased costs.

Typically, these organisations do not receive a significant amount of philanthropic funds, nor do they operate revenue generating activities which can deliver additional assistance to their core community services. Introducing user charges to meet shortfalls is an unacceptable option, as is, reducing the level or quality of service.

In both these areas of insurance premium and rental costs, the NSW Government must develop effective policies to deal with the increasing fiscal problems faced by community organisations.

Such policies must include consideration of the provision of additional funding to meet cost increases largely outside the control of community organisations.

In this continuing era of microeconomic reform, the NSW Government and local governments could well look at developing, in partnership with the community sector, a viable and fair community service obligations policy which genuinely addresses cost pressures on community organisations resulting from efficiency and competition reforms.

# **Aged care: the user-pays bandwagon rolls on**

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by Gary Moore

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The NSW Aged Care Alliance, which represents all peak and major non-profit providers and consumer groups in the aged care field in NSW, remains gravely concerned about many aspects of the proposal to increase nursing home and hostel residents' fees by the end of March 1998, as well as being opposed to its method of implementation.

At its February meeting, the following issues were raised by Alliance members:

- there will be an unacceptable negative impact on many older people who will find it difficult, if not impossible, to meet increased levels of residents' fees from the end of March. This financial impact will also further burden low-income families who, in many cases, will have to meet the fee increases;
- there will be resentment from new residents who will perceive that existing residents, who do not have to pay these increased fees, are being favourably treated;
- there remains significant confusion in the broader community and in the aged-care industry about the application, assessment and impacts of the proposed end of March changes. This includes providers not being able to identify the fees for residents who are not full pensioners before their entry. Government efforts to provide clear, accurate and timely information remain highly inadequate;
- it is now painfully clear that funds for significant facility upgrading by aged-care providers, which were to be generated through the variety of new and increased user charges, will be woefully inadequate for this purpose;
- there are already staffing cuts occurring in parts of the aged-care

industry, which will increase as occupancy rates of nursing homes are further eroded through increased fees. There will be an unacceptable loss of jobs and skills from the industry;

- greater demands will be placed on public hospitals (especially in rural areas), community care providers and families with no commensurate increase in funding assistance or support.

The NSW Aged Care Alliance believes that the seriousness of these matters justifies the Commonwealth Government deferring the proposed end of March changes to residents fees. In the short term, the Alliance also believes that a small portion of the significant Budget surplus which the Treasurer, the Hon Peter Costello, suggests is available in 1998/99, should be applied to maintaining the quality and viability of nursing home and hostel care, particularly for low-income older people.

In the medium term, the NSW Aged Care Alliance is calling on the Howard Government to conduct a thorough examination of aged-care financing, especially in the environment of national taxation reform, with all options, including an aged- or community-care levy, being placed on the discussion table.

# A NSW Children's Commission — coming to grips with the issues

by Linda Frow

**Following the release of the Wood Royal Commission report in August last year and the Premier's announcement of support for a Children's Commissioner, NCOSS convened a working party to develop some ideas around a Children's Commission.**

It produced a brief paper outlining some basic roles and functions for such a commission and a tentative model outlining what it might look like and how it would fit together with existing complaints mechanisms. It also asked for extended consultation and proposed that the Government produce a Green Paper setting out some options.

We now have the Green Paper, released on December 23 last year, and a number of organisations, including NCOSS by way of FONGA, are actively promoting discussion and debate about the complex issues that need to be covered and responded to. On January 29, about 40 people attended a meeting at NCOSS to further develop the ideas contained in the first working party

paper in light of the Green Paper.

There was some lively discussion and while agreement was reached in principle on a range of things, such as the role of the commission and a desire to retain the Community Services Commission as the complaints body, some of the more difficult issues, such as how a commission should be structured; how to ensure participation by children and young people in the system; how not to create just another bureaucracy; how to give the commission some real authority; and how to monitor the education system, are proving much more difficult to resolve. Concern was expressed that the Green Paper does not deal with many of these issues.

A small FONGA working group met on February 6 to try to progress a response to the Green Paper from FONGA. The group attempted to refocus attention on children — what would they want from a Children's Commission; how would they access it; the need for a particular focus on indigenous children; and also on children with a disability and those from a non-English speaking

background; and the need for grassroots advocacy as well as systemic advocacy.

While much of this discussion posed more problems than it solved, it was agreed that a new model would be attempted to describe a system that was more child-friendly while meeting the principles agreed to by FONGA. This will be discussed at the next FONGA meeting on 6 March.

Some very useful input has been received from organisations not directly involved in the working party (e.g. a proposal that there needs to be ensured representation for Aboriginal women and their children, perhaps through a designated position for a Deputy Commissioner) and we are certainly open to any suggestions that may assist in developing a sector position.

If you would like to contribute to the working party or have an idea / ideas you would like considered, please contact Linda Frow by mid-March, at NCOSS on (02) 9211 2599 ext 111.

## Migrants waiting for income support need your help

**E**nclosed with this edition of *NCOSS News* you should find a copy of the two-year waiting period campaign kit 'Long Wait — Short Sight'.

This campaign is being coordinated by migrant services organisations, ACOSS and the Welfare Rights Centre. It aims to demonstrate the devastating impact being witnessed as a result of denying income support to new migrants for two-year and specifically to get Special Benefit (the 'safety net' payment) removed from the legislation.

The campaign needs your

urgent support during the first two weeks of March. The Australian Democrats have made a commitment to attaching an amendment to one of the Social Security bills, to have Special Benefit removed from the legislation. This will be debated over the March Federal parliamentary sitting. Your letters in support of this action (see the campaign kit for pro-forma letters) are crucial. Letters should be forwarded to the Prime Minister, Minister for Social Security, Minister for Immigration, Leader of the Opposition (and relevant

Shadow Ministers), Senator Harradine, the Democrats and the Greens.

In the long term, campaign work needs to continue to address other aspects of the legislation. The kit also has suggestions for this ongoing campaign work: this needs to happen particularly at the local level — both in regard to community education and in the lead up to the next Federal election.

If you need further copies of the campaign kit, contact the Welfare Rights Centre on (02) 9211 5300.



### Staff Changes

NCOSS has farewelled Phil Griffiths, publications officer, who has left to study fulltime. We wish him well with the book-work.

Our new publications officer is Justine O'Leary, who has most recently been working in London and previously with the Community Services Commission.

### Conferences

The next month sees two NCOSS conferences — Managing for Communities on 27 March at the Carlton Crest Hotel in Sydney; and Developing Partnerships on 1 April at the Furama Hotel, Sydney. Check the listing inside the back cover for further details.

Planning is underway for the major NCOSS conference on 30-31 July and we have a draft program together at this stage. If you are interested in presenting a paper, please contact Kirsten Forrester at NCOSS.

### SACS Award

The NSW SACS Award is under negotiation and a number of major changes are proposed in the draft document. Contact either the ASU or your employer body for further information.

### Jobs on line

"Webjobs" the community sector employment listing hosted on the NCOSS internet site has had a successful trial period. We have carried around 30 positions over the past couple of months and look forward to expanding the site. You can find the site at [www.ncoss.org.au/jobs.html](http://www.ncoss.org.au/jobs.html). From 1 March advertisers will now be charged a small fee to cover costs, but the service is of course freely available to job seekers. Contact Justine O'Leary on ext 115 or by email <[justine@ncoss.org.au](mailto:justine@ncoss.org.au)> for advertising terms and conditions.

# Taskforce to look at DOCS' problems

by Gary Moore

The Minister for Community Services, Faye Lo Po', announced, on 29 January 1998, the formation of a high-powered advisory group to assist and guide the Government's program to tackle chronic problems in the Department of Community Services (DOCS).

The Taskforce consists of:

**Roger West** (Community Services Commissioner); **Judy Cashmore** (Child Protection Council); **Gary Moore** (Community Welfare Advisory Council); **Vivi Germanos-Koutsanadis** (Disability Council of NSW); **Maurie O'Sullivan** (Public Service Association); **Michael Williamson** (Health Research Employees Association); **Carmel Niland** (Working Chair); **Sue Chapman** (DOCS Deputy Director General); **Helen Bauer** (DOCS Director General and Executive Chair).

There are also two taskforce positions, held by **Leanne Booth** and **Leonie Moore**, which are for DOCS frontline staff in child protection and disability services.

The taskforce has been asked, as a matter of priority, to look at workload issues, unallocated cases, recruitment, training and supervision needs, staff turnover and whether the role of district officers and other frontline staff needs to be redesigned.

The taskforce will also examine recommendations relevant to improving the department's operations. It has been asked to look more generally at how to improve DOCS performance and culture.

The taskforce met for the first time on 9 February 1998 and will meet fortnightly at first, then monthly from May. The following statement was made by taskforce members after the first meeting. Meetings will be conducted as follows:

- all documents to be public unless the taskforce determines otherwise;
- if any member feels that a document should be confidential in the first instance, it will be tabled at the meeting for the taskforce to make a determination;

- membership of the taskforce is personal to the member, there will be no delegates or alternates unless the Minister determines otherwise;
- taskforce members will attend the meetings in their entirety, as far as possible;
- decisions will be on a consensus basis unless the taskforce determines otherwise. If consensus can't be reached, majority and minority reports may be made to the Minister;
- discussion at the Taskforce meetings will be 'off the record' until the members determine which issues are 'for the record';
- topics listed for discussion by members should include an indication of the outcome desired;
- a record of outcomes will be maintained, rather than detailed minutes, but where divergent views are expressed, these views will be recorded;
- the Director-General of the Department of Community Services will progressively indicate her response to advice from the taskforce including reasons if she has not adopted particular recommendations.

There are many major and controversial issues which the taskforce will tackle and which many parts of the NSW community sector have strong views about. As a community sector member of this taskforce, Gary Moore, the NCOSS Director, would appreciate comments and suggestions from any NCOSS member as the work of the taskforce progresses. Reports of taskforce meetings will be published regularly in *NCOSS News*.

# Migrant SAAP services in crisis

by Kate Lee

**Non-English Speaking Housing (NESH) Women's Scheme Inc. is facing closing its doors from April until the next funding round begins in July 1998.**

NESH is based in Fairfield in South Western Sydney and is the only supported accommodation service specifically for migrant and refugee women and their children in NSW.

It appears that during recent years, NESH has been subject to State and Federal policy changes aimed at migrants and refugees. These policy changes have impacted negatively on the current crisis. For example:

- NESH was poorly funded from the outset, a minimum of \$70,000 difference compared to other medium-term women's schemes;
- NESH received free on-site interpreter services through the Ethnic Affairs Commission (EAC) until policy changes in July 1996. From July 1996 to August 1997, it received only one free on-site service per month and from August 1997 all free services were cut. NESH requires a minimum of eight on-site interpreter services per week and now has to pay \$114 per 2-hour interpreter session to the EAC;
- NESH, like many other SAAP services, relies on rental income from clients to help operate the service. Policies such as the two-year waiting period for migrants to receive income support and the tightening of income support provisions for women subject to domestic violence who have not yet applied for permanent residency, have reduced the capacity of NESH to collect rent. If migrant women subject to these provisions have no income support, then NESH can't get any rental income from them. NESH has witnessed a decreasing rental component in its income from \$2,383 to \$1,967 per house per

year (a total of \$4,576 less per year in rental income);

- the Federal Government's re-focus of migrant support services towards assisting refugees has resulted in increased referrals to NESH of refugees with torture and trauma histories which require intensive support.

There is a need for long overdue recognition of the difficulties facing migrant and refugees using SAAP services and of the difficulties for SAAP service providers in delivering a service to them.

Interpreter services are essential but costly and cross-cultural issues make for real barriers in communication between workers and clients. Torture and trauma issues for refugees are markedly under-recognised in relation to the extra support and resources needed.

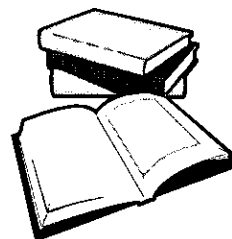
There remain large differences in funding allocation between SAAP services, which can be attributed to the history of submission-based funding. Situations where there is a \$70,000 gap, such as in the case of NESH, is an intolerable situation which has little justification.

SAAP has had no growth funding during the past four years which has exacerbated the situation, however this does not address either initial discrepancies in funding or changes in government policy impacting on service delivery.

NCOSS has written to the Minister for Community Services outlining these issues and has called on her to recognise the impact of recent policy changes which have disadvantaged migrants and refugees and fund NESH accordingly.

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from the



### Recent important releases

#### **NCOSS Submission to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee inquiry into the provision of public dental services**

Written by health policy officer Ros Bragg, this submission highlights the deleterious effects of the abolition of the Commonwealth Dental Health Program on disadvantaged people.

#### **Who cares? Protecting people in residential care**

A report on the recruitment, screening and appointment practices of the Departments of Community Services and Juvenile Justice, and funded non-government organisations dealing with children and state wards. Published by the Community Services Commission in 1996.

#### **Retention of Low Cost Housing. Options for State and Local Governments**

Prepared by Dr Gary Cox and Stacy Meirs of the E3 Group. The purpose of this discussion paper is to provide Shelter NSW with details of mechanisms to retain and promote affordable housing in the Sydney private rental market. Published by Shelter NSW Co-op. 1998

#### **States, Markets, Communities: Remapping the Boundaries**

This is two volumes of papers from the Social Policy Research Centre conference of last year. Published by SPRC.

For further details contact NCOSS Librarian, Bill Pope, tel (02) 9211 2599 ext 103, fx (02) 9281 1968, email <billpope@ncoss.org.au>

# Proposals to improve the performance of DOCS

**On Wednesday 4 February 1998, NCOSS convened a delegation from the Peak Community Agencies and Trade Unions Summit on the Department of Community Services (DOCS), which held meetings with Community Services Minister Faye Lo Po' and Shadow Minister, Patricia Forsythe.**

Before the meetings, both the Minister and the Shadow Minister had received the Statement of Issues and Actions which came from the summit. These are reproduced in this article.

The meetings were characterised by frank discussions about some of the key policy, practice and resources issues facing the community services system in NSW.

Both politicians were asked, and agreed to, provide a detailed response to the 19 proposed actions by early April 1998.

NCOSS and all summit participants eagerly await their replies. We will closely assess what the Government and the Opposition propose to do, in relation to our agenda of short- and longer-term actions to dramatically improve the community services system in this State.

## Issues

A very broad range of issues, several of which are interrelated, were identified. Key issues include:

- the level of available resources do not meet the increasing level and complexity of client demand, across most parts of the community services system. There remains a lack of recognition of this fundamental issue, and a persistence in believing that "still more can be done with the same or less";
- successive State Governments have failed to acknowledge, and

plan for, increasing socio-economic disadvantage, which has arisen from global and domestic economic reforms, in the past decade. DOCS has become an ill-equipped 'provider of last resort'. There is a lack of real social policy vision;

- an effective community services system must become a whole-of-Government concern and must be given far greater government priority;
- there has been, and remains, highly damaging treatment of children, young people, families and people with disabilities by the department. In some cases, this can lead to a whole-of-lifetime in care;
- programs and services are still not designed with the real needs of families, children, young people, people with disabilities, Aboriginal and non-English speaking background clients as the starting point. There is an urgent need for much better consultation with clients and the community. Many clients remain afraid of using departmental services and there continues to be a high level of inappropriate client referrals between the department and other human services providers;
- poor staff morale, particularly at local departmental office level, is reinforced by a multitude of factors, including a lack of quality supervision and appropriate support, a lack of relevant skills, a culture of blame and cover up, poor communication practices, unacceptable workloads and an increasing casualisation of work. There is no culture of celebrating successful practices and learning from mistakes, nor balancing expectations of improved performance with additional support, training and resources;
- implementing sound policies and appropriate practices is being hampered by several factors including the recruitment of managers with little community services background, an emphasis on generic skills, and the loss of organisational memory through a significant number of staff departures;
- there continues to be minimum integration between the range of government human services departments (health, community services, juvenile justice, housing, education and training, ageing and disability etc) in tackling the needs of DOCS clients and broader community needs. There remains little genuine attention to prevention;
- it is, at best, questionable, whether the current internal departmental structure delivers effectively for each of the department's key client groups. Internal budget transparency also remains a major problem. Children's services, as distinct from child protection crisis services, are not viewed as key preventative programs and the department's regulatory role is being marginalised, while family support and substitute care services are severely underresourced. There is a strong sense that a greater and specific focus must be placed on each departmental area of responsibility such as disability and children and community development;
- Government continues to give indications of not supporting the role and work of the Community Services Commission. An effective, independent watchdog must be maintained; and
- there is a lack of protection and support for internal DOCS whistleblowers. Although the rhetoric is about improved service

delivery and supporting frontline workers, senior management is still not listening to, or incorporating the ideas of staff into the essential changes required in the department.

## Actions

Following the discussion of issues, participants at the meeting suggested several proposals aimed at dramatically improving the performance of the department and the community services system. They are:

1. in the short term, the Government should adopt the package of additional and new programs for the Department of Community Services, contained in the NCOSS 1998/99 preBudget submission;
2. an independent inquiry should be established to assist the department to tackle the major changes required to rebuild its programs and services and its public credibility. Such an inquiry should be managed by a body with appropriate skill and focus, such as the Community Services Commission. A community services industry advisory panel, including provider, consumer and trade union representatives, could be established to advise on the terms of reference and progress of such an inquiry. Potential areas for the inquiry include:
  - analysing the true level of need for DOCS services and establishing benchmarks for appropriate levels of services;
  - recommending an effective service accreditation and human resource strategy for departmental and non-government community services; and
  - recommending the most appropriate departmental/ portfolio structure for delivering programs and services to DOCS clients;
3. a service charter for the department should be developed, with assistance from community sector, consumer and trade union representatives, and progress monitored against its benchmarks;
4. an effective whistleblowers protection program should be established;
5. appropriate sections of departmental CEO and senior management performance agreements dealing with objectives, specific target work priorities and measurement of progress should be publicly available;
6. the internal Child Deaths Committee should be abolished with deaths of children, people with disabilities and other people in care being subject to external review;
7. proposed reforms to the Children Care and Protection Act which confirm children's rights, promote quality service provision, clearly delineate advocacy, protection and prevention roles of government and non-government agencies should be implemented by the NSW Government;
8. there should be a full-cost benefit analysis, possibly through the above mentioned independent inquiry, of the impacts of shifting the care and protection system's focus to prevention and early intervention. Such an analysis should also identify the cost of services lost from the community services system during the past 10 years;
9. demonstrated skills and experience in community/human services delivery/management should become an essential requirement for management recruitment. A greater emphasis on professional skills and experience should be given to all casework departmental positions;
10. a reference/advisory mechanism for broad community/stakeholder input at the top level of the department should be established;
11. there should be a clear and enforceable disciplinary code within the department. A coherent performance management program should be implemented with additional resources to meet workload demands, skills needs and management support functions;
12. departmental financial management and accountability must be upgraded with transparent budgets for all programs which provide clear indications of target outcomes of expenditure for each major population group, client type and geographic area which the department services;
13. a consistent and high quality set of NGO funding policies and practices should be negotiated with community sector representatives. Such policies should emphasise partnership and co-operation in community services provision in NSW;
14. in conjunction with the Ageing and Disability Department, the full cost of devolution of disability services should be assessed;
15. there should be specific research, possibly through the above mentioned independent inquiry, into why the number of child abuse and neglect notifications continue to rise at an alarming annual rate;
16. an access and equity strategy, focusing on people from non-English speaking backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, should be urgently finalised. The strategy should set genuine benchmarks for the level and types of services to be provided or funded and formalise agreed consultative processes with representatives of these client groups;
17. The NSW Government should develop an unequivocal long-term progressive vision for the objectives and performance of the community services system in the State. This should include a forward commitment of significant new and better allocated resources;
18. in the interests of improving the living standards of all DOCS clients, the Carr Government and the Collins Opposition should adopt a bi-partisan approach to rebuilding the department and improving the NSW community services system.



# Where is health money going?

by Ross Bragg

**NCOSS is concerned about the lack of publicly available information about the distribution of Government funding within the health services of NSW.**

The distribution of resources between different types of services is a major issue. The community requires a mix of services which include acute care, early stage care, prevention and health promotion, and it also requires services which are specifically designed to meet the needs of vulnerable groups.

There are indications that resources are being increasingly skewed towards provision of acute care services and that other types of services are losing resources. There are also concerns that services for vulnerable groups are at risk. Information on resource allocations is critical to accurately identifying these trends and developing an appropriate response.

Adequate public information on the distribution of resources within the health system is particularly important in the context of increased pressure on health resources. As in most parts of the world, NSW is experiencing growing demand on health services at a time of tight budgets. Health services are highly politicised and there is heavy media coverage of shortfalls in the acute system such as hospital waiting lists and delays in Accident and Emergency.

Adequate public information is also important when there are moves to greater flexibility in allocation of funds. This is happening at a Commonwealth-State level through the broadbanding of Specific Purpose Payments (SPPs) and at State-Area Health Service level through devolution of decision making.

## 1. State budget papers

NCOSS is concerned that the State budget papers do not correctly explain proposed expenditure and

are not particularly useful in indicating the distribution of resources between different types of services.

It has been NCOSS experience that the budget papers are largely irrelevant to the financial allocations which are occurring within the health bureaucracy. Following the last budget, NCOSS contacted staff within the Health Department to clarify budget information. It was found that many staff were unaware of the official budget which related to their subject area and could not explain increases or decreases. They were, however, well aware of the financial allocations occurring within the department, and these had seemingly no relationship to the official budget.

NCOSS queried one line item in the last budget which indicated a \$3 million increase in spending on NGOs. While a formal response has listed a number of initiatives to be undertaken with these funds, informal contact with the department has indicated that the line item is essentially incorrect and there has not been a \$3 million increase in funds allocated for this purpose.

NCOSS is also concerned at the 'program areas' used to structure the health budget. In the 1995-6 budget, these were changed and reduced in number. The new list provides more detail about hospital services, but in all other respects, the present program areas provide information in a more aggregated form than the previous listing, and therefore provide information which is significantly less useful.

The current program areas do not permit NCOSS to find answers to key questions such as the division of resources between acute care and early stage care/prevention/health promotion services. Similarly, NCOSS is unable to determine from the present program areas the amount spent on a range of groups with special needs. Only mental health services and Aboriginal Health

Services are separately listed.

NCOSS recommends that there be greater disaggregated information provided in the budget papers to indicate the distribution of resources between different types of services.

## 2. Area Health Service annual reports

The sole requirement for public reporting from rural and area health services is their annual report. Unfortunately, these documents contain little information which is useful to health consumers and community organisations who have an interest in distribution of resources among the different types of services.

The annual reports provide financial information aggregated across the entire health service. While each report provides a breakdown of funds received according to the program areas listed in the State budget papers, the reports appear not to provide a breakdown of expenditure on this basis.

Several reports list 'actual expenditure' against program areas, however the heading of those tables consistently refer to 'planned and actual allocations received'. This information is considered of such little value that several reports listed the program areas by number only, giving readers no hint of their meaning.

This comprehensive aggregation of financial information means that it is not possible to determine the amount of funding which has been allocated to particular types of services. Even the unsatisfactory breakdown of resources provided in the State budget papers is not available.

This is of enormous concern to NCOSS as anecdotal information indicates that resources are being moved from early stage care/prevention/health promotion to support the hospital system. Similarly, NCOSS has been told a



number of anecdotes about Health Services spending money earmarked for a marginalised group on mainstream services, usually hospital services. NCOSS is unable to gain access to information which can prove or disprove these allegations.

NCOSS recommends that each area health service reports on spending against State budget "program areas" and also provides greater disaggregated information to indicate the distribution of resources between different types of services.

Each health service reports to the Department of Health and the Minister against its performance agreement and does so on an annual basis. The agreements and the reports are not publicly available. NCOSS recommends that performance agreements and area health service reporting against them be made public.

### **3. Funds earmarked for particular purposes**

The Health Department earmarks funds for particular purposes either through formal programs or less formally identified pools of funds.

In many cases, these programs or pools of funds were created because of failures in service provision to particular groups of disadvantaged people. There is a real fear that some of the services funded by these program or pools of funds may be lost if the earmarked funds ceased to be provided. Many of the programs exist because of Commonwealth-State agreements or Commonwealth Specific Purpose Payments.

Publicly available information on funding allocations to, and expenditure against, these programs and pools of funds at State level is limited. There is no formal listing of these programs or pools in the State budget, with the exception of mental health and services for Aboriginal people.

Of greater concern is the lack of information on what is happening

within area health services. NCOSS has received reports of funds earmarked for special purposes being spent for purposes which are at best marginally relevant to the specified purpose, or being diverted to other services, usually hospitals.

Public reporting of allocation and expenditure of earmarked funds is particularly important in the context of broadbanding of Specific Purpose Payments and devolution of decision making to area health services.

NCOSS recommends that NSW Health, in consultation with consumer and community groups, identify a list of earmarked funds and provide effective public reporting on allocation and expenditure at State and area health service level. This could be done in a document accompanying the State budget papers.

*This article is a summary of a longer paper. If you would like a copy or if you would like further information, please contact Ros Bragg at NCOSS on (02) 9211 2599 ext 116.*

## **Health criminal checks**

**Since mid-1997, NCOSS and Health NGO peaks have been negotiating with NSW Health over policies on criminal checks on NGO staff.**

NGO peaks are currently drafting a circular which is appropriate to the sector which will form the basis of further discussions with the Health Department and Area Health Services. NCOSS and the other NGO peaks are advising their members to wait until the new circular is in place before complying.

NSW Health issued a circular about criminal checks in September last year as a response to the Wood Royal Commission findings on pedophilia. While the circular was introduced as a condition of funding for NGOs, there was no consultation with NGOs before the circular was finalised.

NCOSS supports the principle of probity checks on staff working with vulnerable people, however there are a number of problems with the policies and processes introduced by NSW Health. These include:

- **people covered by the circular** — NCOSS argues that it should be limited to people working in the

organisation, in whatever capacity, who have contact with vulnerable people or who have access to their records. It is not appropriate to undertake criminal records checks on people who do not have contact with vulnerable people or their records, such as after hours cleaners.

- **NGO determines who is or is not employed** — NCOSS argued that the decision about whether or not a person with a criminal record is employed by an NGO is a decision for the NGO to make as NGOs are self-managing organisations.
- **effective privacy protection of criminal records information** — NCOSS argues that information on criminal records of staff should be held by the NGO and the Staff Records Management Unit in NSW Health. The information should not be made available to Area Health Services which administer NGOs as a matter of course. Negotiations are continuing with NSW Health on access to this information in some circumstances.

- **cost** — At present there is no charge levied for criminal records checks, however NSW Health is considering whether or not to do so. NCOSS has strongly argued that any costs should be borne by government. This is of particular importance to NGOs with a large volunteer base as each volunteer who works with clients would need to be checked.

Moves are underway towards a whole-of-government policy on criminal checks following from the Wood Royal Commission. NSW Health processes are occurring outside this process and appear to be much wider in scope and impact. In particular, the NSW Health checks are conducted not only for sex or violence offences, but for offences against property such as fraud and misappropriation. They are also not limited to people working with vulnerable people, such as children or frail aged, but to people working with any client of the health system.

*For further information, please contact Ros Bragg on (02) 9211 2599 ext 116.*

# SAAP evaluation rushed

**NCOSS is concerned about the process undertaken by the Department of Community Services over the current NSW Evaluation of SAAP.**

Representatives at a SAAP Forum meeting held before the Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) meeting, were clearly frustrated at the lack of time to adequately respond to the evaluation — both in terms of the lengthy survey they are required to complete and the short notice for participation in focus groups.

This is despite that department's knowledge that this evaluation process comes around every three years. Many services also voiced that the absence of focus groups held in rural areas is a shortcoming in the evaluation methodology. There was also concern that the survey did not allow for the specific differences between SAAP services to be adequately recorded and that the specific needs of children have not been included.

MAC members agreed to propose changes to the department regarding the time frame of the evaluation and the structure of the methodology.

NCOSS is aware that the previous SAAP evaluation failed to engage services, partly because the final report did not adequately reflect the focus group feedback and therefore did not instil any sense of ownership among many SAAP services.

The current evaluation needs to avoid a repeat of this. Unfortunately, the consultative process so far does not bode well for this, however NCOSS remains hopeful that the final report reflects the feedback of SAAP service providers.

# New tables may alter allowances

by Christine Regan

**New Disability Tables will be introduced by the Federal Government in July 1998 which may have an impact upon the eligibility of families to receive the Child Disability Allowance.**

In preparation for the changes, parents of children with disabilities now have until June 30 to reapply for the Child Disability Allowance. The allowance is \$75 per fortnight to assist families with the extra costs involved in caring for a child with disabilities.

There is concern that four months

notice is not enough time for parents to complete forms and have specialists verify their child's eligibility. Further, there is a fear that the introduction of the tables will drastically reduce the number of families eligible for the allowance as a government cost-cutting measure.

The Federal Budget Papers stated that existing Child Disability Allowance customers, who are qualified at 30 June 1998, will continue to receive Child Disability Allowance until 30 June 2003, without the need for further medical reviews.

# Affordable housing more accessible

Changes to the State's planning policy will make local, small-scale, affordable accommodation more accessible to older people and people with disabilities, according to Urban Affairs and Planning Minister, Craig Knowles.

Changes to the State Environmental Planning Policy No. 5 (SEPP 5) have been implemented after studies have shown that between 4 and 7 per cent of people over 55 require fully supported care.

"From this month, retirement villages and hostels will be able to open with the assurance that support services for tenants are accessible in the immediate vicinity," said Mr Knowles.

"New group homes will be approved only if they are near shops, banks and other commercial services as well as health and community services, recreational facilities and transport.

The changes to the policy will encourage smaller, neighbourhood developments, close to services and transport and which are less expensive for retirees and people

with disabilities."

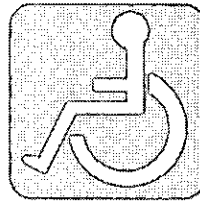
While NCOSS welcomes the changes towards smaller, more affordable housing for older people and people with disabilities, there are several concerns which could dilute the intended advantages.

It seems the changes assume that all areas in NSW have adequate and accessible community infrastructure to support older people and people with disabilities. Areas needing accommodation for older people and people with disabilities, which do not have accessible community infrastructure, could be disadvantaged in approvals for new housing developments. Most notably these would include rural and outlying metropolitan areas.

SEPP 5 has, in the past, required developers to make a monetary contribution towards the cost of necessary community facilities and services. If these contributions are no longer required and the infrastructure is inadequate, will older people be forced to move from their familiar areas to seek accessible supported housing?

# Disability groups appalled at CSDA offer

by Christine Regan



**The first Commonwealth State Disability Agreement (CSDA) expired in May 97 and the Federal Minister, Warwick Smith, has since been negotiating the CSDA Mark II with State Ministers.**

Initially, State Ministers found the Federal offer of funding inadequate to meet the disability needs identified within the community. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimates that an additional \$231 million is required to meet existing and unmet need for people with disabilities. The Commonwealth's third offer of \$55 million over four years is currently on the table.

Disability organisations in NSW and other States are angered and appalled at the offer which accompanies a Commonwealth commitment to discuss unmet need over the next 12 months. In the light of the inadequate funding offer, mainland States are so far refusing to sign the CSDA II, until better funding deals can be secured. The States are seeking a multilateral agreement to embody the initial principles and objectives of the first CSDA.

The Australian Disability Safeguards Alliance reports that, unlike the first Commonwealth State Disability Agreement, the Mark II version has no provision to continue or maintain existing Commonwealth State Disability Services' Acts.

Previously, every State and Territory had to pass complementary legislation to the Commonwealth Disability Services Act before the Disability Agreement could be enacted. This formed the basis of a National Approach to disability services.

The Alliance says the CSDA Mark

II provides the National Disability Standards as the basis for any judgement of rights and/or quality without the inclusion of any enforcement mechanisms in the new Agreement. The Alliance fears that this will enable unregulated, for-profit operators to compete with community organisations.

## Stop press

Minister Warwick Smith has written to all service providers entreating them to put pressure on the NSW Government to sign the CSDA. The letter implies that NSW is the only State not complying with his wishes.

This is not the case, in fact, at the time of going to press it is believed that no mainland State had signed the agreement. Robyn Way, president of ACROD, believes that the agreement in its present form will in no way progress the needs of people with disabilities and their families. "We are only standing still."

She says that without a proper and effective strategy in place for people with disabilities, their already desperate and critical needs will worsen into the coming century.

John Jacobsen of CID, says that it is estimated that between 1996 and 2001 the number of people with severe disabilities will grow by 19 per cent and that the Commonwealth offer does not bear any relation to this growth. He feels that the Commonwealth has abrogated their leadership and has abandoned people with disabilities with this offer.

These and other organisations are advising their members to demonstrate the strength of community support for this issue.

# New look for DSS

The introduction of Department of Social Security (DSS) State Offices around Australia will hopefully lead to stronger social policy links with community sector organisations, specialist research centres, peak consumer bodies and other government agencies.

DSS is now concentrating its efforts in several key areas including:

- social policy analysis, development and advice; and
- the design and implementation of the best 'products' (social security services and payments) for customers in partnership with Centrelink.

The department has a role in many areas affecting the living standards of Australians and is looking to enhance its capacity to develop policy in the context of a broader social and economic perspective.

Each State will focus on ensuring that relevant state, regional and local perspectives inform policy development and review.

The NSW State Office is located at 477 Pitt Street, Sydney. The team is interested in hearing from groups who want to discuss social policy matters, or to obtain information about the department, its programs and corporate strategies.

The State Office is also a point of contact for DSS Direct, the renamed Staff and Community Budget Suggestion Scheme. This is a real way for individuals or groups to contribute to policy development and to receive feedback regarding suggestions.

Further information is available from, Elizabeth Connolly, Manager State Office team, phone (02) 9209 2730, fax (02) 9209 2799, internet <dssnsw@bigpond.com>

# Regional roundup

## Macarthur Region Community Forum

Following the Macarthur Area Assistance Scheme regional consultations this year, a group of the major Macarthur community services organisations participated in a meeting to discuss the concept of establishing a regional community service network around the Camden, Wollondilly, Campbelltown region. Members of similar networks from Illawarra and Fairfield told the story about how they were formed and the benefits that their regions have gained from a regional network.

Enthusiasm for the concept was substantial and a steering

committee was convened to develop the concept and gain support for the establishment of a forum in Macarthur.

Representatives on the steering committee are from Community Transport, Community Health, Macarthur Disabilities Centre, Family Support Campbelltown, HACC and MACROC.

They began putting out the Clearing House Bulletin in December 1997, outlining their aims and issues. Their contact is:

The Secretary, c/- Camden Council, PO Box 183, Camden 2570. Ph: 02 4647 4000 Fax: 02 4647 4100

## Northern Rivers Social Development Council

The North Coast is one of two regions in the state which is trialing a new approach to State Government service delivery in rural areas. The Government Access Centres [GAC] provide information on, and access to a range of State Government services. The Regional Co-ordination Program — North Coast Area has stated that over time the Access Centres will be expanding into referral and appointments for specialist advice by visiting agency officers, interview facilities and a desk and computer for these visiting staff, delivery of transactions and services for a range of agencies, and a monitoring service and advocacy for community needs.

Contact details for the two Northern Rivers GAC's are:

**Kyogle GAC**

Susan Eaton

02 6632 3034

**Macleay GAC**

Geoff Hill

02 6645 2049

## Western Sydney wins in Cabinet reshuffle

WSROC welcomed the appointment of Kim Yeadon as Minister Assisting the Premier for Western Sydney in the major State Cabinet reshuffle announced by the Premier. The reshuffle brought Transport and Roads back together and in the hands of yet another Minister from Western Sydney, Carl Scully, with Western Sydney Ministers Faye Lo Po taking responsibility for community services, ageing and disability; and Bob Debus becoming Tourism Minister.

### NSW Community Services and Health Industry Training Advisory Body

## REGIONAL INFORMATION FORUMS March-May 1998

### *Update on changes and reforms to vocational education and training*

Regional consultations are currently being planned for 20 locations throughout New South Wales. The focus of the forums will be on demonstrating professional development products for trainers and teachers, and raising awareness of changes and reforms. These forums should be attended by trainers, assessors, service managers and other interested parties in the community and health industry.



*"your chance to receive important  
information and provide input that  
could shape training in the community  
services and health industry"*

For more information or to register interest please contact

**Gillian Bonser (Projects Manager)**

**Carol Wood (Projects Administrator)**

**Telephone: 02 9319 1911**

**Facsimile: 02 9319 1613**

**Email: nswcsh@s054.aone.new.au**

# Sector snippets

## Continuing inaction over rural affairs

On 9 February 1998, NCOSS met with the Minister for Regional Development and Rural Affairs, Harry Woods to discuss issues facing disadvantaged people in rural NSW. One of the key issues raised by NCOSS was the Government's inaction over releasing the report of the Rural Communities Consultative Committee (RCCC), dated October 1997 and the failure to re-appoint the RCCC which had its last meeting in August 1997.

The Minister committed to announcing the RCCC's new appointments and terms of reference within a week of NCOSS' meeting with him. As of 2 March 1998 there was still no announcement.

The RCCC undertook a comprehensive public consultation process across rural NSW to prepare the report. It is wide-ranging in its recommendations (see February NCOSS News for list of key recommendations). The 1998/9 NCOSS preBudget submission contains many similar recommendations.

If the Government fails to release the report or, publicly respond to it, it would leave open to serious criticism, its willingness to listen to solutions posed by rural people as well as its commitment to improving the lives of disadvantaged people in rural NSW.

## Library open to DOCS staff

The Department of Community Services (DOCS) is implementing a recommendation from the Wood Royal Commission and the Walker Report to establish library facilities so staff have easy access to current information.

An agreement has been signed between DOCS and the State Library of NSW allowing DOCS

staff to utilise the library's extensive database facilities and receive a comprehensive summary of recently published journal articles, books, conference papers and videotapes.

"Our partnership with the State Library will give staff access to resources to enable them to stay abreast of current issues in child protection and disability services," said Sue Chapman, DOCS Deputy Director-General (Recovery and Change Management).

## Dementing illness workshop

Veterans' Affairs is conducting two-day workshop for those caring for a person with a dementing illness. The workshop is free and being held at four different locations. It will be in Collaroy on 26 and 27 March; in Chatswood on 31 March and 1 April; Parramatta on 2 and 3 April; and Hurleston Park on 6 and 7 April.

It will cover such topics as: experiences of caring, dementia behaviour, medication, managing activities of daily living, loss and grief and stress management.

Further information and registration details are available from Jo Campbell and Associates on (02) 6238 1288.

## Public rally

There will be a public rally on Friday 27 March 1998 at 12.30pm to save public and community housing. Massive funding cuts, damaging reform proposals and years of uncertainty have left public and community housing vulnerable.

Housing Ministers are meeting on 27 March in Sydney to decide the future for social housing — will it survive and grow or will it bleed to death?

You can join in the call to save social housing. More information is available from your Regional Tenant Group or Shelter NSW.

Central Sydney: 9297 4180;  
Western Sydney: 9676 5200; South  
West Sydney: 9821 1700; Western  
NSW: (02) 6361 3588, Shelter NSW:  
(02) 9267 5733.

## Gateways to opportunities

The report *Community-based initiatives: gateways to opportunities* is now available. The report provides an analysis of data emerging from the Action Research Project component of the Community Research Project. This project was initiated by the Commonwealth Department of Social Security because it was keen to examine community-based services' potential to enhance particular aspects of the living standards of people on low incomes.

The main themes of the report are: integrated service provision; living standards as a multi-dimensional concept; partnerships between opportunity; capacity and choice; participation in the formal labour market and socially useful activity; the concepts of civil society and social capital; and a complementary approach.

Copies of the report are available from the Community Research Project, phone Barry Smith on (02) 6244 6029 or Jeff Herbert on (02) 6244 5988.

## Sector snippets

IF YOU have something interesting to share, please contact Justine O'Leary

at NCOSS

tel 9211 2599, fax 9281 1968

email <justine@ncoss.org.au>

or write:

NCOSS, 66 Albion St  
Surry Hills NSW 2010

# Conferences and seminars

## SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE

Tuesday March 10, 12.30-2pm.

Dr Bob Birrell, Director Centre for Population and Urban Research Monash University. *Family structure and social polarisation.*

Tuesday 17 March, 12.30-2pm.

Professor Jeffrey Reitz, Department of Sociology and Centre for Industrial Relations, University of Toronto. *Warmth of the welcome: the social causes of economic success for immigrants in different nations and cities.*

Tuesday 24 March, 12.30-2pm.

Dr Ania Wilczynski. University of Sydney. *Myths, myopia and moral panics: child abuse and the media.*

Tuesday 31 March, 12.30-2pm.

Professor Tony Vinson, Uniya Jesuit Social Justice Centre. *Privacy, surveillance and disadvantage.*

Tuesday 7 April, 12.30-2pm.

Professor Peter Saunders, Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW. *Poverty as a constraint on choice: some exploratory results.*

Tuesday 21 April, 12.30-2pm.

Guyonne Kalb, Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW: *An Australian model for labour supply and welfare participation in two-adult households.*

Tuesday 28 April, 12.30-2pm.

Dr Jennifer Curtin, Research School of Social Sciences, ANU. *Comparative perspectives on union responses to the work-family mix.*

Seminars are held at the SPRC, 3rd floor of the Samuels Building, University of NSW (adjacent to gate 11, Botany Street, Randwick). To confirm details contact Merrin Thompson or Jenny Chalmers on (02) 9385 3833.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION AND DISABILITY SERVICES

### One-day workshops for Managing challenging behaviours

Wednesday, 18 March 9.30-3.30

John Edmondson Memorial Club, 185 George St, Liverpool

Thursday, 19 March 9.30-3.30

Chatswood RSL Club, 446 Victoria Ave, Chatswood

Friday 20 March 9.30-3.30

Parramatta Leagues Club, 15 O'Connell Street, Parramatta

Monday 23 March 9.30-3.30

Easterh Suburbs Leagues Club, 93-97 Spring Road, Bondi Junction

Tuesday 24 March 9.30-3.30

Riverwood Legion Club 32 Littleton St, Riverwood.

This workshop will provide individuals with a variety of options to prevent and/or reduce the possibility of the occurrence of challenging behaviours. It will also discuss how to be proactive in your approach instead of reactive, and how to empower the individual to be more responsible for their own behaviour. The techniques used can be transferred to many situations involving both children and adults exhibiting challenging behaviours. Cost is \$90 per person.

More information and registration details are available from: Special Education and Disability Services, 23 Bunburra St, Para Hills West, SA 5096, Ph: (08) 8258 4151 or mobile 0414 466 070.

## MANUFACTURING WORKERS UNION

### Jobs & Infrastructure conference:

Globalisation, the Asian crisis and the future of Australian industry  
March 16-17, Tom Mann Theatre, 136 Chalmers St, Surry Hills

The aim is to develop alternatives to globalisation and gather international research on what is happening and why. It is planned as an open forum to give as much feedback time as possible to trade union and community activists. Keynote speaker: Hans-Peter Martin, co-author *The Global Trap*. Details re content: A/Prof Peter Botsman, tel 4620 3778

## LG&SA

### Citizens not customers — a model for dynamic communities: Local government convention '98

March 16-17, Sheraton Sydney Airport Hotel, Mascot

A broad-based information forum.

Topics will include Building community relationships, Citizens not customers, Planning and community leadership, Keeping citizens informed, Building more dynamic local government, Best practice for dynamic communities, Legal and employment issues.

Details: tel 9242 4000, fx 9242 4111, email <lgsa@lgsa.org.au>, http://www.lgsa.org.au

## NCOSS

### Managing for Communities

March 27, Carlton Crest Hotel, Sydney

A conference on place management approaches to integrating social and economic development with a locational focus. Speakers to include Premier Bob Carr and the Director General of the Premier's Department, Dr Col Gellatly (tbc).

Details: Kirsten Forrester, tel 9211 2599 ext 110, fx 9281 1968, email <kirstenf@ncoss.org.au>

### Developing partnerships: the relationship between NGOs and NSW Health

1 April 1998, Furama Hotel, 28 Albion Street Surry Hills. 9.15am to 4.15pm

This seminar aims to bring together people from Area Health Services, the Health Department and NGOs to consider some of the more difficult questions about their partnership relationship. It will be valuable for NSW Health staff who have contact with NGO issues, and for staff and board members from NGOs across the State. NCOSS is keen to encourage participation from people from rural and remote areas and some resources are available to assist people. If you need assistance, please contact Ros Bragg at NCOSS, tel (02) 9211 2599 ext 116 or email at rosbragg@ncoss.org.au

#### **CARERS ASSOCIATION OF AUST**

##### **National Summit Conference: Health and Community Care in a Changing Era**

April 2-3, Rydges Hotel, Canberra  
Speakers include the Governor-General, Warwick Smith (Minister for Family Services), Ian Spicer (Chair, National Disability Council), Eva Cox, Jenny Macklin (Shadow Minister for Social Security and Aged Care).  
Details: tel 6285 3000, fx 6285 3001, email <office@con-sol.com>

#### **UWS**

##### **Social justice, social judgement: Questions of value in contemporary Australian society**

April 25-26, University of Western Sydney Hawkesbury, Blacktown campus

The victory of capitalism in the cold war, and increasing globalisation, are producing fundamental changes in the discourses and practices constituting the public sphere. Intolerance is rising and the welfare state is under threat. There is a pressing need to bring questions of value into the light. The questions we need to pose are far-reaching.

We invite papers from academics and others in the wider community working on questions of value, either in relation to social justice, or with regard to our ability to make judgements in many spheres of life.

Details: Anthony Uhlmann, tel 4570 1555, fx 4570 1819, email <a.uhlmann@uws.edu.au>

#### **AUST DEAFBLIND COUNCIL**

##### **Deafblindness Facing the Future**

May 1-2, Ibis Hotel, Melbourne  
For people with Deafblindness, their parents, families, professionals and other interested people.

Details: Annie Rose, tel (03) 9827 6733, fx (03) 9827 8960, website <http://internex.net.au/~dba/confer.htm>

#### **AUST ASSN GERONTOLOGY**

##### **AAG Rural Conference: Progressive policy — does it equal progressive care?**

May 2-3, Wagga Wagga

Conference will discuss contemporary issues concerning the care of older people. It will be of interest to carers, managers, educators, clinicians and policy makers. Subjects to be covered include User rights and responsibilities, empowerment and participation in age care — who are the stakeholders?, Education and research, Clinical perspective of standards, Impact of structural reform etc.

Details: tel 6922 6366, fx 6926 2503, email <lrwin@draget.com.au>; or tel 9523 11715, fx 9523 4026, email <abornma@s054.aone.net.au>

#### **WACOSS**

##### **1998 WACOSS Conference: Building community in a cut throat world**

May 19-20, Esplanade Hotel Fremantle

The competitive world — as represented in changing policy directions and funding and accountability mechanisms of government — is changing the ways we work with government the community and each other. We need to identify the key changes — the good, the bad and the ugly — and to find ways forward.

Details: tel (08) 9291 9306, fx (08) 9291 9978, email <petrconf@inet.net.au>

#### **ANZTSR**

##### **4th National Conference Australian and New Zealand Third Sector Research: Community, citizenship and enterprise culture**

June 17-19, Deakin University, Toorak campus, Melbourne

Conference will examine the impact of the enterprise culture on the non-profit sector of the economy.

Details: tel (03) 5227 2113, fx (03) 5227 2018, email <cchr@deakin.edu.au>

##### **Women's vision for 2020: Making it happen**

July 9-11, University of NSW.  
Workshop strands: women in politics and government, business, health, the media and the arts, education, the law, spirituality, women and multicultural issues, the family. Details: Susanne Rix, tel 011 571 576, fx 011 571 566.

#### **NCOSS**

##### **The inaugural NCOSS policy conference**

July 30-31, location to be advised.  
The conference aims to bring together the breadth of experience in the community services sector and topics for discussion will cover a wide range of current social policy issues. Papers and proposals welcome.  
Details: Kirsten Forrester, tel 9211 2599, ext 110, fx 9281 1968, email <kirstenf@ncoss.org.au>

#### **ACWA**

##### **The 1998 ACWA conference: Improving services FOR children, youth and families**

August 24-26, Sydney Airport Hilton

The premier national conference for the child, youth and family services sector. International speaker: Dr Larry K Brendtro, former president of the Starr Commonwealth, serving troubled children and families in Michigan and Ohio.

Details: Sharyn Low, tel 4572 3079, fx 4572 3972, email <sharyn.low@acwa.asn.au>

## **Conferences and seminars**

IF YOU have a conference to advertise, please contact Justine O'Leary at NCOSS tel 9211 2599, fax 9281 1968 email <justine@ncoss.org.au> or write to:

NCOSS, 66 Albion St  
Surry Hills NSW 2010

# Got a job to advertise?

Let everyone know by advertising your position on the NCOSS internet site.

Millions of Australians are now connected to the internet. Young people, students, administrative staff, managers, policy and advocacy workers — many have access to the net at home, work or uni.

All you need to do is either email us the details of your position, or post us a disk (unformatted text or MS Word). There is no limit on the length of your ad.

Unlike the daily papers, it won't appear for just one day — your ad will remain on our site until after the closing date for applications — all for just \$30!

You can send your job advertisement via email to <justine@ncoss.org.au> or post a disk to Webjobs at NCOSS, 66 Albion Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2010.

Terms and conditions are also available from Justine O'Leary, tel: (02) 9211 2599 ext 115.

# Need help monitoring your media?

NCOSS offers a weekly press clipping service which brings you articles from the daily papers relevant to the community sector — including news, opinion, letters and even cartoons.

We monitor the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Financial Review*, *Sunday Telegraph* and *Sun Herald* and the *Weekend Australian*.

It's great for busy people who need an overview of current affairs and useful for watching an issue over time.

We charge just \$120 for a six-month subscription to cover our costs. For more information (or to subscribe), contact Mutz at NCOSS, tel: (02) 9211 2599 ext 114, email <mutzh@ncoss.org.au>

**Visit our website: <http://www.ncoss.org.au>**

## NSW Child Protection State Conference

Date: 4-5 May 1998, Sydney, NSW

THE 3rd annual State Conference will feature renowned US keynote speaker, Dr James Garbarino, along with popular expert classes, paper and workshop presentations.

Abstracts (up to 250 words) due 12 February 1998. For further information, contact Ruth Newman at the NSW Child Protection Council on (02) 9286 7278, email nswcpc@world.net, or facsimile (02) 9286 7267.



**BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS**

*from rhetoric to reality*

NSW CHILD PROTECTION COUNCIL  
**STATE CONFERENCE**  
4-5 MAY 1998 SYDNEY

## New from NCOSS!



**Investing in our community: social and economic priorities for the 1998/99 State Budget**

JUST RELEASED!  
The 1998 NCOSS pre-Budget submission, prepared on behalf of the entire welfare and community sector.

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# NCOSS News

w/ncoss to  
Lobby Carr.

Published by the Council of Social Service of New South Wales

Volume 24, Number 8, September 1997

## Wood's blueprint needs money and great care

NCOSS has welcomed the breadth of the recommendations contained in the report of the Wood Royal Commission Paedophile Inquiry, released on 26 August.

The report proposes a massive overhaul of the management of the State's child protection system, with the establishment of a Children's Commission, further reform in the Department of Community Services and a new role for the Ombudsman's office.

Throughout the report, Commissioner Wood acknowledges the history of neglect and underfunding of the child protection system, as well as the huge level of demand being placed on family support, supported accommodation and substitute care services.

However, the creation of the Children's Commission will require significantly more funds than simply the reallocation of resources from the existing Child Protection Council and the Community Services Commission.

The report's support for a network of children's advocates (although a clearer definition of their role is required) and key changes to the 1987 Children's Care and Protection Act, is strongly supported.

The recognition of the inability of refuges and other accommodation services for vulnerable children and young people to cope effectively without increased government assistance is also welcomed, although the report should have recommended additional government assistance for family

### Sector says: focus on prevention



NCOSS President Annabel Senior and Penny Stewart from the Family Support Services Association at a Parliament House press conference to launch the major FONGA submission *Balancing prevention and protection in the best interests of children.*  
Details: p 7

support services.

On first reading, NCOSS is disappointed that the report does not:

- ❑ place enough emphasis on prevention and early intervention; nor
- ❑ seek to establish an independent service standards monitoring system for all agencies, government or non government, who work with children and young people.

NCOSS is also concerned at the impact on people with disabilities of the potential dismantling of the Community Services Commission and the confusion contained in the proposed purchaser/provider model for further restructuring the operations of DoCS.

It is critical that the Carr Government continue to respond to these

recommendations in a careful but determined manner as it has with its initial response. It is essential that urgent consideration be given to finding adequate resources to make the key reforms work.

NCOSS calls on the Premier and Ministers to ensure that prevention and protection are the cornerstones of the Government's response to the Wood report. In the best interests of children, we would also like to see the State Opposition, other parties and independents adopt a similar approach to these critical issues.

Premier replies on  
State Budget: p16



The Council of Social Service of New South Wales represents more than 7000 service delivery and consumer groups through its organisational membership.

For information about membership call Deborah Williams.

66 Albion Street  
Surry Hills NSW 2010  
Australia

Tel: (02) 9211 2599  
Fax: (02) 9281 1968

email: [info@ncoss.org.au](mailto:info@ncoss.org.au)



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Phil Griffiths

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Visit the NCOSS website at <http://www.ncoss.org.au/~newmail/>

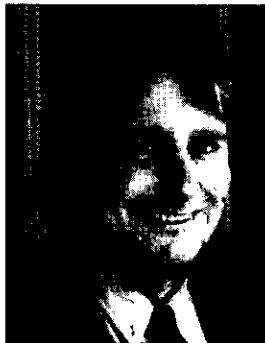
# Muzzling the watchdog

The recent public tensions between Community Services Minister Ron Dyer and Community Services Commissioner Roger West highlight some aspects of the complex environment in which the delivery of community services takes place.

The establishment of the Commission and the Community Services Appeals Tribunal remains a landmark initiative, designed to both provide some formalised redress to disadvantaged consumers with complaints about the quality of services and to give some guide to systemic reforms in government and non government practices which will lead to better quality services.

On the one hand, it is not surprising that the level of contestability between the Commission and the departments and agencies it focuses on should have arisen, given the poor practices revealed in various reports over the past two years, the increasing level of

By  
NCOSS  
Director  
Gary  
Moore



client demand for service and the higher levels of accountability for performance sought by the community, in general, of government and non government service providers.

On the other hand, it is disappointing that these systemic shortcomings have become the basis of personal focus, of slogans such as, "we're interested in services, not reviews", and talking up division between service providers and advocacy bodies.

The pace and degree of social and economic reform in the community

impacts savagely on the capacity of departments like Community Services and non government agencies to deliver adequate and effective services.

There is a delicate balance to be achieved which incorporates more resources and better practices before the results turn significantly around for clients.

The Community Services Commission has a critical job to play in helping to always highlight the practice reforms. The Department and non government agencies also have a critical role to play in delivering practice reforms to their services.

And the Minister, aided by the non government sector, has a fundamental role to play in obtaining the necessary resources required to also make a real difference.

It would be tragic to see those with a vested interest in derailing progressive reform, in promoting narrow self interest or with a disregard for the importance of vibrant and viable community services, succeed in this difficult environment.

## Losing the High Court bet

The recent High Court decision, which found that the NSW Government's tobacco franchise fees are invalid, has been interpreted by some as increasing the momentum for national taxation reform.

The States and Territories have potentially lost around \$5 billion in revenue through this decision, as it would be very likely that all existing State license fees on fuels, tobacco and alcohol would also be found invalid if challenged (which is likely unless the States withdraw them).

Although the Commonwealth Government has agreed to levy its own excises to replace the license fees, and therefore avoid a fiscal crisis for the

States, two key matters emerge.

The first is that following the dispute between the liquor retail industry and the Carr Government over prepaid licence fees, NSW appears to be at least \$60 million short in revenue.

The second is that the current Commonwealth bail out arrangements are short term, with these "new" excises ultimately being integrated with the existing Commonwealth excises and the States likely to pressure the Commonwealth Government to give them access of a more resilient Commonwealth tax base.

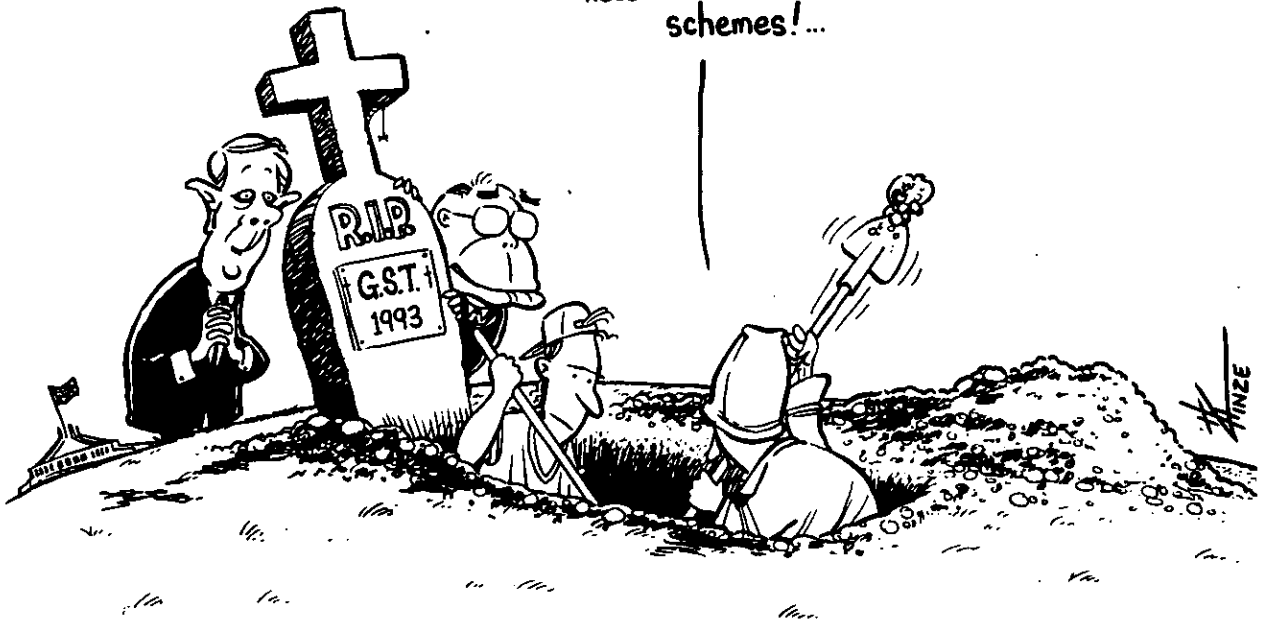
The NSW Government's Budget is already under revenue stress due to concessions over the introduction of

the bed tax and the expansion of poker machine taxes, and Commonwealth Government budget cuts. This "crushing" defeat in the High Court has further cut State revenues and exposed Government spending on health, housing, community services, aged services, disability services etc, to potential cuts.

What is immediately clear is that the Commonwealth Government should fully and immediately compensate NSW for revenue losses due to the High Court decision.

And the Carr Government should also immediately dismiss any thoughts about pruning expenditure on social programs.

...digging, digging, digging!  
...that's all we ever seem to do on  
these work-for-the-dole  
schemes!...



## News from Macquarie Street

### Free phone help for tenants

The Minister for Fair Trading, Faye Lo' Po, has launched a new statewide Tenants' Advice Line as part of the Government's Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Program (TAAP).

"The service offers free, confidential advice to tenants," she said. "It can help with rent increases, rent arrears, bond money, repairs, evictions and disputes with landlords."

The advice line operates right across the state through 18 community-based services, including Aboriginal services and an interpreter service for tenants from non English speaking backgrounds.

The toll free number for the Tenants' Advice Line is 1800 655 186.

### Research into ethnic gambling problems

A major research project into gambling in ethnic communities has

been launched by the Minister for Gaming and Racing, Richard Face.

"The project will target Vietnamese, Greek, Italian, Croatian, Macedonian, Korean, Chinese and Arabic speaking people," the Minister said.

"It will determine the availability of support services for problem gamblers and their families from these communities and whether the services provided are equitable."

The project will develop models for improved services for problem gamblers and their families and a community education campaign.

### Information on NSW Water Reforms

People who are interested in finding out more about the Government's Water Reform package can phone 1800 638 996 toll free, 10am to 8pm, seven days a week, to register for information to be mailed out to them.

### Federal funds cut to Migrant women's organisations

NSW Minister for Women, Faye Lo' Po, has condemned Federal Government cuts which have seen funding slashed for the only national peak migrant women's organisation.

The Association of Non-English Speaking Background Women of Australia, ANESBWA lost funding for its national coordinator who represented migrant and refugee women's views to government.

This is the third setback for ANESBWA this year, following cuts from the Office of Status of Women and the former Office of Multi-cultural Affairs.

The NSW peak body, Immigrant Women's Speakout also lost a position that had been crucial in reaching out to migrant women in NSW rural areas and to those belonging to small groups such as the Kurdish and Somali communities.



# ACOSS and tax reform

**To some people, the idea that ACOSS should take a leading role in the push for tax reform seems surprising.**

Yet our taxation system has a major impact on the generation of wealth and distribution of income in our community, and is therefore of central concern to all working for a more just and economically sustainable society.

Taxation is an investment by Australians in Australia. At its best, a taxation system provides essential services and benefits, maintains a socially cohesive and fair society, and helps create the conditions for responsible economic growth and development.

It is for this reason that ACOSS has a long history of activism in tax reform. We participated in the 1985 Tax Summit which discussed (and rejected) the then-Treasurer Paul Keating's proposal for a consumption tax on all goods and most services. Although a number of valuable changes were made at that time, many of the fundamental problems were left untackled.

Another sweeping tax reform proposal was floated in 1991 as part of the federal Coalition's *Fightback!* policy. ACOSS strongly opposed this package because its centrepiece was a shift from taxing income to taxing consumption, accompanied by large reductions in government expenditure — a policy which would have been very harmful

*One important piece of common ground is the need of the tax system to operate more equitably*

**By  
ACOSS  
President,  
Robert  
Fitzgerald**



to low income people.

The GST plan was widely blamed for the Coalition's election loss in 1993. Consequently, in its 1996 federal election campaign, the Coalition pledged not to introduce a GST — or raise taxes or introduce new ones — during its first term of office. However in August 1997, the federal Coalition government openly declared its intention of developing major tax reform proposals for implementation in its second term, flagging major reductions in personal income tax and a "broad based indirect tax".

Well before this development, ACOSS and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) had convened a national summit in October 1996 which led to an ongoing Tax Reform Forum to progress the development of a better common understanding of the problems and options for change.

Since then a series of roundtable meetings convened by ACOSS, ACCI and the Business Council of Australia, as well as ACOSS dialogues with unions, community, environmental and consumer organisations, have contributed to a growing amount of common ground.

One important piece of common ground is the need for the tax system to operate more equitably, and to

maintain a level of revenue adequate for government spending on services and investment. There is also widespread agreement that our present tax system has a detrimental impact on the economy — it favours certain types of investment (especially speculative investment in assets), and some taxes have become unnecessarily complex and expensive for business.

These discussions have confirmed the long-standing ACOSS position that tax reform must be much broader than just a discussion of a GST. ACOSS has neither advocated nor rejected "a GST" — a term that can mean many different things. The impact of any GST proposal would be determined not only by its precise nature (such as the rate and coverage), but also by the total package of which it is a part.

The key issue for this tax reform process is the construction of an integrated package of tax changes on all three fronts — income, assets and consumption — which, taken as a whole, will improve the equity, adequacy and efficiency of our revenue system. It is to this task that ACOSS has dedicated itself.

As always, the litmus test we will apply to any package is whether it will improve the living standards of low income people.

## **The ACOSS Tax Reform Pack**

As one contribution towards opening up this debate, we have produced the ACOSS Tax Reform Pack. It aims to explain complex revenue matters in a clear way, as well as set out our proposals for a better tax framework.

❑ *The ACOSS Tax Reform Pack is available for \$2.50 (incl post) from ACOSS, tel (02) 9332 4355*

# *Carr promises to make women safer*

## **14 regional violence specialists appointed**

**The State Government has appointed 14 new violence prevention specialists as part of the NSW Strategy to Reduce Violence Against Women. Three more are being recruited as we go to press.**

Launching the \$1.6 million program, Premier Bob Carr said the Government was "determined to find ways to make women in our community safer and more secure."

"The decision to fund the violence prevention specialists came from the Premier's Council for Women. After statewide consultations, the Council recommended the creation of these specialist positions and the Government listened."

The violence prevention workers will be regionally based, with one for each NSW Health area, and their primary task will be to develop regional action plans in conjunction with both government and NGO services.

They will also raise statewide issues with the NSW Council on Violence Against Women, to enable it to advise to the Government on legislation, departmental practice and other strategic issues.

According to Claire Vernon, Executive Officer of the Violence Against Women Specialist Unit in the Attorney-General's Department, "regional plans could involve street safety in country towns, improved referral protocols, greater awareness of regional sexual assault units, community education and work with local schools."

"There will also be a regional reference group working with each specialist to oversee the regional action plan and resolve any local issues."

"We know there are a lot of local services — we want to find out how we can make it better for women," she said.

The project has been funded by four

Government departments: Police, Health, Attorney-General's and DoCS. The regional specialists will work out of a local "host" office.

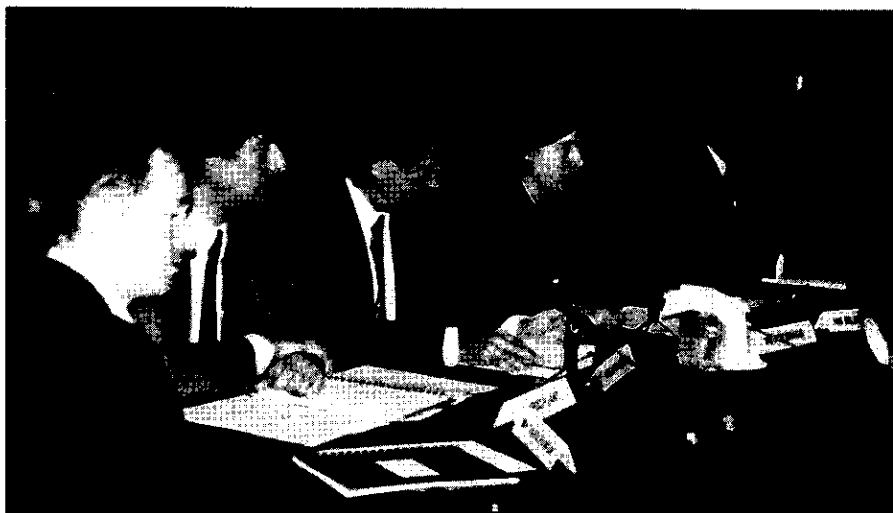
The regional specialists are located in Ashfield, Penrith, Zetland, Liverpool, Parramatta, Bourke, Tamworth, Dubbo, Newcastle, Lismore, Wollongong, Gosford, Taree and northern Sydney.

Claire said the decision to locate the

specialist unit in Attorney-General's, "reflects the view that violence against women is a crime."

One of the first tasks is to get information to interested stakeholders. The Specialist Unit has already published two information bulletins and is building up a mailing list of interest organisations and people.

*For further information, contact the Specialist Unit, tel (02) 9228 7899.*



## **Housing sector meets Senators**

On 5 August, representatives of the community sector gave evidence to the Senate References Committee Inquiry into Housing Assistance.

Ros Bragg from NCOSS opened proceedings by emphasising the increase in homelessness and the problems of people with a mental illness, the decline in resources for housing assistance and rising rents in Sydney.

She called for a review of negative gearing and capital gains tax arrangements "because they are not currently targeted to disadvantaged people in any way."

"Better targeting of negative gearing could encourage greater supply of low cost accommodation and release resources which could be

spend to provide housing assistance to people in greatest need."

Other speakers argued against plans to convert all housing assistance into a cash subsidy, arguing this ignored the problem of an inadequate supply of low cost housing and the discrimination that occurs in the market.

**OUR PHOTO:** Representatives of the community sector at the Senate Inquiry. From left: David Ramsay and Rod Plant (Shelter), Gary Moore and Ros Bragg (NCOSS), Owen Rogers and Colin Robinson (St Vincent de Paul), Will Roden (Shelter, back to camera). Also present were Eileen Levett (St Vincent de Paul), Brian Cooper and Michael Jarque (Sydney City Mission)

## *New FONGA submission*

# **Balancing protection and prevention**

Over the past three months a working group, drawn from members of the Forum of Non Government Agencies (FONGA), has prepared a major submission to the NSW Government, concerning greater prevention and better protection of children and young people who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or "at risk".

The submission, *Balancing Prevention and Protection in the Best Interests of Children*, was forwarded to the Premier and Ministers one week before the Wood Royal Commission was released on 26 August.

The FONGA submission contains 26 recommendations based around the themes of prevention, quality and accountability, investigation, rights and

advocacy, and public education.

The proposals, contained in the submission, include:

- the establishment of an independent service standards monitoring system for all government, community sector and private out of home care services in NSW;
- the expansion of existing resource and support services for families and the introduction of new home visiting services;
- making child care workers mandatory notifiers of child abuse and making child protection programs run by schools mandatory for students;
- offering "second chance" assistance

to all early school leavers and providing a specific coordinated case management service for young offenders and young people in care;

- including a statement of children's rights in the new Children (Care and Protection) Act;
- establishing a statewide network of children's advocates.

The key message of this package is that the community needs Government to ensure a balance between prevention, early intervention and investigation in child protection programs and systems.

*Copies of the FONGA submission are available from NCOSS (\$10 for non FONGA members).*

## **The community benefit in Hogg's vision?**

**The Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS) is calling on the Carr Government to guarantee that the full range of consumer protection measures and regulatory structures, recommended by the Hogg Committee, are firmly in place, before any sale of electricity assets commences.**

Responding to the report, NCOSS Director Gary Moore said, "the sale, if it proceeds, remains an extremely risky business.

"Electricity employees and specific regions will be immediately hurt, with all NSW electricity consumers potentially vulnerable to rising prices and lower quality service.

"Low income consumers and other disadvantaged groups in the community must be protected by price subsidies and other robust community services obligations contained in all licence requirements.

"The NSW Government must expand the role and resources of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal. It should promote the creation of a Utility Industry Ombudsman and should immediately move to fund the Utility Consumers Network, irrespective of the sale proceeding.

"In relation to Government use of sale proceeds, beyond debt reduction, NCOSS is pleased that the Hogg Committee has endorsed our key criteria for the funding of appropriate infrastructure projects.

"However, NCOSS believes that it is imperative that the Carr Government ensure that such funds are, indeed, used for priority social infrastructure and programs, and not diverted for other purposes.

"To this end, we would insist that the NSW Government legislate a NSW Community Investment Fund. A NSW Community Investment Plan, developed in consultation with the community and publicly released,

should be the guide to expenditure. This is crucial to eliminate political pork barrelling in the use of these essential taxpayer funds.

"If the sale proceeds, we are encouraged by the Hogg Committee's proposals for retraining and relocation assistance for affected employees.

"However, as BHP and Newcastle has recently demonstrated, much more in the way of industry policy and employment creation initiatives must be undertaken by Government in the regions directly harmed by the sale of the electricity assets.

"The decision to sell, if endorsed by the ALP Conference, is a huge turning point for the role of Government in this State. Anything less than the Government implementing the highest safeguards will be a betrayal of the State's 800,000 people living in or near poverty.

"Any such negligence will haunt the Carr Government at the ballot box," added Mr Moore.

# *ACOSS takes the initiative*

## **Making reconciliation a reality in the community**

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Contributed by the Australian Council of Social Service

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**The next major challenge facing the reconciliation process is the preservation of native title rights, an issue which is likely to be dealt with by Parliament before the end of this year.**

Non-government organisations can play a role by leading discussion away from ignorance and division.

More specifically, organisations within the community sector need to look to at their own day to day performance in order to ensure that their practices and policies conform to the fundamental goals and objectives of the reconciliation process.

With this recognition in mind, the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) has taken significant steps to increase its involvement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs.

### **Developing a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs**

ACOSS has decided to focus upon indigenous issues as one of its four key areas of operation for the next year and is currently developing a statement of policy and principles on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs to guide initiatives we take in the area.

ACOSS is also seeking to adopt as one of its core objectives the vision of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation which calls for "*a united Australia which respects this land of ours, values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and provides justice and equity for all*". This is one way to ensure that we are continually confronted by the challenge of reconciliation.

ACOSS has also moved to take a stand on a number of prominent issues.

Recently, the release of *Bringing them home* — the report of the "stolen generations" inquiry — prompted ACOSS to publicly voice its support for the inquiry and the implementation of its recommendations.

ACOSS is developing a statement of apology for the involvement of community sector organisations in the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families. We hope to release the statement (which has been approved by ATSIC), publicly after gaining the endorsement of our National Member organisations and affiliated State Councils of Social Service.

ACOSS finds the proposed legislative response to the Wik decision highly alarming and has taken significant steps to oppose the Prime Minister's 10 point plan.

In addition to writing to members of Parliament and releasing a public statement on the Wik decision, ACOSS has been an active participant in a national coalition of peak bodies known as Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR).

ANTaR emerged in response to calls from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations (particularly the National Indigenous Working Group on native title), for organisations in the wider community to become actively involved in the struggle to protect indigenous land rights. The coalition aims to:

- ❑ support the National Indigenous Working Group on native title and provide a link between that group and the Australian community;
- ❑ to support the retention of Native Title rights on pastoral leasehold lands throughout the country; and
- ❑ to promote reconciliation between Australia's indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

This coalition is highly active in New South Wales and provides an

opportunity for community sector organisations to increase their involvement in the reconciliation process.

ANTaR has planned a number of events and actions, including a national week of action for 21 to 28 September involving a series of rallies, forums and gatherings held under the banner of "Together for Coexistence".

### **Awareness and education**

ACOSS has developed a number of measures aimed at conveying information to our constituency.

Regular articles on indigenous issues are included in our monthly magazine, *Impact*, and an issue specifically devoted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs will be released in October. ACOSS has also agreed to develop a national education strategy on native title in conjunction with the Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation coalition.

The strategy will involve the development and marketing of an education kit containing information on major issues involved in the current debate over the native title rights.

### **Collaboration**

The process of education and information dissemination has inevitably involved making contact with our Indigenous counterparts and learning to work together on issues of mutual concern. Ways need to be found to mutually share information more effectively and to learn from each others' experience.

For the past two years, ACOSS has actively pursued closer relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and has now developed a reasonably comprehensive set of national contacts in a range of areas including health, education, housing, community

*Continued bottom page 9*



# Child Care Regulations Round 3 as private providers campaign

Report: Linda Frow

Following on from the debacle last year when the centre based and mobile child care regulations were initially disallowed, then reinstated subject to consultation, the amended regulations will be debated in Parliament on the 16th, 17th and 18th September 1997.

We understand that lobbying from the Association of Child Care Centres, representing private centre owners, has begun again in a further attempt to stop the regulations going through.

This time they are claiming that the consultation process and analysis was inadequate and that a number of the amendments were not subject to consultation.

We<sup>2</sup> all remember the disaster that occurred last time when the cross-

benches were persuaded to support the Opposition to reject the regulations, resulting in the deregulation of centre based and mobile services. It is important for the crossbenches to hear from the community sector which has supported the regulations and the consultation process, and for that support to be loud and clear.

The members of the Legislative Council who need to hear of our support are: Elisabeth Kirkby, Richard Jones, Ian Cohen, Alan Corbett, John Tingle and Fred and Elaine Nile. The Opposition, via Patricia Forsythe, should also be targeted.

We need to ensure that no mistakes are made this time around and that our Parliamentary representatives are fully aware of the need to regulate child care services for the protection of children and staff, and to ensure that quality of care is maintained and enhanced.

For further information contact Linda Frow at NCOSS.

## ACOSS and reconciliation...

From page 8

services and child care.

The benefits of working more closely together are obvious. Aside from the mutual education inherent in the experience, we may well discover better ways of doing what we do.

The development of close ties with indigenous organisations has also assisted us in bringing principles of social justice into our various policy areas. Exploring opportunities for working together on these basic issues of social justice is what reconciliation at the community level is all about.

### Taking a 'rights' approach

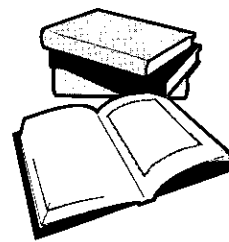
Crucial to the process of reconciliation will be moving governments away from a welfare approach to an

approach which recognises the human rights of Indigenous peoples. Included in this must be a recognition of their unique rights as the first peoples of the continent of Australia and of their unique relationship with the land. It is the denial of that relationship with the land which is the fundamental cause of inequality, injustice and poverty amongst our Indigenous peoples.

The non-Indigenous community sector has begun in recent times to argue much more in terms of rights and it is vital that this be strongly pursued. By advocating a human rights-based approach to so many of the changes our sector is seeking, we would not only strengthen the human rights "climate" generally. We would also strengthen the bargaining position of Indigenous people and bring our struggles closer together.

## NCOSS LIBRARY

from the



### Recent important releases

#### Census 1996

Material from this is being released in stages, some in publications and some on disc and CDROM. We have received **Selected Social and Housing Characteristics for Statistical Local Areas NSW**. (ABS Cat No 2015.1)

The **Community Profile Series** (ABS Cat No 2020.0-2020.8) provides detailed census data for small areas. This is available by selected data in hard copy or electronic form. This can be useful for building up a picture of your local community.

The big item is **CDATA96** (ABS Cat No 2019.0-2019.8) is a CDROM product which provides a large amount of data which can be manipulated by the inbuilt database to produce maps, tables and graphs based on areas ranging from Australia wide to the smallest collection districts. Unfortunately the price for these are probably beyond most community groups, ranging from \$8000- \$12,000.

The **ABS Library Extension Program** provides all standard published output to all major libraries, and 470 selected published libraries. From December 1997 they will hold a specially developed CDROM product, **CLIB96**, which holds detailed census data.

#### Royal Commission into the NSW Police Service

NCOSS has volumes IV and V, the Paedophile Inquiry, and vol VI, Appendices.

For further details contact NCOSS Librarian, Bill Pope, tel (02) 9211 2599, fx (02) 9281 1968, email <billpope@ncoss.org.au>



## Focusing again on our Strategic Plan

We're halfway through our current Strategic Plan, so we have recently held two focus groups and a staff discussion to discuss our progress and coming tasks.

From our external stakeholders (and board) there was enthusiasm for our achievements in the past year, especially in raising our media profile and taking up the issue of microeconomic reform.

However there was also concern in all discussions with the level of overwork involved, and meetings over the next few weeks will aim to tackle the problem and refine our priorities.

### Students help us out

NCOSS is very fortunate to have the assistance of two dedicated university students who are doing social work placements with us.

Mary Devine from the University of NSW is working on our forthcoming Pre-Budget Submission, assisting with the organisation of consultative meetings and doing basic research into the social and economic environment.

Joe Blaszczyk from Sydney University is helping us establish a rural network, helping prepare our submission on the Five-year disability framework Green Paper, helping organise the Dubbo HACC conference and looking at NCOSS's role in the sector.

### NCOSS AGM

The NCOSS Annual General Meeting was reconvened on 21 July. The meeting voted to include a statement of reconciliation in NCOSS's Memorandum of Association.

# SMH launches CitySearch Community services offered web sites

**A partnership involving the John Fairfax & Sons is about to launch CitySearch, a large, comprehensive, interactive Internet site for the metropolitan area of Sydney.**

CitySearch will allow users to search for the services, businesses, organisations and events they want.

Looking for a Thai restaurant in Hurstville or a neighbourhood centre in Ryde? CitySearch will find it, and then give you a map of the area. It will also then allow you to search for other services and events in that area: a local cafe or car mechanic perhaps.

In the US, where the concept was developed, CitySearches have become amongst the most accessed internet sites in the cities where they operate.

Use of CitySearch will be free; its revenue will come from the annual fees businesses pay to have their own CitySearch website.

The CitySearch organisation is offering all nonprofit and community organisations two free web pages, and a discount of 25% on the commercial rate should community organisations want a bigger presence.

If six businesses each buy a site of at least six pages, they can nominate a nonprofit organisation to receive a six-page site free.

NCOSS will have a presence on CitySearch, including a hotlink to our own, comprehensive website.

We recommend that community organisations approach CitySearch to have their services advertised. Absolutely no technical knowledge is required; you don't even need a computer. You simply supply CitySearch with text and logos or photos and their staff make up your web pages.

The evolution of sophisticated services like CitySearch raises important policy issues for our sector.

Clearly such facilities have the potential to be of enormous benefit, by

allowing people to look for and easily find the services they need.

But the danger is that these internet-based services will only be available to those with the means to buy a sophisticated computer — and then pay from \$20 a month for an internet service provider — and those who have been able to acquire the computer skills and confidence to use the internet.

It is estimated that only 2% of older people have used the internet, despite the obvious pleasure and benefit many would derive from it.

It is significant, too, that CitySearch-type services will only be established in the biggest capital cities, once again leaving regional and rural areas "information poor".

To get your organisation on CitySearch, contact Yvonne Gregory, Community Relations Manager, tel 9518 9777, fax 9518 5588, email <ygregory@citysearch.com.au>

## MAKING IT WORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The report of YouthForce, the taskforce set up by the Premier in December 1996 to examine innovative approaches to tackling youth employment and training issues, was recently handed to the Premier, Bob Carr and the Minister for Education and Training, John Aquilina.

It is understood that the report will be publicly released in mid September.

The report was prepared after consultations with young people, educators, employers, trade unions, government agencies and community organisations and following a review of previous major youth unemployment inquiries and reviews held in Australia and overseas during the past fifteen years.

A complete coverage of the report, *Making it Work for Young People*, will be included in next month's NCOSS News.

# *Criminal checks on Health NGOs*

## **NCOSS believes policy unworkable**

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By Ros Bragg

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**NSW Health has issued a policy requiring criminal checks for the staff of Health NGOs and for a range of other people connected with these organisations.**

These checks must be undertaken as a condition of funding. NCOSS strongly supports the principle of probity checks on staff working with vulnerable people to prevent abuse. However NCOSS has concerns about the policy developed by NSW Health.

The policy requires criminal checks to be undertaken on all new and existing staff of Health NGOs.

It also requires checks on students undertaking placements, visiting practitioners, volunteers and people engaged in any other capacity. This includes academics, board members, clergy, union officials, contractors and official visitors.

The checks are for convictions for sexual offences, serious offences involving a threat or serious injury to another person and other serious offences where they directly relate to the duties of the position — for example, fraud offences for positions where money is managed.

The policy allows for people with criminal records to be employed in Health NGOs under certain circumstances, and the nature of the conviction and the circumstances under which the offence took place will be taken into account in making this decision.

If a person is found to have a criminal record, then permission for that person to be employed by the Health NGO must be obtained from the Director-General of NSW Health.

Of particular concern is the fact that this process is occurring independently of the Cabinet Office work on a whole-

of-government approach to probity checks.

NCOSS is also extremely concerned that NGOs were not consulted in the preparation of the circular.

NCOSS is conscious of the limitations of the police criminal record system in identifying past perpetrators of abuse. The police records detail convictions only, and not charges which were successfully defended or dropped, irrespective of the circumstances. And the records do not provide information about many instances of abuse because charges were not laid.

### **Range of checks too broad**

NCOSS is concerned that the range of people on whom criminal checks are to be undertaken is too broad. It appears to cover all individuals who have contact with a service funded by NSW Health, whether or not they have contact with clients.

Some examples which appear to fall within the guidelines include a plumber called in at short notice to fix overflowing pipes, a person who services the photocopier, and a volunteer who attends a nonresidential service after hours to assist in a mailout.

A further issue of concern is the compatibility of the policy with the status of NGOs as self managing organisations. NGOs are funded under the NGO grant program to provide services with accountability to NSW Health and Area Health Services through various reporting arrangements. They are not required to seek departmental or Area Health Service approval for appointments, or other employment decisions.

NCOSS argues that this should not be introduced where issues of criminal records arise. Sufficient protection against inappropriate appointments can be obtained using other methods.

Many people employed in the health system and elsewhere have incidents in their past which are not related to their capacity to do the job, but which would cause great embarrassment if made public.

There are also people in the health system whose past experience of illegal activities is invaluable in doing their job. Staff working with clients who use illegal drugs are a prime example. In both these cases it's important to protect against the disclosure of this information.

NCOSS would like to see greater security of the information contained in the criminal record checks. Specifically, NCOSS does not consider it appropriate for Area Health Services to hold information on the checks run by Health NGOs, nor to report to the Area Health Services on specific cases.

### **NCOSS alternative**

NCOSS has proposed an alternative process for managing criminal checks and probity checks within NGOs funded by NSW Health. This process requires referee checks in addition to criminal record checks. It provides for review processes internal to the NGO to make a decision about an applicant or an existing staff member, or any other person related to the centre who is found to have a criminal record.

It requires the NGO to inform the Staff Records Management Unit in NSW Health that they are employing a person with a criminal conviction, or in the case of existing staff, that they have already employed such a person. And it allows for the Staff Records Management Unit to undertake an audit of compliance with the policy with individual NGOs.

However the Area Health Service is not required to be involved in this process and need not have information about the criminal record checks undertaken by each NGO.



## From the NCOSS website

The report of the Wood Royal Commission into its paedophile reference was a major event for the community sector.

Within two hours of the report's release, NCOSS's response was available on our website, along with a major submission from FONGA, *Balancing prevention and protection in the best interests of children*.

Last month we also uploaded:

- ☐ the FONGA submission on competitive tendering, made to the House of Reps Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs;
- ☐ the NCOSS submission on housing assistance to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee inquiry;
- ☐ our submission to the Policy, Service Delivery and Administration Review of the Emergency Relief program;
- ☐ the NCOSS response to the Office of Rural Communities review of rural counselling services;
- ☐ the NCOSS response to the Legislation Review of Children's Services;
- ☐ and more!

### Watch out for a new URL

The current NCOSS website is temporary. We are hoping to set up a permanent site in the next month or so. Please don't link our site to yours just yet.

### Cross media ownership campaign

A number of organisations have launched an internet campaign which you can access from our website. First go to *What's New*.

[www.ncoss.org.au/~newmail](http://www.ncoss.org.au/~newmail)

# Regional Roundup

## Dubbo

Concerns are expressed about the privatisation of the Federal Information Technology Systems on the ground of personal information held by government possibly going to unaccountable private firms.

There is a form letter to send to protest this under the slogans: "Privacy not Privatisation" and "Personal data is not for barter".

The Thubbo Aboriginal Medical Cooperative has set up a Visitation Program for Aboriginal parents and relatives of juveniles in custody in detention centres around NSW. Transport and accommodation is provided.

They believe that the lack of visitation develops into breakdowns in communication between families and communities and leads to frustration on the part of juveniles and families.

— from July 97 Interagency News

## Illawarra Forum

The Illawarra Forum is running some small focus groups on the Department of Community Services Integrated Planning Framework in the Illawarra Area. These are on Tuesday 9 September in Wollongong and Monday 15 September in Nowra. Ring the Forum office on (42) 57 1490 or DoCS Area Office on (42) 26 8410 for further details.

The Forum is circulating a four page discussion paper on Competition Policy and the Community Services Sector in the Illawarra as a means of giving feedback from the recent workshop held in Wollongong on Competitive Tendering and Contracting Out. For further information contact the Forum.

The Forum is trialling a Community Management Support Unit for the region. Support, training and resourcing of community based management committees is a crucial service needed in the Illawarra

So far the unit has produced the

Management Mag, set up a resource library, run Planning and Evaluation days for organisations, done intensive work directly with individual committees such as the Coomaditchie Aboriginal Corporation, and provided advice, information and resourcing by telephone inquiry.

— from the August 1997 Illawarra Forum News

## Northern Rivers

The SACS 97 — *On the Edge* conference is beginning to take shape. It will be the premier event for the social and community services sector in this region. While the program has yet to be finalised, the scheduled day for SACS 97 is Friday, 24 October, 1997.

*Networking the Nation* is the Commonwealth Government's Regional Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund. The stated objective of *Networking the Nation* is to assist regional, rural and remote Australia by funding projects which enhance telecommunications infrastructure and services, increase access to services and reduce disparities in access. Projects could include:

- ☐ Infrastructure
- ☐ Innovative technology
- ☐ Planning
- ☐ Services and service access
- ☐ Awareness
- ☐ Training
- ☐ Employment

Small organisations would be able to apply for funding, and joint applications are permitted.

For more information phone : 1800 674 058 (toll free) or email: [rtif@dca.gov.au](mailto:rtif@dca.gov.au)

— from the July 1997 Just News

Please send items for this column to Bill Pope at NCOSS, fax (02) 9211 2599, email [billpope@ncoss.org.au](mailto:billpope@ncoss.org.au)

# NCOSS Rural and Remote policy advice group meets

Report: Ros Bragg

**The NCOSS Rural and Remote Policy Advice Group met for the first time on 12 August at NCOSS.**

People from as far afield as Wagga Wagga, Armidale, Orange, Lismore and Bombah (near Tottenham) attended.

NCOSS has established the policy advice group to further develop its work on issues affecting communities in rural and remote areas.

New models of funding provided by both State and Commonwealth were a key issue of concern to the group.

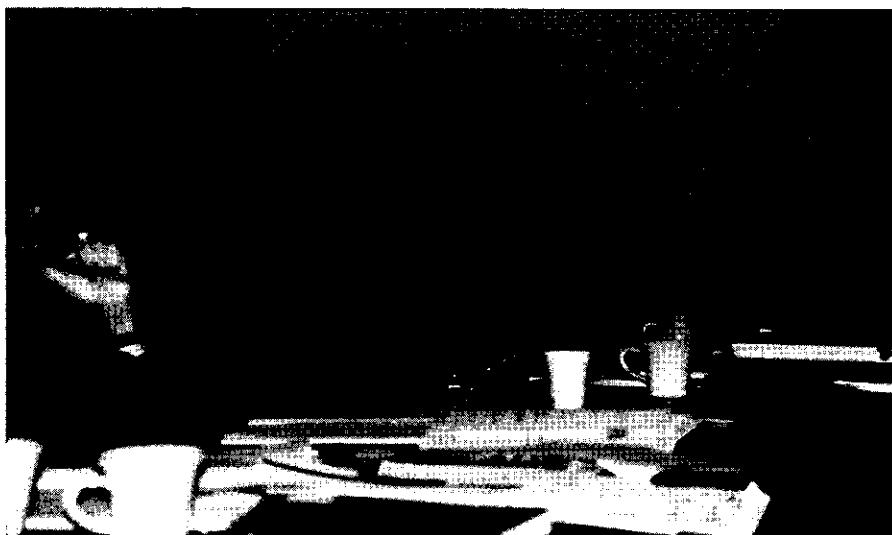
While offering potential for better coordination of services, these models will create a real problem for communities without developed community leadership, they place greater demands on the volunteer management committees in those communities which do have strong community leadership, and in many cases there is a need for a better information base, such as a community audit, to support decision making.

## Concern over infrastructure

The fundamental importance of social infrastructure was discussed at some length. It was agreed that an effective community development process is needed to develop this infrastructure, rather than the fragmented community development work being undertaken by various agencies across the State.

There is real concern about the high levels of welfare dependency in rural and remote communities. There was also discussion of employment creation processes with the CDEP program offered as a successful example, but currently suffering under Commonwealth cuts.

It was also noted that the regional



**The Rural Policy Advice Group meeting last month. From left: Lisa Madden (Dept Aboriginal Affairs), Joe Blaszczyk (student at NCOSS), Chris Wilson (Northern Rivers RCSD), Margaret Carroll (Office of Rural Communities), Fran Rowe (Lachlan Consulting, Bombah) and Ros Bragg (NCOSS)**

level focus of many industry development campaigns such as tourism would benefit the larger regional centres rather than the smaller communities.

Transport was another pressing issue. Affordable transport is essential for people to access services, particularly if they live outside the regional centres. However the most disadvantaged people, who are those most commonly in need of services, are also those least able to afford transport. A private vehicle remains the primary form of transport for people in rural and remote communities.

It was also noted that cuts to payments such as Abstudy are affecting people's capacity to travel to gain the skills to gain employment.

The group also considered the Draft Rural Social Justice Strategy which is currently under development by the Office of Rural Communities, working through its consultative arm, the Rural Communities Consultative Council. The strategy is to be handed to the Premier by the end of August, however it is possible that an extension will be obtained.

## Office of Rural Communities moves to Premier's Dept

On 15 August, the Premier announced that the Office of Rural Communities will be transferred to the Premier's Department.

The Office of Rural Communities was established in 1996 within the Department of Agriculture.

Its functions are to assist the Government in the coordination and review of the State's rural policy and Government programs and services in rural areas; to engage in consultation with a broad spectrum of interests in rural communities; and to assist State agencies to incorporate rural and remote strategies in their departmental planning.

The consultative arm of the Office of Rural Communities, the Rural Communities Consultative Council, is to make its report on its statewide consultations to the Premier by the end of September.

# Managing the impacts

On 18 August, the NSW Casino Control Authority held a forum looking at public interest issues and the operation of the Sydney Harbour Casino. NCOSS Director Gary Moore was one of the presenters at the forum and the following is an edited version of his speech. The full text is available on the NCOSS web site.

### Introduction

In a recent media release, *Patronage, Revenue Soar at Sydney Harbour Casino*, Dick Warburton, Chairman of Sydney Harbour Casino Holdings Ltd, enthusiastically stated that:

...the State Government and taxpayers continued to reap enormous benefits from Sydney Harbour Casino. In the last six months alone, we paid casino taxes of \$43 million, which means payments to the State since our inception now exceed \$500 million. You can imagine the giant hole that would be left in the State Budget if these funds were not available to the Government.

Besides a brief reference to new job opportunities arising from the soon to be opened Star City, this media release, on Casino performance for the six months to June 30, was starkly silent on how the Casino was faring on other key issues such as:

- assessing any impacts of its services on low income and vulnerable groups in the community;
- managing problem gamblers,
- minimising gambling related crime;
- ensuring the rights of gambling consumers are respected and complaints are effectively addressed;
- assessing any economic impacts of its operations on other retail, hospitality or tourist businesses; and
- assessing any social impacts on the Pyrmont community.

The NSW Casino Control Authority, as the regulator of the Sydney Casino, should be ensuring that public

interest principles guide its ongoing management of this relationship as well as its specific assessment of the casino's performance.

Whilst section 31 of the Casino Control Act makes an explicit reference to tourism, employment and economic development, it does not specifically mention social equity, in particular low income or disadvantaged groups in the community. NCOSS would urge the Authority to include social equity in its considerations.

### Ownership of the casino operator

The ownership and management of gambling entities is continuing to be privatised in NSW. The sale, by the NSW Government, of the TAB, for example, is expected to proceed during 1997/98.

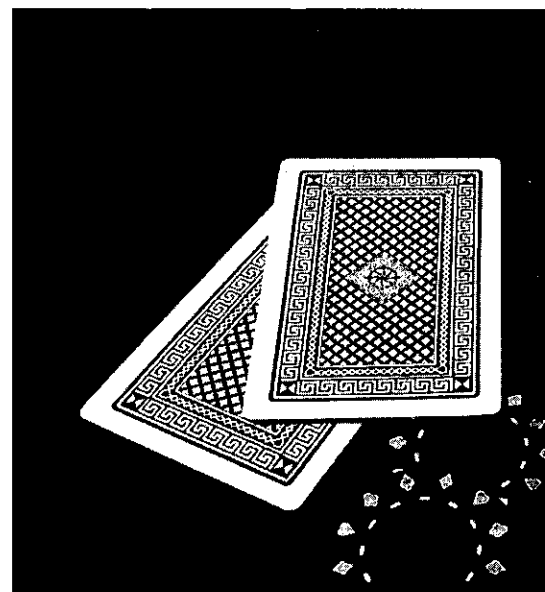
NCOSS is concerned that potential exists for a concentration of ownership of key NSW gambling resources to occur, with possible negative impacts for consumers and the community. Such negative impacts include price collusion, excessive profit taking and related features of market domination.

NCOSS believes that any significant shareholder in the Sydney Casino operator should not be allowed to also hold significant shareholdings in other gambling operators or their management in NSW. The Control Authority, in conjunction with other gambling regulators, should monitor the ownership patterns of operators.

### Gambling and State revenues

In 1995/96, gambling turnover in NSW was nearly \$32 billion, with gambling profits in excess of \$3.75 billion.

Gambling taxes comprise 10.8% of total NSW revenues and they are growing. Whilst these are used to fund services in NSW, a significant and ongoing reliance on this source of revenue



is worrying to NCOSS, because:

- it is highly likely that gambling is regressive in impact, in that lower income people spend more of their disposable income than higher income people on the principal gambling revenue earners; and
- the costs of problem gambling are far broader than the scope of services funded through the Casino Benefit Fund. These costs have to be met within other government program budgets already struggling to meet client demand for other social needs.

Whilst this area is principally a matter for Government policy, it is important for the Casino Control Authority to ensure that all funds allocated to the Casino Benefit Fund are actually committed and spent each year. If this is not the case, then it would be prudent to direct surplus funds to priority social programs operated by NSW Government agencies, rather than accumulating growing surpluses of unspent funds.

### Consumer protection

In his 1991 report on the proposed introduction of the Sydney Casino, Sir

# of the Sydney Casino



Laurence Street outlined a range of consumer protection measures which should be incorporated as core features in the operation of the Sydney Harbour Casino. These included:

- ☐ automatic teller machines should not be installed on the casino premises;
- ☐ signs should be posted informing people with gambling problems of sources of help; and
- ☐ training of casino management and staff should be undertaken to help identify patrons who may have gambling problems.

The Authority should include in this investigation the implementation of the measures proposed by Street, and in cases where there has been no implementation or revised arrangements the Authority should specify the reasons for these changes.

There was considerable publicity given to the unfortunate parental practice of leaving children in cars or unattended at the Crown Casino in Melbourne and, on a few occasions, at the Sydney Harbour Casino.

NCOSS believes that the Authority should ascertain what, if any, community education and related measures

may have been, or should be put into place by the casino and other government agency, so as to dissuade patrons from this behaviour. In addition, it will be important to note what counselling, referral and emergency child care services are being used by the Sydney Harbour Casino when this situation arises.

There have been recent suggestions made to NCOSS that people with disabilities seeking access to the casino have experienced some difficulties with casino staff. NCOSS would be keen to see what type of disability access policy and procedures are in force.

## **Casino impacts on other businesses and jobs**

NCOSS welcomes the additional employment opportunities being created through the casino expansion. However, we believe that nothing short of an exemplary effort to ensure the jobs provide good career path prospects, have accredited vocational education and training, are of enough hours per week to provide a living wage, and are targeted to the unemployed, will suffice.

The casino does provide work related child care. It has, however, been suggested to NCOSS that current shift arrangements result in children being woken at 4.00am to go home on a regular basis. If this is the case, this situation must be altered through a more child and worker friendly set of shift arrangements, without any discrimination against working parents.

## **Impacts on families and individuals**

There are several negative impacts on individuals and families which gambling activities have been documented to cause. These effects are not wholly associated with the problem gambler.

They include:

- ☐ unemployment, poverty and income insecurity;
- ☐ damage to mental health;
- ☐ family breakdown, including a rise in the incidence of domestic violence;
- ☐ gambling related crime.

NCOSS maintains the general view that as much as possible must be done to ensure that the negative impacts of gambling are minimised. A further rapid expansion of gambling outlets in NSW is unable to be justified on social impact grounds.

## **Casino Community Benefit Fund.**

Whilst the majority of funds (80%) are allocated to gambling research, education and direct services, the 20% allocated to community projects is a significant and sound commitment to building stronger community infrastructure.

Current reforms to funding practices of the fund are welcome, as they establish a higher quality, better focused and more accountable set of programs.

## **Monitoring ongoing social impacts**

NCOSS believes that a review of the social, economic and environmental impacts of the Star City operations should be undertaken 12 months after its opening. The range of criteria used by the 1991 Street Inquiry would be a good starting point, with the addition of an examination of casino impacts on the Pyrmont community.

In relation to the Pyrmont community, which is changing as a result of urban consolidation, NCOSS believes that the Casino Control Authority should engage the views of various Pyrmont residents and community groups as part of this current investigation.

# *The 1997/98 State Budget*

## **The Premier replies to NCOSS**

In this issue, Premier Bob Carr provides a detailed reply to the *Community Response to the 1997/98 State Budget*, which was published in the June *NCOSS News*.

NCOSS greatly appreciates the time and effort which the NSW Government and its agencies have taken in preparing this response.

When this year's State Budget was released, NCOSS applauded the Government's new revenue initiatives, welcomed spending increases in some key programs, but expressed the view that much more could and should be done to assist disadvantaged people and communities in NSW.

This remains our view today.

As was our practice last year, NCOSS has invited the Opposition Leader, Peter Collins, to respond to the State Budget and the Premier's comments. We hope to publish this response in a future issue of *NCOSS News*.



Premier of New South Wales  
Australia

### **Dear Mr Moore**

I read with interest the analysis of the State Budget which was published in the June 1997 edition of the *NCOSS News*. The NCOSS pre-Budget submission and subsequent discussions were most constructive in canvassing expenditure and revenue options open to the Government.

I am pleased that many of the Government's major enhancements to spending on crucial social policy areas such as health, housing assistance and home and community care were recognised and supported. It is also gratifying that NCOSS acknowledges the Government's commitment to raising revenue without disadvantaging low income earners.

As you are aware, the Commonwealth made substantial cuts to spending in human services in its 1996/97 and 1997/98 Budgets. These cuts have led to additional pressure on State programs at a time when we can least afford it. Nevertheless, my Government has demonstrated its commitment to social justice through major enhancements to health, services for Aboriginal people and children and young people in substitute care.

The attached document provides a more detailed response to the issues raised by NCOSS in its commentary on the Budget, and clarifies a number of points. I hope that you will make this information available to readers of the *NCOSS News*, and that my Government and the NSW Council of Social Service can maintain a constructive and positive debate regarding any matters of interest or concern to your organisation.

Yours sincerely

**Bob Carr**

Premier



# The State Budget: the Premier replies

## NSW Government response to NCOSS's analysis of the 1997/98 Budget

### General Comments

In its general commentary on the 1997/98 Budget, NCOSS claims that the Government has got the revenue part of the Budget right, and the spending part wrong. I believe that this is an oversimplification and misrepresentation of what our Budget achieves.

Since coming to office this Government has provided a total of \$50 million to create 300 additional supported accommodation places for people with a disability. Capital funding of \$26 million for this initiative has been fully committed. The recurrent funding of \$24 million has been allocated to 290 supported accommodation places across the State, as well as 10 attendant care places and 83 accommodation support packages to relocated residents of the former Watagan Centre. In addition, people with disabilities and their families will benefit from the major boost in funding for the Home and Community Care program (HACC) and the 16% increase for the Post School Options Program.

The Government recognises the considerable need for more accommodation options to be provided for people with a disability and other vulnerable groups in the community. Assessing these options for older people and people with disabilities has been one of the key responsibilities of the Accommodation Taskforce, of which NCOSS is a member. The Taskforce is to report to the Government in August 1997.

Notwithstanding that unemployment is largely a Commonwealth responsibility, the State Government has maintained its commitment to improving educational and employment and training opportunities at a time of severe Commonwealth cuts to programs for the unemployed. For

example, the Government established YouthForce NSW to investigate innovative approaches to the problem of youth unemployment. YouthForce is chaired by Gary Moore, and has been working closely with the government, non-government and business sectors to develop strategies to increase young peoples' involvement in vocational education and training, and employment. The State Government's commitment to this important social policy area is further demonstrated by the \$11 million per annum allocated by TAFE NSW for training for unemployed people.

NCOSS asserts that the Government has not addressed the needs of homeless people. This is not the case. The homeless will benefit from the \$15.4 million which has been provided under the Crisis Accommodation Program for an additional 90 facilities. In addition, a total of \$3 million has been allocated in 1997/98 to complete the Mental Health Supported Housing Initiative, which is aimed at increasing housing options to support people with a mental illness.

The State Budget is not developed in isolation and is necessarily affected by the Commonwealth's budgetary decisions, particularly in relation to social services. As NCOSS notes, the Federal Budget "contained an array of harmful cuts", including to many joint programs. In this context, my Government's spending on social services such as Home and Community Care, services for Aboriginal people and public transport stands in stark contrast to the Commonwealth's abandonment of social justice.

In addition, the Government has demonstrated its social justice credentials by raising revenue without imposing additional hardships on low income earners and other disadvantaged groups. As you know, the measures employed are ones that NCOSS has advocated for some time. The tax on residential properties with a land value of \$1 million or more, and the tourist accommodation charge, are significant social justice measures as they redistribute wealth to the disadvantaged people of NSW.

More detailed replies to the NCOSS analysis of the State Budget follow.

### Home and Community Care

The Government's commitment to helping older people and people with a disability live independently is reflected in the substantial increase in funding to the HACC program, as acknowledged by NCOSS.

The Government recognises that demand for HACC services will continue to increase as a result of the Commonwealth's introduction of user charges for residential aged care and the application of a 6% efficiency dividend to funding under the Commonwealth State Disability Agreement (CSDA).

As you may be aware, Disability Services Ministers met on 30 July to consider signing an interim CSDA. Regrettably, the Commonwealth resiled from such an agreement whilst continuing to refuse to commit additional resources for unmet need and future growth in disability services. I can assure you that the Government will vigorously pursue negotiations with the Commonwealth on a new CSDA to ensure the best possible outcomes for the people of NSW.

### People with a Disability

Since coming to office, the Government has provided \$24 million recurrent and \$26 million in capital funding to create an additional 300 supported accommodation places for people with a disability. Your article also notes an increase of 16% for the Post School Options Program. These measures, and others of similar magnitude, are concrete evidence of our commitment in this area.

The State's contribution to funding for supported accommodation has increased from 72.5% to 81% since the commencement of the CSDA, while the Commonwealth's contribution has decreased from 27.2% to 19% of total funding. The State is continuing to negotiate with the Commonwealth about the increased need for Commonwealth funding for supported accommodation services.

The Government is also consulting with the community and the disability

# The State Budget: the Premier replies

sector on the recently released Green Paper on the NSW Government Disability Policy Framework. Information received in response to the Green Paper will assist in the development of future policy regarding the Government's response to the needs of people with a disability.

In relation to NCOSS's concerns about the Hall for Children, I am sure you would agree that closure of this privately owned and run facility was the best and only decision the Government could have taken. Ensuring quality, ongoing care for the former residents is a sensitive and difficult task which I know the Minister, and my Government, are determined to get right. We are currently undertaking a thorough assessment of the needs of all residents and they will be progressively relocated once assessments are completed.

## Services for Older People

As previously announced in the *Social Justice Directions Statement*, the Government is developing a policy framework to promote "healthy ageing", and provide a comprehensive approach to the health and wellbeing of older people. NCOSS *News* readers would understand that, as this has not been completed, there is no reflection of initiatives linked to the framework in this year's Budget. However, the draft framework will be released by the end of 1997 to ensure proper input from the community.

The \$75 million provided for the upgrade of State Government nursing homes is further proof that services for older people are a priority for my Government and stand us in direct contrast to Commonwealth policy in this area. NSW Health has now provided nursing homes with details of projected infrastructure programs that will lead to improved facilities in the future.

## Community Services Commission and Guardianship Board

I have fulfilled my commitment to increase funding to the Community

Services Commission. In 1997/98 the Government has provided the CSC with additional recurrent funding of \$250,000 per annum, bringing total funding to \$3.3 million. The Commission has received an 8.3% increase in funding.

The Parliament recently passed a number of administrative amendments to the *Guardianship Board Act*, introducing more flexible financial management orders and streamlining of administrative processes. Once introduced, these new arrangements should alleviate some of the Board's workload. However, I am cognisant of the fact that changes to Commonwealth aged care legislation and the growing number of older people with psycho-geriatric problems may lead to an increase in the Guardianship Board's workload. The Board provides a valuable service, and the Government will continue to monitor the situation

## Children's Services

The NCOSS *News* implies that the State has decreased its funding in this area. This is not the case. As reported in NCOSS *News*, Commonwealth budget cuts have had a dramatic impact on the affordability and accessibility of quality child care.

Despite the Commonwealth's withdrawal from the national expanded child care strategy, the State Government is upholding its commitment to implement a \$20 million child care package. In 1997/98 \$4.75 million in capital expenditure will be provided to increase the number of child care places for children under three and to establish new child care places in rural NSW. An additional \$660,000 has also been allocated to the Family Initiative Fund to provide child care and pre-school services for children aged 0 to 5 who are at risk.

Funding arrangements for the implementation of National Standards for Outside School Hours Care are currently being reconsidered in light of the Commonwealth's removal of operational subsidies to this area of children's services, which clearly - and sadly amounts to a refusal to fund services to these standards.

## Substitute Care, Child Protection, Community Development and Family Support

NCOSS has expressed concern that no progress has been made in dealing with children and young people who are placed in undesirable care situations. The Government has allocated \$20 million over three years to improve standards in substitute care. In 1997/98 \$2.5 million will be used for the development of new models of care, and particularly for the provision of new services for young people with high support needs.

As NCOSS acknowledges, significant reforms to the management and service delivery responsibilities of the Department of Community Services are being implemented, and the Government will continue the reform process in light of the final report of the Royal Commission into the NSW Police Service. Major examples of new approaches in DoCS include the child protection case management framework, introduction of the Family Initiatives Fund, and a renewed focus on the recruitment and training of front-line staff.

The Department of Community Services is introducing an Integrated Community Services Planning Framework in 1997/98, which will identify gaps in services at local level and priorities for more effective service delivery. Chief Executive Officers from relevant Government agencies are also developing guidelines to ensure a more coordinated approach to the provision of care and support services for children and young people.

## School Education

I am pleased that NCOSS recognises the Government's commitment to excellence in teaching and learning as demonstrated by the creation of 250 new teaching positions in 1997/98. A total of 776 new teaching positions has been created under this Government.

There is no basis for claims of "hype, spin, double counting and misleading information" in relation to the Depart-

# The State Budget: the Premier replies

ment of School Education budget. The \$4.2 billion budget represents an increase of 5.8% on 1996/97 and demonstrates the Government's ongoing commitment to improving educational opportunities and outcomes in NSW. Major elements of the Budget include:

- the introduction of the Back to School Allowance in recognition of the costs faced by parents in educating their children. This will provide a real benefit to all families without creating a costly bureaucracy;
- a \$12 million increase in funding for literacy programs and an additional \$4 million for literacy testing;
- a capital works allocation of \$129.8 million to provide for the construction of six new schools, major improvements to seven other schools and the continuation of 45 major projects; and
- \$225 million made available to schools to meet their operating costs.

## Young People

NCOSS' claims that there are few initiatives in the Budget for young people also have little basis. In addition to earlier commitments to young people, this year's Budget includes the \$35 million Neighbourhood Improvement Program, to enhance the amenity of public spaces and parks in housing estate areas, and to make these areas safer for children and young people. The Department of Sport and Recreation and the Police Service are extending their programs through the Police and Community Youth Clubs network, and the Attorney General's Department's Juvenile Crime Prevention Grants Program.

The Supported Housing Program, which provides housing for young, primarily single people, on low incomes will proceed in 1997/98. Under the program an additional 246 purpose-built or purchased dwellings will be provided in areas of high need.

## Employment and Training

I share NCOSS's concerns about high unemployment rates, and note that

Commonwealth changes to employment assistance mean that labour market programs will be cut by \$11.5 billion over the next two years. In comparison, my Government is implementing policies aimed at providing equitable access to education and training opportunities. This is attested by:

- the creation of Department of Training and Education Coordination Centres across the State to enable better planning and coordination of assistance and advice;
- the allocation of \$2.8 million for the State's 20 Industry Training Advisory Bodies to advise Government and training providers on the skills needed for specific industry and enterprise areas;
- the provision of \$20 million for literacy and numeracy courses;
- \$7 million for youth programs, and \$10 million for disability services; and approximately \$11 million per annum set aside by TAFE NSW for targeted training for unemployed people

## Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

NCOSS expresses concern at the alleged underspending of SAAP funds from the 1996/97 Budget. This does not reflect the current situation. Recurrent expenditure of \$2.96 million is being rolled-over to 1997/98. These funds have been allocated to cover the State's contribution to a pay increase for SAAP workers which was awarded under the Social and Community Services Award. However, payment of the Commonwealth's contribution has been delayed into 1997/98, with a subsequent delay in State expenditure.

## Housing

The NSW Government continues to provide high levels of housing assistance, despite the substantial funding cuts of over \$30 million made by the Commonwealth under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. These cuts represent yet another considerable reduction in Commonwealth contributions to

housing assistance expenditure in NSW. It is estimated that Commonwealth funding under the CSHA will have declined in real terms by 38 % between 1989 and 1999.

My Government is committed to the effective and equitable provision of social housing and is continuing to negotiate with the Commonwealth Government in relation to long term reform of housing assistance policy. As I am sure NCOSS would agree, there is a need for a broad range of strategies to encourage affordable housing in the public and private sectors, including a more effective model of rent assistance.

The 1997/98 Budget measures for housing, including the significant funding increases of 19% to community housing and 26% to Aboriginal housing, and the \$10 million enhancement for the Neighbourhood Improvement Program in 1997/98, reaffirm the Government's commitment to the public housing sector.

## Health

I am pleased to note NCOSS' support for the major enhancement of \$221 million for 1997/98, including the increase of \$16.2 million for the primary and community based services program. This brings the total State health budget to \$6.1 billion.

With health services under attack from the Commonwealth Government, the NSW Government is determined that families in regional NSW and fast growing outer urban areas will have access to first-class health services. The 1997/98 Budget represents a third successive increase in NSW Health funding and fulfils the Government's commitment to achieving fairer funding in growth areas.

As to NCOSS' concerns regarding the financial position of Area Health Services, a fall in capital expenditure, and funding to NGOs:

- the Department of Health is currently undertaking a detailed process to ensure the increased funding is fairly distributed among Areas;
- the 1997/98 capital budget provides for a 1.3% increase in capital expenditure to \$471 million.

# The State Budget: the Premier replies

In the event that expenditure on capital works is delayed, the funds remain available for capital works in future years;

- funding provided to NGOs is published each year in the Department's annual report.

It is not possible to determine whether under-spending occurred in respect of mental health funding until final acquittal for 1996/97 has occurred. The underspending estimated in the Budget papers was primarily caused by delays in the availability of data which is used by the States and Commonwealth to negotiate payments under the National Mental Health Strategy. NSW Health is currently negotiating with the Commonwealth to ensure earlier allocation of funds for the next financial year.

The Government has also demonstrated its commitment to working with Aboriginal people and communities by increasing funding for Aboriginal health by \$6.2 million in 1997/98, bringing total funding to more than \$18 million.

## Transport

NCOSS suggests that the Budget does not provide funding for public transport in Western Sydney, and seeks clarification in relation to community transport initiatives. The Budget includes:

- \$480,000 to fund the necessary studies and assessments to continue the implementation of the Parramatta-Epping Rail Line; and
- approval for the Greater Western Sydney Public Transport Strategy.

Programs administered by the Accessible Transport Schemes Section of the Department of Transport also received additional funding in the Budget:

- the NSW Community Transport Program received an additional \$254,000;
- the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme received an additional \$764,000;
- \$35,000 allocated to cover the cost of the "pick-up" of 3 Area Assistance Scheme projects currently administered by the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning.

## Legal Aid

NCOSS refers to uncertainty regarding funding of legal aid services by the State Government, which have resulted from the Commonwealth Government's cuts to legal aid funding to NSW. I am pleased to be able to clarify the Government's position on this matter.

In response to the Commonwealth's decision to reduce legal aid funding, the NSW Government has decided to establish a new and autonomous Legal Aid Commission for NSW. The State Government is prepared to maintain a single service point for legal aid services in NSW and is currently negotiating with the Commonwealth regarding the NSW Legal Aid Commission undertaking work for the Commonwealth on an agency basis. An agreement is expected to be finalised in the near future.

The State Government will also provide an additional \$4 million for legal aid in 1997/98. Future funding levels will be determined following a major review of the provision of legal services in NSW. Levels of funding currently provided to community legal centres from both the Commonwealth and the State will not change.

The Commonwealth has clarified that it will maintain the existing level of its funding for community legal centres at approximately \$3.4 million.

## Corrective Services

The *NCOSS News* has not reported the Government's fulfilment of its election commitments to provide new inmate development services such as the Sex Offenders Program and the Drug Therapeutic Unit. Further, there was no underspending for 1996/97 on the Aboriginal Ex-inmates Post Release Program, as stated in your article.

Serious doubts must be raised about NCOSS' argument that *all* prisoners with experience as mental health patients could be "diverted" from prison. This assertion clearly ignores potentially serious issues relating to community safety.

## Rural and Remote Communities

I wish to clarify a number of points in regard to Government policies and services for rural and remote communities. The suggestion that the Office of Rural Communities (ORC) does not receive a specific budget allocation is not accurate. While the ORC may not have been specifically mentioned within the State Budget, it does receive an allocation within NSW Agriculture's budget. In 1996/97, the ORC's operating budget was \$691,000. This will be maintained in 1997/98.

Funding for the Drought Support Worker program has not been "axed". The two remaining Drought Support Worker positions will be funded until 31 December 1997. In addition, a total of \$4.871 million will be spent on the Regional Drought Initiatives Program over 3 years, with equal funding contributions being made by the State and the Commonwealth.

There appears to be some confusion in relation to the role of the Rural Health Support Unit. The Unit was established to provide support to Rural Health Services, and will do this by researching and developing strategies to address issues of concern to rural areas. Consultative structures for involving rural communities in the health system will be established over the next year, with local health services responsible for resourcing community participation.

NSW Health continues to undertake specific programs to address the health needs of rural communities. For example, the Multi-Purpose Service Program is a joint initiative with the Commonwealth, under which \$22 million is being provided for capital works for the co-location of a range of different health services such as residential aged care, acute care and emergency. The program is being implemented at 12 sites around the State. A total of \$3 million in capital costs is also being spent on the creation of Community Health Posts, 5 of which have been completed and 2 are being finalised.

The Government is conscious of the importance of retaining health staff in

# The State Budget: the Premier replies

rural and remote areas and consideration is currently being given to initiatives which could be implemented within the 1997/98 budget to encourage GPs, specialists and allied health staff to work in rural areas.

## Regional and Urban Development

As NCOSS notes, the State Government is continuing its support for regional development, despite the Commonwealth's abolition of its Regional Development Program. The Government recognises the economic difficulties created by the closure of banks in some regions and has funded extra field workers in the CreditCare program, which facilitates the introduction of credit unions. The Main Street/Small Town program, which assists regional communities to plan their economic future has also recently been reviewed and modified to focus more clearly on communities of 1,500 to 15,000 people.

Underspending on the Area Assistance Scheme (AAS), was largely due to the slowness of some organisations in cashing in their grants. Funds have been rolled over to 1997/98 and \$1.7 million has been allocated to 47 "pick-up" projects. The Minister has recently announced changes to the Scheme to ensure that funds are better targeted to projects in high need growth areas such as Western Sydney and the North Coast. As you know, NCOSS is being consulted on the changes, which will involve better auditing procedures and a more efficient use of "pick-up" funds to allow Government agencies to take over the funding of projects after the initial grants expire.

## Aboriginal Affairs

The State Budget demonstrates the priority attached by the Government to meeting the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people. Funding has been allocated to a range of programs for Aboriginal people in key areas such as health, housing and infrastructure improvements. In contrast, the Federal Government has cut the ATSIC budget by \$470 million over four years. The

1997/98 State Budget supports the needs of Aboriginal communities and includes:

- \$2.25 million each from the NSW Government and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council for the Aboriginal Infrastructure program; and
- almost \$20 million in recurrent payments for Aboriginal education and training, including \$10.3 million to implement the Aboriginal Education Policy in schools. \$3.15 million will also be provided to DTEC to improve access of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to education, training and employment.

## Ethnic Affairs

The New South Wales Government's 1997/98 Budget demonstrates its commitment to ensuring that all citizens of NSW can effectively participate in community life. In addition to increased funding for Carnivale, interpreter and translation services, the Community Grants Program and community language teachers, the Budget provided \$70.2 million to the Department of School Education's Non English Speaking Background program, and \$3.3 million for the Multicultural Education Plan 1998-2001.

## Women

This Government has worked hard to ensure that women have access to quality services and that relevant and effective programs are put into place. This includes funding new measures to reduce violence against women, provide assistance for women who experience violence, fund women's health programs, and implement measures to improve educational and employment opportunities for women. The NSW Government is concerned that the Commonwealth is eroding hard fought rights and entitlements for women by undermining the award system and cutting funding to legal aid and child care.

Additional 1997/98 Budget measures not mentioned in the NCOSS News which will assist women include:

- enhanced programs for cervical cancer screening (\$1.7 million) and breast cancer screening (\$12.4 million);
- \$250,000 to support further implementation of the Department of School Education Gender Equity Strategy through a pilot program to ensure that schools plan for improving equality for girls in schools;
- the establishment of the New South Wales Council on Violence Against Women, the Violence Against Women Unit, established in the Attorney General's Department, and a network of 17 Regional Coordinators located across the State at the total cost of \$1.658 million; and
- the Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Program has been allocated \$4.2 million over three years (1996-1999), to expand and improve the program, with \$1.44 million to be provided in 1997/98.

I am disappointed at NCOSS' statement that "child care experienced a cut". This is clearly inaccurate. The facts of the case are outlined in the section on children's services, but it is clear that the NSW Government has maintained a high level of funding in the face of extreme difficulties in its negotiations with the Commonwealth.

## Conclusion

The 1997/98 State Budget affirms my Government's commitment to social justice. Substantial cuts to Commonwealth Government spending in human services have placed additional pressure on State programs. Despite these financial difficulties, the Budget will deliver major improvements in health and hospital services, family and community services and schools, as well as creating safer communities and providing better transport and roads.

The Budget consolidates the hard work and progress of the Government's first two years in office, and is clearly aimed at achieving a robust economy through a fair sharing of the costs, and a fair sharing of the benefits.

# *As Olympics approach*

## **Rentwatchers formed to keep an eye on rents**

**Rentwatchers is a new tenants action group formed to keep an eye on rents in Sydney as the buildup to the Olympics rounds the home turn.**

The group is being coordinated by Redfern Legal Centre and involves the a large number of tenant groups and community organisations, including NCOSS which has long been concerned at the impact of the Olympics on housing for disadvantaged people.

Sydney has the tightest rental market in Australia, with a vacancy rate of around 1.2%. Burgeoning rental costs in the inner city are forcing tenants out to the urban fringes. Suburbs with a traditionally high number of low income renters are being swamped by property developments aimed at middle to high income earners.

Federal Government cuts to public housing expenditure, rental assistance payments for share houses and social security benefits for young people will also have an effect on low income earners' ability to pay the rent.

Previous tourist events have caused large rent increases in Australia. In the lead up to Bicentenary celebrations in Sydney cheap inner city boarding houses were converted into short term tourist accommodation. Low income boarders and lodgers were evicted and could not afford to return. Expo 88 saw huge rent hikes in South Brisbane. After Expo left town the rents didn't come down.

The NSW Government refuses to see that rents in Sydney are going through the roof. It also doesn't believe that past experience in Barcelona and Atlanta should alert it to the fact that the Olympics will mean even bigger rents, even if only for a short time.

The Olympics Minister's office says there is, "no indication of a problem yet" and therefore no need to introduce legislative protection.

Yet in both Barcelona and Atlanta tenants were evicted or charged over-the-top rents in the lead up to the Olympics so landlords could cash in on the tourist dollar.

Rentwatchers has been formed to chart the increases in rents, particularly along the Olympic corridor, and to lobby for affordable rents in Sydney. We will be releasing quarterly reports about the rental market and commun-

ity actions planned to protest about rent hikes.

The Redfern Legal Centre has just produced a free kit for tenants called *Going Thru' the Roof: a tenant's guide to fighting rent increases in the Residential Tenancies Tribunal*.

*For more details contact Beth Jewell or Kylie Kilgour at Redfern Legal Centre, tel (02) 9698 7277*

## **Small organisations threatened by market rents**

**Urban consolidation policies displace low income groups from traditional places of residence — that's been the global experience.**

The Redfern/Waterloo area, a traditional working class and disadvantaged area of inner city Sydney faces this fate. Accommodation costs are rising rapidly, increasing the hardship of traditional residents.

When this is compounded by forcing all small, locally managed, community services to tender on an open market to deliver their services, in conjunction with other policies entailing the sale of government properties — traditionally the "home" of locally managed community services — then the possibility of these services surviving is low.

Four students from the faculties of Social Science and Law at UTS carried out research into this problem in collaboration with the Redfern Skills Centre and their report, *Urban Consolidation, Micro-Economic Reform and the Viability of Locally Managed Community Services*, has been published by The Shopfront at UTS.

The report recommends:

□ More delegation of power to local governments is needed in dealing with

these issues.

□ Small local community organisations should get special consideration in terms of competitive tendering. These organisations are in the area because of market failure, not the reverse.

□ The sale of government property proceed cautiously in light of:

- a) the needs of an area, and
- b) the provision of effective services.

□ That all levels of government acknowledge the importance of locally managed community organisations in disadvantaged areas. These organisations contribute to empowering disadvantaged groups, and give a sense of community and refuge in times of strife.

□ That concrete forms of funding at all levels of government be set aside to ensure that locally managed community groups survive. One way would be to cover accommodation costs.

*Taken from Frontlines, newsletter of The Shopfront at UTS. For more details on the report, Urban Consolidation, Micro-Economic Reform and the Viability of Locally Managed Community Services, call The Shopfront on (02) 9514 2900*

# Sector snippets

## Common Youth Allowance fax campaign

A coalition of community, youth and church-based organisations has organised a "fax the facts" campaign against the Federal Government's Common Youth Allowance.

The organisations believe that the introduction of a common youth allowance could make a real contribution to simplifying income support for young people, but not in the form proposed.

There are three major concerns: the impact of parental income testing on 18–20 year old independent young people, the withdrawal of the dole for 16 and 17 year olds unless they remain at school, and the taking away of Rent Assistance from many young people who live away from home. Many struggling families will lose severely — up to \$87 per week.

The coalition has published a campaign kit which includes a form letter which can be faxed off, the fax numbers of the Prime Minister and other political leaders in Canberra, background information about problems with the allowance, and an open letter to the Prime Minister signed by 19 organisations.

For further details, contact Carol Croce, YAPAC, tel (06) 247 1666 or John Wells, ACOSS, tel 019 469 494.

## Angela Chan bows out

Angela Chan has stepped down as chairperson of the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW after 3 dramatic years in the position. Tony Pun, a stockbroker and member of the Chinese community, has replaced her.

NCOSS wishes Angela well, and thanks her for the outstanding contribution she has made to multiculturalism, social policy and disadvantaged people in NSW.

## Get LOUD

LOUD is a national media festival of youth culture and the arts and it

will be hitting our newspapers and airwaves in January 1998.

An entirely media based festival, LOUD offers young Australians the opportunity to exhibit their own images, texts, artworks and other representations of youth culture and the arts to a national audience via both new and traditional media.

LOUD wants as many youth people (12–25) as possible to take part. Deadline for nomination is 1 October 1997.

Information leaflets are available by faxing a request to freecall 1800 243 600, by emailing LOUD at <loud@loud.org.au>, by visiting their website at <<http://www.loud.net.au>>, or by writing to LOUD, Locked Bag 4888, Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012.

## An Adult Education degree for Aboriginal people

The University of Technology, Sydney, is offering a Bachelor of Education in Adult Education (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program).

This is a three year full time course for mature aged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It develops knowledge and skills in:

- program planning and community development
- designing education and training programs
- adult teaching and learning skills
- submission and report writing
- public speaking
- Aboriginal studies: culture, history and politics.

There are special support services in recognition of the fact that many ATSI people have had little experience of formal study.

Applications close at the end of October. For further details tel 1800 634 649 (toll free); or (02) 9514 3814, fx (02) 9514 3806.

## 20 years of the Ombudsman

To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Commonwealth Ombudsman, the Ombudsman's Office has published a history of the Office and the people who conceived, established and operated it.

It provides a visual summary of the work of the Ombudsman's Office as well as a guide to the growth of complaints, the main sources of complaints, and major changes in the Office's jurisdiction. There are also contributions from leading political and community figures and former Ombudsmen.

There are limited copies available. To obtain one, contact Maria Ford, tel (06) 276 0124 or email <[Maria.Ford@comb.gov.au](mailto:Maria.Ford@comb.gov.au)>.

## The Public Sector in Jeopardy

This is the title of a new book by Russell Mathews and Bhajan Grewal which charts the economic policies of Australian Governments from Whitlam to Keating, and traces the major changes in intergovernmental fiscal relationships.

A major theme of the book is the way in which all these governments contributed to the decline of the public sector and to the retreat from genuine federalism in Australia.

The book costs \$49.95 and is published by the Centre for Strategic Economic Studies, Victoria University, tel (03) 9248 1024, fx (03) 9248 1048.

## Sector snippets

IF YOU have something interesting to share, please contact Phil Griffiths at NCOSS, tel (02) 9211 2599, fax (02) 9281 1968, email <[philg@ncoss.org.au](mailto:philg@ncoss.org.au)> or write: NCOSS, 66 Albion St Surry Hills NSW 2010

# Conferences & seminars

## AUST ASSN OF SOCIAL WORKERS

### Social Action in an Age of Conservatism: A seminar on activism in the nineties

Sept 12, 2.30-5.30pm, Hotel Lawson, Bulwara St Ultimo

Gary Moore, Director, NCOSS, will speak about ways in which social workers can "maintain the rage" against social injustice without risking their livelihood. No cost, but registration necessary.

Details: tel (02) 9212 2676, fx (02) 9212 4010, email: <aaswnsw@aasw.asn.au>

## WOMEN'S ELECTORAL LOBBY

### 25th anniversary luncheon

Sept 13, 1-4 pm, at the Russian Club, Strathfield. Details: tel Katrina, Mon, Wed, Fri, 11am-3pm (02) 9212 4374

## DEPT STATE & REGIONAL DEV

### 1997 Main Street & Small Towns Conference

Sept 14-16, Merimbula. Details: Mainstreet Partnership, tel (02) 9955 6700, fx (02) 9956 8619

## SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE

### Seminar: Crime, violence and citizenship

Sept 16, SPRC, 12.30-2.00PM, 3rd floor, Samuels Building, University of NSW. Speaker Dr Kerry Carrington, UWS Hawkesbury. Details: Merrin Thompson, tel (02) 9385 3846, email <M.Thompson@unsw.edu.au>

## LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICES ASSN

### These boots were made for walking: Annual neighbourhood and community centres conference

Sept 18-19, Airport Hilton, Sydney. Details Louise Daley tel (02) 9211 3644

## SELF HELP INFORMATION NETWORK

### Annual conference and exhibition: Back to basics — food, accommodation and equity for all people

Sept 20, 10am-4pm, Teachers Federation Rooms 1-2, 300 Sussex St Sydney. Details: tel (02) 9660 6136

## BOTANY MRC

### Fundraising dinner

Sept 20, 7.30pm, Castellorizian Club, Anzac Pde, Kingsford. Raising funds for an ethnic telephone line. Details: tel (02) 9663 3922

## ANTAR

### National Day of Action: Support Native Title

Sept 21, Rally Sydney Domain, 1.30pm

Come and support native title. Prominent Indigenous and non-Indigenous speakers.

Details: Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation, 2 Thames St Balmain, tel (02) 9810 3922

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

### Setting the Pace: the 8th International Conference on Mobility and Transport for older people and people with disabilities

Sept 21-24, Perth. Open for pre-registrations now. Details: Terry Williams, ADD, tel (02) 9267 6870

## SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE

### Seminar: Women's wages and decentralised wage fixing in Australia

Sept 23, SPRC, 12.30-2.00PM, 3rd floor, Samuels Building, University of NSW. Speaker: Diane Fieldes, UNSW. Details: Merrin Thompson, tel (02) 9385 3846, email <M.Thompson@unsw.edu.au>

### Concert for seniors

Sept 24, Rooty Hill RSL, 10.30am-12.30pm. Part of the Australian National Storytelling Festival. Details: Sue Alvarez, tel (02) 9977 0331.

### World Futures Studies Federation XV World Conference

Sept 28-Oct 3, University of Queensland. A host of international speakers talk about the future. Details: Sally Brown, tel (07) 3365 6360, fx (07) 3365 7099, email <wfsf@qut.edu.au>

## ADD

### Healthy Ageing: Making it happen: 1997 Premier's Forums on Ageing

Sept 29, Wagga Wagga, Leagues Club

Sept 30, Nowra, Worriggee House  
Oct 1, Newcastle, Workers Club  
Oct 2, Coffs Harbour, Ex-Services Club  
Oct 3, Parramatta, Gazebo Hotel  
Details: ADD tel (02) 9367 6841

## YAPA

### Access all areas: YAPA 1997 state-wide conference

Sept 30-Oct 2, University of NSW

The conference will highlight innovative approaches to working with young people and the youth sector. Themes are: Young people and the future of employment; Activism for young people and the youth sector; Young people participating in their communities.

Details: tel (02) 9281 2344

## SYDNEY UNI DEPT WOMEN'S STUDIES

### Maternity and Citizenship conference

Oct 3, Women's College, University of Sydney

Topics include childbirth, maternal and child health services, maternity payments and provision, and the work of mothering.

Details: Pat Davies, tel (02) 9351 3638, fx (02) 9351 5336

## SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE

### Seminar: Poverty, choice and relativism

Oct 7, SPRC, 12.30-2.00pm, 3rd floor, Samuels Building, University of NSW. Speaker: Prof Peter Saunders, UNSW. Details: Merrin Thompson, tel (02) 9385 3846, email <M.Thompson@unsw.edu.au>

### Meeting the challenges of implementing national competition policy

Oct 8-9, Millennium Hotel, Sydney

Key policy makers from the National Competition Council and various State Governments address the progress of implementing the Government's agenda, pricing and access issues, etc.

Details: IIR, tel (02) 9929 5366; fx (02) 9959 4835; email <iir@ozemail.com.au>

## ASSN WELFARE OF CHILD HEALTH

### 5th National Conference: Getting Better Together



# Conferences & seminars

Oct 9-10, University of Western Sydney, Nepean, Westmead

Theme: Partnership in Care: a new contract between parents and health professionals. Keynote speaker: Prof Philip Darbyshire, Chair of Nursing, Adelaide Women's and Children's Hospital.

Details: AWCH National Office, tel (02) 9633 1988, fx (02) 9633 1180

## Women of the Land gathering

Oct 9-12, Tocal, Hunter Valley. Details Bronwyn Norman tel (065) 74 4544

## ASSN SELF HELP ORGS & GROUPS

### Arts & Community Services Display 1997

Oct 10-12, Bexley RSL Club, 24 Stoney Creek Rd. A celebration of the self help movement. Awards presentation 4pm Sunday 12th. Details: Judy Riding, tel/fx (02) 9588 3256, mob 017 890 564

## SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE

### Seminar: Costs of aged care in NSW

Oct 14, SPRC, 12.30-2.00PM, 3rd floor, Samuels Building, University of NSW. Speaker: Prof John McCallum, Faculty of Health, UWS Macarthur. Details: Merrin Thompson, tel (02) 9385 3846, email <M.Thompson@unsw.edu.au>

## RED CROSS

### International Children's Week Seminar: Youth: the long road ahead

Oct 22, Government House, Sydney

The forum aims to highlight youth as a vulnerable group within today's community and raise awareness of issues such as youth suicide, violence and substance misuse.

Details: Bronwyn Van Den Nouwelant, tel (02) 9229 4204

## NURSING MOTHERS ASSN

### International conference: Breast-feeding — the natural advantage

Oct 23-25, Sydney. Details tel (03) 9877 5011

## THE SHOPFRONT, UTS

### Shopfront Show Day

Oct 24, 2pm, Blackfriars campus,

Abercrombie St Chippendale. Joins us for an afternoon of Show and Tell with our project groups. Details: tel (02) 9514 2900, fx (02) 9514 2911, email: <Pauline.Oloughlin@uts.edu.au>

## ASSN SELF HELP ORGS & GROUPS

### Support workshop: support for those supporting

Oct 25, 11am-4pm, Bexley RSL Club auditorium, 24 Stoney Creek Rd

What backup is available for support people and groups? What problems are commonly encountered? Who do you debrief to? Cost \$20 incl lunch/afternoon tea.

Details: tel/fx (02) 9588 3256, mob 017 890 564

### Bankstown Community Festival

Oct 25, Old Town Centre Plaza, Bankstown. Celebrate diversity in Bankstown. Entertainment is sought, and stalls and displays can be booked. Details Veronica or Oanh, tel (02) 9774 2426

### Reclaim the night rally

Oct 31. No details yet

## IIR CONFERENCES

### 3rd Annual Contracting Out Congress

Oct 27-29, Millennium Hotel, Sydney

How business and government are implementing cost reduction strategies, achieving quality service and delivery.

Details: tel (02) 9929 5366, fx (02) 9959 4684, email iir@ozemail.com.au>

## ACOSS

### ACOSS Congress 1997

Nov 6-7, Melbourne Town Hall

This Congress comes at a time when the community sector is having to reassess its role in the development of national policy and the delivery of services. Details: Gill Whan, tel (02) 9332 4355, fax (02) 9332 1515

## INL ASSN FOR ADOLESCENT HEALTH

### Celebrating Cultures and Commonality: Second Pacific Rim Conference on Adolescent Health

Nov 12-14, Bondi Beach, Sydney

Professionals, workers, young people and others interested in and involved in adolescent health will be attending.

Details: Education Centre, New Children's Hospital, tel (02) 9845 2091/2092, fax (02) 9845 2999, email <janicec@mania.com.au>

## NCOSS

### Living in the Olympic State: The Social Impact of the Olympics

Nov 13-14, Gazebo Hotel, Parramatta. In conjunction with WSROC & IMROC

A forum for discussion of progress towards maximising the positive socioeconomic opportunities and managing the negative social impacts associated with the Games.

Details: tel (02) 9211 2599, fax (02) 9281 1968, email <info@ncoss.org.au>

## AUST ASSN OF PHILANTHROPY

### Grantseeker Workshops

Nov 17, Sydney. If you want to know more about approaching trusts and foundations for funds, these workshops are for you. Cost: \$250. Details: tel (03) 9650 9255, fx (03) 9654 8298

## AUSTRALIA COUNCIL

### Community Cultural Development Conference: DARE

Nov 17-19, Brisbane

DARE aims to inspire the community arts sector in Australia and challenge it to lead the way into the new millennium.

Details: Peter Wood, conference manager, tel (02) 9281 9001, email <quaypw@s054.aone.net.au>

## ANZ SOC ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS

### Creating a Green Future: National Conference

Nov 17-20, Carlton Crest Hotel, Melbourne. Details: Conference Plus, tel (03) 9602 3073, fx (03) 9642 5152.

## Conferences & Seminars

IF YOU have a conference to advertise, please contact Phil Griffiths at NCOSS, tel (02) 9211 2599, fax (02) 9281 1968, email <philg@ncoss.org.au> or write to:

NCOSS, 66 Albion St  
Surry Hills NSW 2010

## Jobs day for young people

Staff recruitment agency Morgan & Banks have organised a free conference for 500 young unemployed people.

The conference will be held on Monday 15 September at The Metro in George St, Sydney.

John Winter from Morgan and Banks says that, "The conference will be informative and entertaining with a number of well known and high profile personalities speaking about goal setting, motivation, preparing a resumé, presentation, interview skills, following dreams and coping with disappointment."

"It is Morgan & Banks' goal to place all young people who participate in the day in a job. We already have more than 100 jobs committed and we are challenging business to support this venture and provide jobs for the rest."

Young people wishing to attend need to fill in a form and return it. Forms can be obtained from Hoyts Cinemas and General Pants stores.

# Data from the 1996 census

**Population of NSW:** 6,038,696 up 5.4% from 1991.

**Median age:** 34 years, up from 32 years in 1991.

**Proportion of population 65 years and over:** 12.7% up from 11.9% in 1991.

**Australian born:** 72.8%, down from 74.8% in 1991.

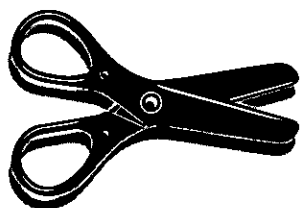
**Indigenous origin:** The number of people who reported being of indigenous origin increased by 44.9% from 1991, from 70,019 to 101,485. This is an increase from 1.2% to 1.7% of the total population of NSW. This increase may be partly explained by people's increased willingness to declare their indigenous origin.

**Education:** 371,615 people, or 6.2% of the population, attended some form of tertiary institution.

**Unemployment:** In June 1997 the number unemployed in NSW was 229,700, 7.6% of the workforce.

**Income:** The median weekly income for people aged 15 years and over: \$298 ( \$15,496 p.a.) up from \$276 in 1991. (Figures for family or household income, which are more comparable to the poverty line figures, will be available in 1998.)

**Rent and Housing Loan Repayments:** The median rent was \$140 per week, up from \$127 in 1991, a rise of 10.2%. The median housing loan repayment was \$867 per month, up from \$618 in 1991, a rise of 40.3%



## NCOSS press clip

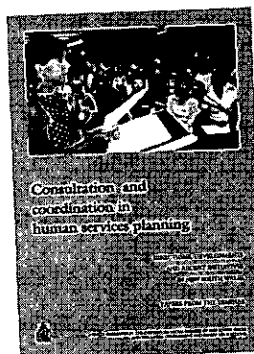
A weekly clipping service which brings you articles from the daily papers relevant to the community sector — including news, opinion, letters and even cartoons.

We monitor the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Financial Review*, *Sunday Telegraph* and *Sun-Herald* and the *Weekend Australian*.

It's great for busy people who need an overview of current affairs and useful for watching an issue over time.

We charge just \$120 for a six month subscription to cover our costs. For further information (or to subscribe), contact Mutz at NCOSS, tel (02) 9211 2599, fx (02) 9281 1968, email <mutzh@ncoss.org.au>

## NCOSS publications



### Consultation and coordination in human services planning

Papers from the seminar. Adrian Pisarski on the successful Marrickville Youth Support Project, David Gilbert and Jill Lang on the North Coast Regional Coordination Pilot, and more

**NCOSS members \$15**

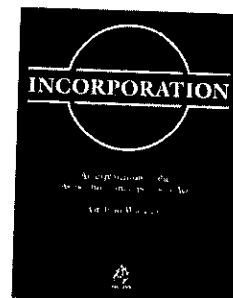
**Retail \$25 incl post**

### Incorporation Latest edition out now!

This NCOSS best-seller explains in simple language how to set up and administer an incorporated association under NSW law.

**NCOSS members \$15**

**Retail \$17.50 incl post**



**To order:** write to NCOSS Publication Sales, 66 Albion St Surry Hills NSW 2010 or ring through and pay with your credit card over the phone. Tel (02) 9211 2599

*Don't miss this year's*

## **ACOSS Congress 97**

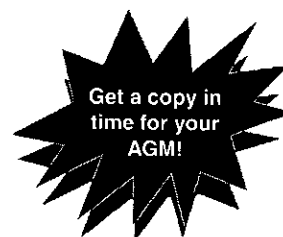


Details and registration: Gill Whan  
Tel: (02) 9332 4355 Fax: (02) 9332 1515  
email: <acoss@acoss.org.au>

### **Managing Community Organisations: A Guide for Management Committee Members**

This booklet will provide you with a clear overview and a better understanding of the following points:

- ☐ What is a management committee?
- ☐ Why have a management committee?
- ☐ What are the key responsibilities of the management committee?
- ☐ What are the different responsibilities of management committee members and staff?
- ☐ Individual management committee members' tasks and responsibilities



The original 5 booklet series in English costs:

For Government Organisations: \$58

For Non Government: \$38

Also available in Arabic, Spanish, Vietnamese:

1 book: \$10 each

5 books or less: \$9 each

5 books or more: \$7 each

To purchase a copy, please contact Kimberly at Ettinger House, tel (02) 9754 1811, fax (02) 9754 1589

## **Formalise your community experience with a Bachelor of Adult Education**

UWS Macarthur offers an undergraduate degree course which aims to equip community adult educators with a formal university qualification.

Part-time options are available, along with flexible modes of tuition to accommodate lifestyle and work commitments. It is offered at Campbelltown and Bankstown campuses.

Course focus is on Adult Learning and Teaching, Program Development, Organisational Management and a range of practical experiences.

To be eligible for admission you must qualify for exemption from the first year of the course through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

Find out how to apply at the RPL workshop...

**23 September**

commencing at 6pm, Bankstown campus

For further information, phone (02) 9772 9480 or (046) 203 103.

Applications close 31 October 1997



# Living in the Olympic state

## *The social impact of the Olympics*

The 2000 Olympics will have implications for communities in Sydney and across New South Wales. Join us on 13 and 14 November to hear findings of recent research, participate in workshops and discuss the issues that will affect us all.

A report on the NSW government's progress in managing social impacts is expected to be released at this

conference. From discussion about the report's findings and debate throughout the two days of the conference, we hope to draw up a set of recommendations and a strategy for future action on managing the potential negative impacts and maximising the positives associated with the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

### AGENDA

#### *Thursday 13 November*

Opening address: **Olympics Minister Michael Knight**

Progress on facilities and related preparation: David Richmond, Director General, OCA

Panel: Hosting the Olympics—What are the economic, environmental and social benefits and costs?

Panel: Social Impacts and Opportunities

The role of the Department of Community Services: Helen Bauer, Director General

Workshops: What do the Olympics and Paralympics mean for Housing, Health, Employment, Transport, Future use of sporting facilities, Consumer protection, Greater Western Sydney, Regional NSW, Security and citizens' rights?

Conference Dinner

#### *Friday 14 November*

Keynote address: **Sandy Hollway, CEO, SOCOG**

Panel: Opportunities for people with disabilities

Panel: The cultural activities and their benefits

Workshops: The Olympic legacy — Metropolitan Strategy, Transport priorities, Facility development and integration, Community development priorities.

Panel: Participating in the Olympics and Paralympics

Where to from here? Conference outcomes and future action: Gary Moore, Director, NCOSS

### *The conference of the year!*

#### **OTHER SPEAKERS INCLUDE:**

Marjorie Anderson, Aboriginal Employment Strategy, OCA

Lois Appleby, Secretary-General, Paralympics

John Collins, Department of Urban Affairs and Planning

Chris Goddard, Western Sydney Community Forum

Rev Harry Herbert, Social Impacts Advisory Committee

Peggy James, Green Games Watch

Beth Powell, Director, Major Events Unit, Sydney City Council

Peter Woods, Local Government and Shires Associations

Susan Young, Keys Young consultants

**Book now! Fill in and fax the registration form enclosed or contact NCOSS tel (02) 9211 2599, fx (02) 9281 1968 to reserve your place.**

*Convened by...*



The Council of Social Service of New South Wales (NCOSS) in conjunction with the Inner Metropolitan Regional Organisation of Councils (IMROC) and the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC)

**November 13-14**  
**Gazebo Hotel**  
**Parramatta**

# Residential Services **SEMINAR**



Thursday 13th  
and  
Friday 14th  
November, 1997

9.30am to 4.00pm

**The Autistic Association of NSW**  
is offering a **2 day Seminar**  
on setting up and running residential to  
cater for the needs of people with autism.  
It will be presented by:

**Leone Baker** *mobile* **0411 744 865**  
Residential Services Co-ordinator  
and

**Leonie Kershaw** *mobile* **0411 519 574**  
Autism Support Unit Co-ordinator

**\$150**  
per day

(Attend 1 or  
both days)

For further information, contact the above, or *Chris O'Connell-Gray* on (02) 9452 5088. Please pass this onto any other services you think may be interested in attending.

## **DAY 1** **THE SETTING-UP PROCESS**

- ☐ Funding alternatives
- ☐ Setting up a residence - practical issues
- ☐ The assessment process and collaborative consultation
- ☐ Enhancing consumers' life-styles
- ☐ Staff training
  - \* why?
  - \* what?
  - \* how?

## **DAY 2** **ON-GOING PROCEDURES**

- ☐ Staffing
- ☐ Policies and procedures
- ☐ Consumer issues
  - \* Health care
  - \* Behaviour and communication support
- ☐ Positive programming
- ☐ Routines
- ☐ ISP's
- ☐ Management of finances
- ☐ Communication of procedures and administration to consumers

**Venue:** Autistic Association of NSW, 41 Cook Street, Forestville

## **One Day Workshops**

### **Autism - Basic & Advanced Skills Workshops**

**Illawarra School for Autism,  
4 Wilford Road, Corrimal 2518**

The Autistic Association of NSW is running two workshops in the Illawarra area for parents, carers and professionals. The first workshop will involve a general discourse on Autism Spectrum Disorder and then practical skill building sessions. The second day will build upon those skills. The anticipated course content is as follows:

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#### **MONDAY 20th October 1997**

##### ***What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?***

Diagnosis/classification; causes; behavioural characteristics & learning styles; social & communication skills of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder

##### ***Visual Thinking & Communication***

key factors for communication systems; instructional methods; why use visual approaches; assessment tools & procedures; selection of learning goals; implementation of teaching programmes

##### ***Behaviour Management***

Communication based approach; the function of behaviour; self management strategies; planned change; classroom management strategies

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#### **MONDAY 27th October 1997**

##### ***Introduction & Communication***

Overview of the day a review of autism; communication, visual systems and other strategies; question & discussion time.

##### ***Social Skills***

play and social skills; playground social strategies; social skills group; question & discussion time.

##### ***Behavioural Support***

Function of behaviour; assessment; strategies; intervention; activities question & discussion time.

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#### **Bookings**

**\$150 per professional, \$75 per family (2 people)**

**Chris O'Connell-Gray**

**Training and Information Officer**

**Tel: 9452 5088 / Fax: 9451 3447**

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## Climate Change Contact List

To find out who is working on greenhouse and energy issues in NSW we are collating a list of people, organisations and contacts for distribution.

Please send CIPSE your details below.

Name of organisation/group:-

\_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

phone \_\_\_\_\_ fax \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

contact name \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description of your work, eg  
campaigns, publications, community  
activities

# community information project on **sustainable energy**

Shop 1, 88 Cumberland Street, Sydney 2000  
Phone: (02) 9251 7146 Fax: (02) 9247 7118  
Email: [cipse@ozemail.com.au](mailto:cipse@ozemail.com.au)

The *Community Information Project on Sustainable Energy* (CIPSE) has been set up to provide information to the community on existing and accessible sustainable energy solutions to greenhouse issues. It is a joint project of Total Environment Centre, the Nature Conservation Council, Friends of the Earth and Australian Conservation Foundation.

The project provides information to the community to enable them to participate in the greenhouse and energy debate, and assists people to find appropriate sources of information to help them implement sustainable energy solutions.

A series of (mostly) free workshops is planned for 1997 and 1998, and an action kit will soon be available. In 1998 there will be a tour of renewable energy sites around Sydney and an exhibition of household energy technology.

If you would like to be notified of workshops and events please contact CIPSE and ask to be put on our mailing list.

The CIPSE Coordinator, Kathy Fook, can be contacted by writing to Shop 1, 88 Cumberland Street, Sydney, 2000; by phone on 02 9251 7146; by fax 02 9247 7118 or by email at [cipse@ozemail.com.au](mailto:cipse@ozemail.com.au)



# ten grains of salt?

Australia's claims of economic disaster if we agree to global greenhouse gas reduction targets can be taken with ten grains of salt.

So says the top U.S. greenhouse negotiator.

Find out if he's right.

Friday 3 October 1997 12-2pm  
State Library of NSW  
Macquarie Street, Sydney

community information project on  
**sustainable energy**  
cipse@ozemail.com.au fax: 9247 7118  
entry free but you must book by 26.9.97

## Ten Grains of Salt? Greenhouse Economics

### Workshop Program

12 midday - 2.00 pm  
Coles Seminar Room  
round table lunch discussion  
(light lunch provided)

1. Why can't Australia's economic modelling be relied on?

Mark Diesendorf  
Institute for Sustainable Futures

2. What economic policies are available to address greenhouse *without* harming the economy or Australian living standards?

Clive Hamilton  
Australia Institute

Numbers for the workshop are limited to allow maximum participation. No economic background is needed as concepts will be fully explained.

Bring your questions and learn to refute the arguments of economists who say that Australia can't afford to tackle the greenhouse effect.

**SPECIAL OFFER!**  
*Human Economy Human Ecology*  
M Diesendorf and C Hamilton (eds)  
recommended retail price \$35  
only \$21 to workshop participants

**P**lease register my attendance at the greenhouse economics workshop '*Ten Grains of Salt*' on Friday 3 October.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANISATION \_\_\_\_\_

(if applicable)

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ (bh)

\_\_\_\_\_ (ah)

FAX \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose my cheque for \$21 made out to the *Institute for Sustainable Futures* for the special book offer. I will collect my book at the workshop.

Return to: **community information project on sustainable energy**  
Shop 1, 88 Cumberland St, Sydney 2000  
cipse@ozemail.com.au fax: 9247 7118



# **"Crime Prevention Works"**



## **GRANTS FORUM**



presented by the

**CRIME PREVENTION DIVISION  
NSW ATTORNEY GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT**

on

**Wednesday 15 October 1997  
from 9.00am - 1.30pm**

The Crime Prevention Division is the Government's key agency for the provision of advice on crime prevention policy and programs in NSW. An important role of the Division is to administer the Juvenile Crime Prevention Grants Program, which supports innovative juvenile crime prevention initiatives.

### **The Grants Forum will:**

- showcase successful innovative projects funded under the Division's Juvenile Crime Prevention Grants Program, which will include presentations by project co-ordinators;
- provide participants with an opportunity to meet recipients of Juvenile Crime Prevention Grants Program grants and discuss their projects in-depth;
- promote and highlight the success of community based crime prevention projects;
- provide an opportunity for government, non-government and community based agencies to network and share information on juvenile crime prevention;
- provide information on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Grants Program's funding procedures; and
- provide information on the work of the Crime Prevention Division.

### **Who should attend?**

- community based non-government organisations who are interested in applying for a juvenile crime prevention grant;
- government and non-government agencies who would like to make contact with other agencies active in crime prevention, or interested in becoming involved in crime prevention; and
- agencies who would like to broaden their knowledge on community crime prevention best practice in Australia and overseas.

### **VENUE:**

**Marconi Room, Town Hall House  
Level 4, 456 Kent Street  
Sydney**

(alternative entrance via Druitt Street, behind the Town Hall)

**RSVP:** Wednesday 1 October 1997  
tel: 9228 7477 - Sue  
or 9228 8307 - Louise

Morning tea will be provided

# Any Which Way You Can

## Youth Livelihoods, Community Resources and Crime

by Dr Rob White

Megan Aumair Anita Harris Liz McDonnell

'By understanding the social world of the young it is hoped that we can gain a better appreciation of the difficulties they face and the rights which ideally they should possess. Fundamentally the crucial issue underpinning the present situation of many young people is lack of a basic means of life. If we as a society cannot fulfil their needs, then young people certainly will - any which way they can.'

*Dr Rob White, University of Melbourne*

'In an age when resources and economic considerations are of paramount importance to many people, it is timely to be reminded that children and young people are by far a country's most precious resource. Sadly, some young people are not given the chance to be part of society's economic life and therefore create their own self-destructive resource sub-cultures. Society is courting disaster if it fails to heed the message of this book.'

*Sir Ronald Wilson*

'The author raises a number of questions which must be addressed if we are to understand the impact on young people of current economic and social conditions. What types of incomes or resources are available to them? By what formal or informal means is that income supplemented? What is the nature of crime committed by and against young people... what are their basic rights?'

*Brian Burdekin AO, Chairman, AYF*

Published by the Australian Youth Foundation, 1997 (ISBN 0 646 30395 3) 146 pages.



For more information about the AYF visit our web site at <http://www.ayf.org.au/~ayouth/>

### Order Form

Please forward  
with payment to:



The Australian Youth  
Foundation  
Suite 302  
134 William Street  
EAST SYDNEY 2011  
Ph (02) 9357 2344  
Fax (02) 9358 5635

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of *Any Which Way You Can* at \$30 each (including postage in Aust.)

I enclose a cheque / money order for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (for credit card payments, see below)

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Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

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State \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

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Credit card details

BANKCARD

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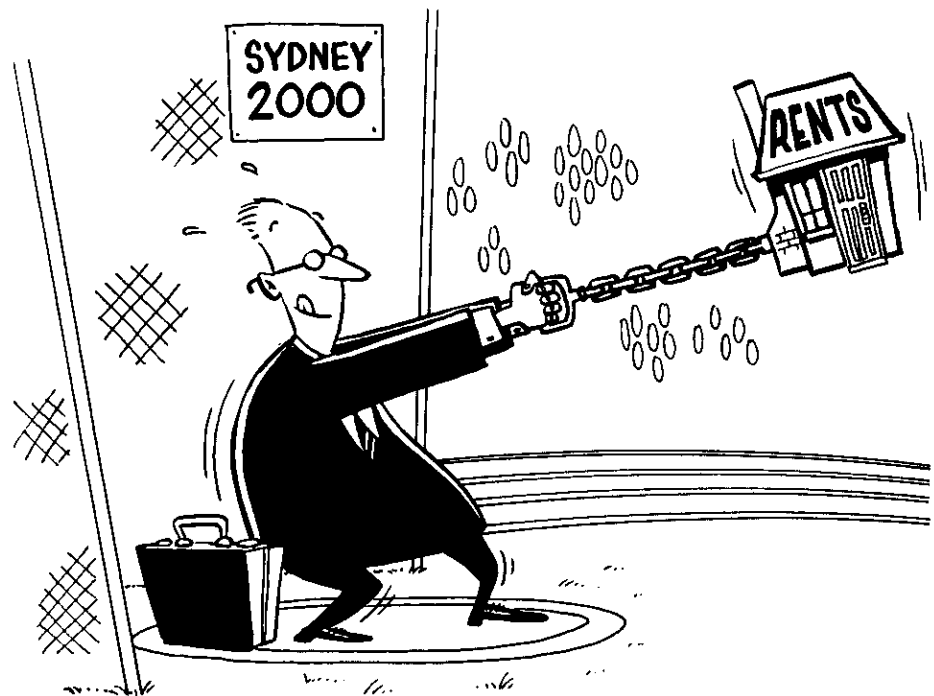
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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

# Living in the Olympic state

A CONFERENCE ON MANAGING  
THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES

*Will this  
be Sydney  
in the Year  
2000?*



GAZEBO HOTEL, PARRAMATTA  
13-14 NOVEMBER 1997

Convened by The Council of Social Service of New South Wales (NCOSS) in conjunction with the Inner Metropolitan Regional Organisation of Councils (IMROC) and the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC)



## Thursday 13 November

The Olympics will have implications for communities in Sydney and across New South Wales, now and beyond 2000. A report on the NSW Government's progress in managing social impacts is expected to be released at this conference. From discussion about the report's findings and debate throughout the two days of the conference, we hope to draw a set of recommendations and a strategy for future action on managing the potential negative impacts and maximising the positives associated with the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

**Conference Dinner:** Join us for a night of fine food and wine, entertainment and a look at the lighter side of the issues. The dinner will be a special event in its own right, and we hope you can join us to continue the day's discussion in a more informal atmosphere.

### THURSDAY'S AGENDA

- 9.15 Welcome:** Annabel Senior, President, NCOSS  
**Opening Address:** Minister for the Olympics, Michael Knight
- 9.45 Setting the Scene**  
**Progress on Facilities and Related Preparation:** David Richmond, Director General, Olympic Coordination Authority
- 10.15 Morning Tea**
- 10.45 Panel: Hosting the Olympics—What are the benefits and costs?**  
Harry Herbert, Chairperson, Olympics Social Impacts Advisory Committee (SIAC)  
Peggy James, Coordinator, Green Games Watch 2000  
John Madden, University of Tasmania (author of *The Economic Impact of the Sydney Olympic Games*)
- 12.15 Lunch**
- 1.15 Panel: Social Impacts and Opportunities**  
**International experience:** Michael Darcy, University of Western Sydney (co-author of *Housing and the Olympics*, 1994)  
**The Work of the Social Impacts Advisory Committee:** Brian Elton, Consultant to SIAC  
**Home of the Olympics—the reality:** Lea Rosser, Auburn Council  
**Involving the community:** Geoff Shuttleworth, Penrith City Council  
**The Keys Young Report:** Susan Young, Keys Young Pty Ltd (joint author)
- 2.45 Afternoon Tea**
- 3.15 Preparing for the Olympics—what will it mean for community services?** Helen Bauer, Director-General, Department of Community Services
- 3.30 Workshops: Managing the impact of the Olympics on...**  
**Consumer protection**  
Mara Bun, Australian Consumers Association  
Rod Stowe, Department of Fair Trading  
**Employment**  
Marjorie Anderson, Aboriginal Employment Strategy, Olympic Coordination Authority  
Ross Jones, Central Western Sydney Area Consultative Committee  
Margaret Ryan, Department of Training & Education Coordination  
**Future use of the sporting facilities**  
Leanne Evans, Department of Sport & Recreation  
Iain Winton, Blacktown City Council  
**Greater Western Sydney**  
Michael Darcy, University of Western Sydney  
Evelyn Schilz, Greater Western Sydney Economic Development Board  
**Health**  
Maria Visotina, Department of Health  
**Housing**  
Vivienne Milligan, Office of Housing Policy  
David Ramsey, Shelter NSW  
**Regional NSW**  
Helen Backhouse, Illawarra Forum  
Michael O'Sullivan, Department of State & Regional Development  
**Security & citizens' rights**  
Tracy Sonda, IMROC Youth Crime Prevention Project, Ashfield Council  
**Transport**  
David Pettigrew, Olympic Coordination Authority  
David Trebilcock, Leichhardt City Council
- 5.00 Concluding session:** Gary Moore, NCOSS
- Conference dinner, 7pm**

# REGISTER NOW!

## *Living in the Olympic state*

Please register one delegate per form. Photocopy form for extra registrations. Please make sure you indicate your workshop choices.

Registrations without payment will not be accepted.

*Please register now as places are strictly limited*

### Registration

I would like to attend "Living in the Olympic state" on 13-14 November 1997

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

NCOSS membership number (if app) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Registration: please choose one option

##### Government, local government & corporate

- ☐ Conference only \_\_\_\_\_ \$300
- ☐ NCOSS affiliate member discount \_\_\_\_\_ \$250
- ☐ Conference & Dinner package \_\_\_\_\_ \$350
- ☐ NCOSS affiliate member discount \_\_\_\_\_ \$300

##### Community sector

- ☐ Conference only \_\_\_\_\_ \$140
- ☐ NCOSS member discount \_\_\_\_\_ \$120
- ☐ Conference & Dinner package \_\_\_\_\_ \$170
- ☐ NCOSS member discount \_\_\_\_\_ \$150

Please fill in this form and post with registration fee to  
Olympics Conference,  
NCOSS

66 Albion St,  
Surry Hills NSW 2010.

If paying by credit card, you may prefer to fax it to  
(02) 9281 1968.

Confirmation of registration will be mailed to you.

For further details contact Deb Williams at NCOSS,  
tel (02) 9211 2599, email debw@ncoss.org.au

### Workshop choices

Please number your first two preferences for each session.

#### Thursday 3.30 session: Managing the impact of the Olympics on...

- ☐ Consumer protection
- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Future use of the sporting facilities
- ☐ Greater Western Sydney
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Regional New South Wales
- ☐ Security and citizens' rights
- ☐ Transport

#### Friday 1.15 session: The Olympic legacy

- ☐ Community development priorities
- ☐ Facility development and integration
- ☐ Metropolitan Strategy, Inner Sydney
- ☐ Metropolitan Strategy, Western Sydney
- ☐ Transport priorities

### Payment

- ☐ I enclose a cheque (payable to NCOSS) OR:
- ☐ I am paying by ☐ Bankcard ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

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Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Name on card \_\_\_\_\_

Card expires \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

There will be an administrative charge of \$15 for registrations cancelled by 31 October 1997. No refunds will be made after 31 October. Substitute delegates are welcome.

# Making

## THE OLYMPICS

# work

## FOR THE PEOPLE OF NSW

International experience shows that the Olympic Games can have both positive and negative social impacts for the host city. In 1995, the Keys Young Report, "Preliminary Social Impact Assessment of the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games", identified a number of social impacts and emphasised the need for a strong focus on the principles of access and equity in planning for the Olympics and Paralympics.

Some of the social impacts identified include:

- pressure on housing affordability and the reduction of low cost accommodation;
- the requirement for better public transport systems;
- potential job opportunities for the unemployed and stimulus to regional NSW;
- the need for additional health and community services or different means of delivery;
- financing and managing new sporting facilities after the Games; and
- ensuring access on transport and at Games facilities for people with disabilities.

NCOSS, in conjunction with the Inner Metropolitan Regional Organisation of Councils (IMROC) and the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils

(WSROC), is pleased to host the first opportunity for public discussion of progress towards maximising the positive socio-economic opportunities and managing the negative social impacts associated with the 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

### About the Conference Hosts...

*The Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS)* is the peak body for the social and community services sector in NSW. We bring together community service organisations with common interests but diverse functions to work on behalf of disadvantaged people and communities across NSW.

*The Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC)* is the leading research, advocacy and lobbying arm of local government in Western Sydney, representing nine local councils and 1.2 million people.

*The Inner Metropolitan Regional Organisation of Councils (IMROC)* facilitates regional cooperation through advocacy, resource sharing and regional planning. It represents ten councils and aims for sustainable and involved communities.

### To register...

Please fill in and send the enclosed registration form. Registration includes lunches, morning and afternoon teas both days. Registration fees are:

#### Government, local government and corporate

Conference only _____	\$300
NCOSS affiliate member discount _____	\$250
Conference & Dinner package _____	\$350
NCOSS affiliate member discount _____	\$300

#### Community sector

Conference only _____	\$140
NCOSS member discount _____	\$120
Conference & Dinner package _____	\$170
NCOSS member discount _____	\$150

### FURTHER DETAILS

Contact Deb Williams at NCOSS, tel (02) 9211 2599, fax (02) 9281 1968, email <debw@ncoss.org.au>

NCOSS thanks our major sponsor, the Olympic Coordination Authority, along with the NSW Departments of Ageing and Disability, Community Services, Fair Trading, Health, Housing, and Urban Affairs and Planning for their support.

The “Living in the Olympic state” conference brings together presenters from State and local government, the community sector, environment, business and consumer groups and the universities.

By the end of the conference, we will have moved from the broad issues associated with the Games, through research and current work, down to the nuts and bolts of how the Olympics and Paralympics will impact on communities in Sydney and across New South Wales. The two days of cross-sector discussion provide an excellent opportunity for the people of NSW to debate the issues and move towards a strategy to maximise the positive and minimise the potential negative impacts of the Olympic Games.

## FRIDAY'S AGENDA

**9.00** **Welcome:** IMROC President, Maire Sheehan  
**Keynote Address:** Sandy Hollway, CEO, SOCOG

**9.20** **Opportunities for people with disabilities**  
**The Paralympics—the event:** Lois Appleby, Chief Executive, Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games

**The Olympics—Maximising opportunities for people with disabilities:** Jane Woodruff, Director General, Ageing and Disability Department

**10.15** *Morning Tea*

**10.45** **Panel: The Cultural Activities and their benefits**

Craig Hassall, General Manager, Artistic Events, SOCOG

Gary Ella, Manager, Aboriginal Affairs, SOCOG

Angela Chan, former Chairperson, Ethnic Communities Council

Beth Powell, Director, Major Events Unit, Sydney City Council

Debra Good, University of New South Wales (researching the Managerial Dilemmas of the Cultural Olympiad)

**12.15** *Lunch*

**1.15** **Workshops: The Olympic Legacy**

**Community development priorities**

Barbara Gapps, Fairfield Council

Anne Marie Dwyer, Department of Community Services

**Facility development and integration**

Mick O'Brien, Olympic Coordination Authority

Peter Woods, Local Government & Shires Association

**Metropolitan Strategy, Inner Sydney**

Sue Holliday, Department of Urban Affairs & Planning

David Tow, IMROC

**Metropolitan Strategy, Western Sydney**

John Collins, Department of Urban Affairs & Planning

Alex Gooding, Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils

**Transport priorities**

Chris Goddard, Western Sydney Community Forum

Christine Laurence, Nature Conservation Council

**2.45** *Afternoon Tea:*

**3.15** **Panel: Participating in the Olympics and Paralympics**

**Volunteering:** David Brettell, SOCOG

**Ticketing:** Amanda Cornwall, Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC)

**Greater Western Sydney Games:** Chris Cunliffe-Jones, GWS Games

**4.00** **Where to from here? Conference outcomes and future action:** Gary Moore, NCOSS

**4.30** **Closing address:** Cr Bob Downing, WSROC Chairperson

**4.45** *Close of Conference*



## DoCS summit sends a clear message

A major meeting attended by seventy peak welfare agencies and trade unions has called on the Carr Government for an across-government commitment to tackle the deep seated problems faced by the ever growing number of disadvantaged clients of the Department of Community Services.

The meeting angrily denounced the failure of successive State Governments to provide real vision about how to prevent social problems and the marginalising of the community services sector.

The cost to the community of the lack of prevention is now becoming stark.

The continuing crises in DoCS will not be solved until we have an absolute focus on effective policies, adequate resources, the best training and support, and structures capable of delivering positive outcomes for vulnerable children, families and people with disabilities.

The meeting also made it absolutely clear that the NSW community sector is demanding a bipartisan approach to the funding and delivery of all community services in this State.

The meeting overwhelmingly endorsed proposals in the NCOSS 1998/99 pre Budget submission for additional assistance to DoCS of \$100 million in conjunction with a fully resourced Children's Commission.

The meeting noted that if the Government must find \$500 million for



Some of the 70 representatives of the community sector who met at the DoCS summit last month

uncosted Olympics expenditure (80% of DoCS' budget), then it must also find critical new resources for the hundreds of thousands of DoCS clients each year.

The meeting also endorsed the establishment of an independent inquiry to assist the rebuilding of DoCS and the development of the community services system.

Such an inquiry should be managed by an appropriately skilled body, such as the Community Services Commission, and could focus on determining the real levels of client need and required resources, a community services sector wide accreditation and staff development strategy and the merits of structural changes within the department.

A detailed statement is now to be prepared for endorsement by all summit participants. This statement

will be forwarded to Community Services Minister Faye Lo Po', Opposition Shadow Minister Patricia Forsythe and Director General Helen Bauer.

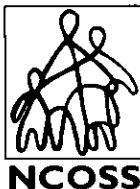
The meeting also called on the Carr Government for a genuine partnership with community agencies, consumer groups and trade unions in improving the State's social and community services.

**Lo Po' welcomes summit: the Minister's press release on p 6**

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The Council of Social Service of New South Wales represents more than 7000 service delivery and consumer groups through its organisational membership.

For information about membership call  
Deborah Williams.

66 Albion Street  
Surry Hills NSW 2010  
Australia

Tel: 9211 2599

Fax: 9281 1968

email: [info@ncoss.org.au](mailto:info@ncoss.org.au)  
web: <http://www.ncoss.org.au>



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Phil Griffiths

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**Visit the NCOSS website at <http://www.ncoss.org.au>**

# A fair say makes for better government decisions

In the wake of the State MPs super debacle and debate about an effective MPs' Code of Conduct, NCOSS is calling on the Carr Government to urgently release its long awaited Green Paper on Consultation and Participation in Government.

In its October 1996 Social Justice Directions Statement the NSW Government promised to finalise a report by June 1997 on methods to enhance community participation in decision making. Eight months on there still is no report for public discussion.

Reforms to the roles and responsibilities of government over the past decade have raised fundamental challenges to effective and accountable relationships between government, citizens and communities, in NSW as much as elsewhere.

The contracting out of government services poses real threats to freedom of information and the community's right to know, as recently recognised by the Administrative Law Council of Australia. And unfortunately to date, ensuring access to, and quality of service in a contracted regime often runs a distant second to cost saving.

During 1997 the community witnessed ill conceived attempts by the State Government to wind back the responsibilities of watchdog bodies such as the Community Services Commission.

Improving community participation took a back seat to regulatory efficiencies in the December 1997 passing of new planning legislation.

In the Community Services portfolio, the current review of the 1994 Consultation Protocol reveals a major struggle over rights and responsibilities in the relationship between govern-

By  
NCOSS  
Director  
Gary  
Moore



ment, community and consumer interests. In Health, community and consumer groups are demanding a real say in how services are planned and budgets prioritised.

The proposed NSW Children's Commission will be fatally flawed if it doesn't provide sound advocacy programs and participation mechanisms for children and young people. And a utilities ombudsman must have the powers and resources to regulate quality service standards and protect consumer rights.

## Objective receding

NCOSS recognises the Government's achievement in legislating an Administrative Decisions Tribunal in NSW, even though one year on, adequate resources and a definitive timetable are yet to be agreed.

However on so many other fronts, the objective of more open government and the benefits of greater community participation seem to rapidly receding.

NCOSS believes that the Premier can further demonstrate that he has genuinely learned the lessons of the super fiasco, and release a Green Paper which commits his Government to real improvements in making government more responsive and accountable to citizens and their communities.

## Going for gold or going broke?

The NSW Budget is once again under serious pressure, due to unaccounted-for Olympics expenditure.

Media reports in early January suggest that up to \$500 million of additional public funds will have to be found to meet essential Olympics costs such as wages for public transport and health workers.

These reports also suggest that the Carr Government will seek spending cuts across a range of departments and agencies to meet this shortfall.

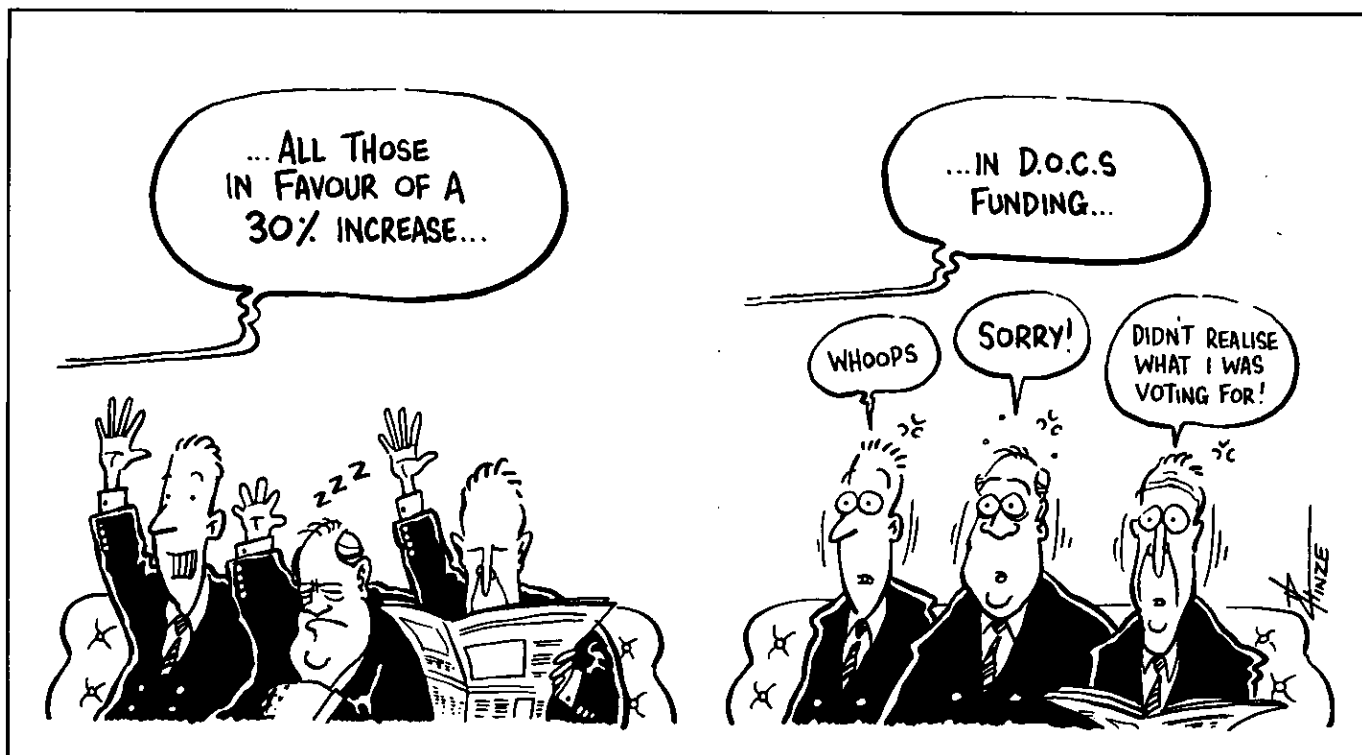
NCOSS, along with other peak community, housing and church organisations, has been seeking a detailed picture of the full fiscal impact of Sydney staging the 2000 Olympics and Paralympics.

Following interest from the Auditor General and pressure from the Opposition and crossbench MPs last year, Olympics Minister Michael Knight agreed that a full Olympics-related Budget would be tabled in State Parliament when it resumes in April.

The State Budget is already headed for a significant deficit, with over \$400 million of revenue lost before any Olympics "surcharge" is added. And there are suggestions that the Asian financial crisis could severely cut revenue, leaving SOCOG with a deficit the State would be expected to cover.

The NSW Government needs to better tackle growing social and economic needs through more effective business, regional and employment development policies and increased spending on human services and social programs, rather than cuts.

NCOSS has asked the Olympics Minister and the Treasurer to spell out how they are compiling the Olympics-related Budget so that the public will be able to judge what is a legitimate Olympic expense.



## News from Macquarie Street

### Democrats back land tax

The Australian Democrats have come out against NSW Opposition promises to abolish land tax.

Democrats State Parliamentary Leader, Elisabeth Kirkby, argued that, "The State has a responsibility to ensure that issues such as health care, homelessness and affordable housing are addressed and part of the revenue raised from land taxes is used to meet these needs.

"Mr Collins will have his work cut out for him convincing the Australian Democrats that this tax should be scrapped if the Coalition win the next election," she said.

### Minister condemns Telstra rural news cut

The Minister for Regional Development and Rural Affairs, Harry Woods, has condemned Telstra closing its rural news gathering service.

The Electronic News Gathering service (also known as REACH) lets television crews working in rural and remote areas deliver their stories via electronic link to a television station in time for the nightly news.

The closure means that TV crews

will have to physically deliver video footage, meaning that film will often be a day behind the actual story.

Transmission points to be closed by the end of February include Albury, Armidale, Ballina, Bathurst, Bega, Cooma, Dubbo, Gosford, Grafton, Lismore, Moree, Narrabri, Newcastle, Nowra, Orange, Perisher Valley, Port Macquarie, Tamworth, Taree, Thredbo, Tweed Heads, Wagga Wagga and Wollongong.

### Crisis talks on workplace deaths

The Minister for Industrial Relations, Jeff Shaw, has announced he will call crisis talks to address the "alarming number of deaths and accidents at work".

"In the first twelve days of the new year alone, five people have been killed in a series of tragic accidents in NSW," he said.

NSW has doubled the maximum penalties for breaches of safety laws and the Government had secured the largest ever safety fine in Australia when a Sydney manufacturing firm was fined \$485,000 over a series of accidents involving the loss of workers' fingers and limbs.

### New Asia-Pacific HQ for NSW

The Premier, Bob Carr, has announced that the American electronics multinational, Rockwell, will be setting up an Asia-Pacific regional headquarters at North Ryde, creating 200 jobs and injecting \$200 million into the State economy.

The Premier revealed that Rockwell will:

- set up an electronic commerce division to help banks process inquiries through automated call centres
- expand the sale of modified satellite technology to farmers to help them examine crops and pinpoint areas needing more water, fertiliser or herbicides
- set up a base for its engineers to train and service its products and systems throughout Asia.

### New fuel to cut pollution

The petroleum industry and the NSW Environment Protection Authority have forged a landmark agreement to change the composition of petrol to progressively reduce the amount of petrol vapour released into the air.

# A Budget to heal division

**Major developments in our shared national life have made 1997 a significant year in Australian history.**

These developments, some of which have unfolded in the full glare of the public spotlight, while others have remained in the shadows, point to a troubled and increasingly divided nation. They also cry out to the government to use the forthcoming federal Budget to heal the divisions, not to exacerbate them.

In the past year, we have witnessed:

- ❑ the divisive native title and stolen generations debates;
- ❑ the nursing home furore;
- ❑ the rapid pace of tax reform developments;
- ❑ the heated controversies around industry policy and greenhouse gas emissions;
- ❑ the continuing rise in long-term unemployment and underemployment;
- ❑ the upsurge in "workfare" rhetoric amid claims of social security rorts; and
- ❑ the reappearance of real destitution as harsh new income support rules start to bite and the low income housing crisis deepens.

If there is one unifying theme in these disparate issues, it is the futility of trying to draw definite dividing lines between economic, social and environmental policies. They are inextricably linked and we ignore the connections at our own peril.

*ACOSS will be working hard to influence the shape of the next Federal Budget*

**By  
ACOSS  
President,  
Michael  
Raper**



Nowhere is this more apparent than in our piecemeal attempts, as a nation, to address the persistent problem of high unemployment and the wider social problems that flow from this.

Australia is becoming an increasingly divided society. The gap between people who are well-off and those who are poor continues to widen — not just in dollar terms but in knowledge terms and those doing well seem to have less and less comprehension of the daily struggle of the 1.8 million Australians living in poverty.

This growing gap is due in large part to economic factors which have dampened employment opportunities and increased wage inequalities. But it is also grounded in long-standing weaknesses in Australian society which have served to entrench the divisions between those in the mainstream and those relegated to the margins.

## **The lie of 'terra nullius'**

As a nation we have not yet managed to mend old divisions, especially those arising from the lie of 'terra nullius' and the subsequent dispossession of indigenous Australians and their exclusion from general community life. Australia's halting response to the

social challenges posed by our emerging relationship with East Asia is another weakness that diminishes us as a society and as a force within the region.

Real progress has been made in these areas over the past decade, but this progress has been threatened by the events of the past two years. Many Australians are now feeling insecure and uncertain about the country's future economic and social direction.

Many Australians are also feeling the direct effects of unemployment, job insecurity (through far high levels of casual employment) and the withdrawal of support and assistance following the severe cuts of the last two federal Budgets.

## **Budget statement**

The ACOSS Federal Budget Priorities Statement has been constructed to address both these broad issues and specific problems. It sets out an integrated raft of policies in a wide range of areas which, if implemented, would reduce unemployment and inequality and ensure a brighter future for all Australians.

During the next three months in the lead up to the Coalition government's third Budget, ACOSS will be working hard to influence its shape.

I hope that our document, *Budget 98 — Time for 20/20 Vision*, will help all our members and affiliates in the community sector so that through our joint efforts we ensure that the government gives priority to the social and environmental needs of the nation as well as the economic.

## Lo Po' welcomes DoCS summit

Community Services Minister Faye Lo Po' welcomed the summit meeting convened by NCOSS on 22 January. This is what she said in her press release that day.

### NCOSS SUMMIT WELCOMED

The Minister for Community Services, Faye Lo Po', today welcomed the convening of a summit by the NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS) to discuss problems in the community services sector.

"Around 70 groups were at the summit. They represent a wealth of experience and wisdom in community services and disability. I have made it plain that I want to get the benefit of that experience by hearing what these groups have to contribute," Mrs Lo Po' said.

"I have asked the director of NCOSS, Gary Moore, to bring a delegation of people from today's summit to talk to me as soon as he can organise it.

"This will happen hopefully within the next week. I am eager to hear what they have to say.

"I will incorporate all their view and information into my own thinking and planning in the task in front of me: to pinpoint the chronic problems facing DoCS and the community and disability sectors and set about tackling them in the most effective possible way.

"I intend to make NCOSS and other groups present at today's summit my partners in this task — including the trade unions who advocate for the hard-working DOCS officers and other workers in the field," Mrs Lo Po' said.

### STOP PRESS

As we go to press, the Minister has announced the setting up of a taskforce (including NCOSS Director Gary Moore) to drive reform of DoCS. NCOSS News will report on this next month. All comments NCOSS makes will posted on our website as they are made.

## RCCC in limbo Not enough progress for rural NSW

**The Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS) is disappointed at the lack of significant progress by the Government in addressing the needs of rural and remote communities.**

NCOSS welcomed the creation of a Ministry of Rural Affairs as an indication of government commitment to take action on this issue. NCOSS is extremely concerned that while there have been a number of media releases emerging from government, there has been very little substantive action.

NCOSS recently obtained a copy of the Report of the Rural Communities Consultative Council (RCCC), dated October 1997. We understand that this report has not been formally released and, despite being completed four months ago, there has been no formal response to its recommendations.

NCOSS strongly urges the NSW Government to release the RCCC report and demonstrate its commitment to rural and remote communities of NSW by acting on recommendations of the RCCC report.

Of particular importance are:

- ❑ development of regional infrastructure plans aimed at bringing about sustainable socioeconomic development in regional NSW (rec 1)
- ❑ an evaluation of the effect of the full implementation of competition policy and microeconomic reform on regional economic activities (rec 3)
- ❑ promotion of regional Olympic business opportunities (rec 6)
- ❑ the introduction of a "Community Futures" program (rec 9)
- ❑ the introduction of a "Jobs for the Bush" employment creation initiative (rec 11)
- ❑ a review of health and services resource allocation formulae (rec 19)
- ❑ an investigation of best practice models of service delivery appropriate

to rural and regional contexts (rec 20)

- ❑ an expansion of country community transport initiatives (rec 21)
- ❑ the development of a community technology strategy (rec 27)
- ❑ the development of a consultative model (rec 28)
- ❑ the expansion of the Government Access Program (rec 35)
- ❑ strengthening the implementation and application of Rural Community Impact Statements (rec 36)

Some of these recommendations are mirrored in proposals contained in the NCOSS 1998/99 pre-Budget submission.

NCOSS further understands that the RCCC has not yet been re-appointed. Nominations for the new committee were sought from NCOSS on 11 September last year, and the last meeting of the RCCC was in August. This delay is disappointing.

In February 1997, the Premier announced that the life of the RCCC had been extended and NCOSS understood that this was for an indefinite period.

It is surprising to find in the RCCC report a statement that the RCCC is to be reviewed after its first twelve months term (p 23). This period passed in August 1997 and a review seems at odds with the Premier's announcement of an indefinite extension some months prior to this. NCOSS is also seeking clarification of this matter.

Effective policy, program and service initiatives for rural and remote communities also require sound and practical coordination of effort across government agencies responsible for elements of rural affairs.

To this end, NCOSS also trusts that urgent progress can be made in defining the various roles, relationships and responsibilities between the Premier's Department, the Ministry of Rural Affairs, the Department of State and Regional Development and NSW Agriculture.

# Children's Commission Green Paper promises strong debate

**On the 22 December 1997, the State Government released a Green Paper on options for establishing a Children's Commission.**

The Carr Government had committed itself to establish a Children's Commission following the release of the Paedophile Inquiry report of the Wood Royal Commission in August.

It is critical that the Government gets the responsibilities, functions, powers and resources of the Children's Commission right.

On first reading, the Green Paper canvasses many of the issues, raised by the Wood Royal Commission and other recent reports, which have to be addressed over the next three months.

In discussing the employment

screening of people working with children, the Green Paper introduces a new, and potentially contentious proposal to place the onus and cost of accreditation on existing and potential employees and volunteers.

At the same time, the Green Paper appears to omit discussion about greater assistance for an independent children's advocates program, as raised in Wood and recommended in the 1996 NSW Legislative Council Report on Children's Advocacy.

And the Green Paper continues the Government attraction to reducing the responsibilities, and hence, effectiveness of the Community Services Commission, by posing options in the investigation and review section that take us no further than its recent unsuc-

cessful bid to push the Ombudsman Amendment Bill through the NSW Parliament.

NCOSS hopes that interested consumers, organisations and the broader public will submit their views on the shape of a Children's Commission by the Green Paper's deadline of 31 March 1998.

We will continue to remind the Carr Government that genuinely assisting vulnerable children and young people is about prevention and protection and about additional resources for quality services and effective watchdogs.

*Copies of the Green Paper are available from the Office of Children and Young People in The Cabinet Office on 9228 5146 or on the net at [www.nsw.gov.au/html/reports.html](http://www.nsw.gov.au/html/reports.html).*

## IMPORTANT: NCOSS members please note

## Putting the community sector on the internet

The Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) is working on a major project to put information about welfare and community service organisations onto the internet.

The information will be made available in a database, linked to the ACOSS web site and the web sites of all State and Territory COSSes. People looking for a particular kind of organisation or service, or a service in a particular location, will be able to "search" the ACOSS database to find what they need.

NCOSS strongly supports the ACOSS project. We find the possibility of a national database of welfare and community services exciting. It has the potential to be of immense benefit to both the public at large and to other services.

It illustrates the determination of the sector as a whole to use new communications technologies for the benefit of disadvantaged people; to not be "left behind" or have all the benefits go to those with deep pockets.

*However there are some issues*

*that NCOSS members will need to address.*

It is intended that the "raw material" for the ACOSS internet database will come from the membership records of the State and Territory COSSes. Only organisational members will be included in the database; not individual members or affiliates.

The information to be uploaded includes the organisation's name, postal address, public phone and fax numbers, email address and website, whether or not the organisation produced publications for sale, the organisation type, its primary service focus, some brief comments or description, name of any parent or sponsoring organisation. The database will be updated every week or two.

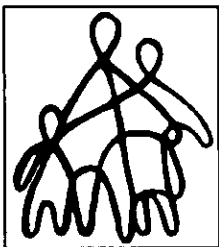
NCOSS understands that some organisations may not want their details to be included as part of the ACOSS database. However it is impractical for us to delay the project until we can contact and seek specific approval from every individual organisational member.

Therefore, at the NCOSS Board meeting on 16 February, it will be proposed that the information on the NCOSS database be made available to ACOSS, that NCOSS will not seek individual approval from our organisational members.

Those organisational members wishing to have their details left off the ACOSS database will need to contact us immediately. Equally, some organisations may want some of this information left out and other bits included, and we will exclude any information members ask to have left out.

The new information wanted for the database will have to come from organisations themselves. We intend to ask for that information when we send out membership renewal notices to minimise the amount of work involved. Until then, details such as the brief description of the organisation, will be left out.

For further details about this project, please contact Kirsten Forrester at NCOSS, tel 9211 2599, fax 9281 1968, email <[kirstenf@ncoss.org.au](mailto:kirstenf@ncoss.org.au)>.



**NCOSS**

**NEWS**

## CWAC Chair

NCOSS Director Gary Moore has been appointed to chair the Community Welfare Advisory Council for the next two years.

## Staff changes

This month, NCOSS welcomes two new policy staff to our team.

Kate Lee joins us as a generalist policy officer, with responsibilities for Housing, Homelessness, SAAP, Rural affairs, Utilities, Consumer issues and Transport

Kate has most recently been Community Projects Officer at Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre.

Christine Regan joins us as HACC/Ageing and Disability policy officer. She has most recently been Manager of Tri Community Exchange at Penrith, one of the Family Resource Centres defunded in the last Federal Budget.

NCOSS looks forward to the contribution they will make.

## New phone system

NCOSS has a new phone system. It allows callers to directly dial the staff member they wish to speak to and leave voice mail messages if they're out. Extension numbers are included in the staff details on p 2.

## Competitive tendering book

The Law Foundation of NSW has recently funded NCOSS to prepare a handbook for non-government community welfare sector organisations on competitive tendering, and to run a training course on how to handle competitive tendering.

# The human cost of 'market reform'

By Chris Dodds

When major events such as the Federal Budget impact on our sector there is often a vain attempt to translate what these Budget line items really mean in human terms.

All too often it is only six to twelve months after a decision is announced that we are able to understand the real effect. Sometimes it is only after the complete disappearance of a service that we understand its real role.

It is ironic that a government so obsessed with "the family" has overseen the complete abolition of the Family Resource Centres.

These projects in the most disadvantaged areas of Australia were innovative, exciting and extremely valuable. They provided a base for local services to look (if only a little) beyond the narrow confines of program fences and address a broad range of issues both in policy and service delivery issues.

The abolition of these services was complete and absolute. The result will be a loss of resources, skill and expertise far beyond the dollar value of the Budget line item.

Indeed, to take a cheap shot, a reform of the travel and expenses mechanism of government would return to the Treasury a far larger sum than this modest program.

Another example I have come across of the trickle down effects of economic rationalism in government is in my region, the Hunter. It concerns the savage cutback in TAFE Outreach funding.

Overall cuts in vocational training, combined with the introduction of the "market", have led to significant restructuring in the TAFE area. The call, so often heard but so little understood, has been to return to core activities.

This return has to be done with significant resource constraint and with competition as the first priority.

This reorientation to the market by

public institutions such as TAFE means that significant access programs like Outreach, aimed at the most disadvantaged, have no place in the core business.

Why should they? Poor people cannot afford user pays; indeed they require subsidies. Poor people have no jobs and therefore do not need improved vocational skills; they have no employer to pay for them.

In the Hunter region, over 1000 people will have one more pathway out of disadvantage and poverty closed or severely restricted. Indeed around 30 part time teachers will lose their jobs and be added to the already above-average unemployment figures in our local community.

## Our responsibility

Each year the Federal and State Governments are hell bent on achieving an economic surplus as the major priority in the budget planning process.

We, the people working in the community services sector, have a responsibility to ensure that our communities, our politicians and our governments understand the true costs of those economic priorities.

We need to ensure that no service closure or cut is allowed to go by without public comment.

We need to ensure that every time a person is denied the opportunities that most people take for granted, those responsible are pointed out.

If we fail to take a stand then all of those parts of our society that we value will become a privilege only available for a minority. In taking a stand we are speaking, not just for those people who may be using our services at the moment, but for ourselves and our children and for our community.

The Australia we have known is worth fighting for and the market Australia sought by some is worth fighting against.

*Chris Dodds is a member of the NCOSS Board*

# *Waiting lists blow out*

## **Commonwealth funds needed back in dental health**

By Ros Bragg

**The abolition of the Commonwealth Dental Health Program in 1996 has led to unacceptably long waiting times for publicly funded dental care and worsening of the already poor dental health of disadvantaged people.**

A Senate inquiry into the provision of public dental services is under way and NCOSS is making a submission which focuses on the need for Commonwealth funding to be reinstated.

There is solid evidence that disadvantaged people have worse dental health than the rest of the community. A telephone survey conducted in 1994 found that people on low incomes were more likely than people on higher incomes to have no teeth or fewer teeth, and to be experiencing social impacts from dental disease including embarrassment about their appearance, avoidance of some foods and pain.

The inequities in dental health status increase with age and are worse for people living in rural and remote areas. There are limited statistics on the experiences of particular population groups, however it is clear that there are many groups which have extremely poor dental health.

Since the abolition of the Commonwealth Dental Health Program (CDHP) in 1996, resources for dental services have been severely limited. NSW lost \$34 million from its budget for adult dental care.

This has resulted in an increase of 29% in the waiting list in the year ending June 1997. This is despite closure of the waiting list in some areas.

Waiting times have increased across the board. In the Illawarra Area Health Service, they have increased from 18

months to between three and four years. In the Mid North Coast Health Service, the wait can be up to 58 months for some services.

Even in areas with previously short waiting lists such as the Far West Health Service, a one month waiting time has blown out to six months.

While most patients can obtain pain relief within 24 hours, some Health Services have a waiting list for pain relief.

Long wait times mean that many people will not be able to address minor problems before they become more complex. This will necessarily result in increased extractions rather than fillings, a greater rate of tooth loss, and increased social impacts from dental disease, including pain.

### *Some health services have a waiting list for pain relief*

NCOSS is advocating the reinstatement of Commonwealth funding to provide dental services for disadvantaged people.

The Commonwealth justification for cutting the program was that it was a State responsibility and the Commonwealth program had been limited in aim to the reduction of waiting lists. NCOSS argued that the issue is one of joint Commonwealth-State responsibility.

At a national seminar held in Melbourne in January this year, a range of community groups, service providers, state bureaucrats and academics developed minimum service targets for the provision of dental health care to disadvantaged people.

These standards are:

❑ No Australian should have to wait more than 24 hours to receive

emergency dental care

❑ Treatment will be available for decayed teeth and other oral disease in time to prevent expensive complicated dental care or tooth loss; generally within one year, and

❑ Regular dental check-ups will be available at least every three years.

NCOSS considers these targets to be very basic minimum targets and is advocating for the Commonwealth to adopt these and to use them to determine an appropriate level of resources. One estimate provided at the seminar was that an additional \$282 million nationally was required to meet the targets.

NCOSS also advocated for the Commonwealth adopting a more proactive role in promoting oral health. This could consist of work on national goals, national standards for provision and access to care, and national priorities for reform in service delivery.

The appointment of a Director of Oral Health within the Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services would assist this project, as would a focus on oral health in the implementation of the recently agreed National Public Health Partnership.

At a State level, NCOSS recommended further investigation of a dental internship scheme and greater use of allied health personnel. The dental internship scheme could increase the size of the salaried public health workforce, better prepare graduate dentists and provide dentists with experience in dental public health.

Expanding the role of allied health personnel could make more effective use of dental therapists, dental hygienists and dental technicians.

Submissions to the inquiry close on 3 February.

*For further information contact Ros Bragg at NCOSS on (02) 9211 2599 ext 116.*





## to Aboriginal a

The Australian Council of Social  
caused by the forcible separa

**We acknowledge that the removal of children devastated individuals, families and entire communities.** We acknowledge the finding of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission that a major intention of this official policy was to assimilate the children so that Aborigines as a distinct group would disappear. Hence, as the Commission found, it was a genocidal policy. We further acknowledge that the resulting loss of land, language and identity is a key cause of the intolerable levels of disadvantage currently faced by indigenous Australians.

**Collectively, we feel a particular sense of responsibility** for the consequences of these racist policies because their implementation required the active involvement of community welfare organisations. We unreservedly and wholeheartedly apologise to the individuals, families and communities who have suffered such pain and grief from these terrible acts of injustice.

**We know that the impact of the past continues to resound today.** Aboriginal children continue to be removed from their families for 'child welfare' reasons

**It is only through the commitment of a wider community that non-indigenous a shared future. Without such a commitm**



November 1997

ACT Council of Social Service • New South Wales Council of Social Service • Northern Territory  
Tasmanian Council of Social Service • Victorian Council of Social Service • Western Australian  
Anglicare Australia • Association of Civilian Widows of Australia • Association of Non-Eng  
Australian Association of Social Workers • Australian Community Health Association  
Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations • Australian Federation of Deaf Societies • Austr  
Australian Pensioners' and Superannuants' Federation • Australian Psychiatric Disability Coalition  
Centacare Community Services Australia • Consumers Health Forum • Council on the Ageing  
International Social Service • Maternity Alliance • Mercy Foundation • National Assoc  
National Council for Single Mothers and their Children • National Ethnic Disability Alliance • Nationa  
National Union of Students • National Skillshare Association • Oz Child/Children Australia •  
Australian Consumers Association

# and Torres Strait Islander People

Service (ACOSS) and our undersigned members deeply regret the damage  
tion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

at a rate six times greater than the general population, and placed in juvenile detention centres at a rate twenty-one times higher. These disturbing facts show that the past lives on in the present, and will continue into the future unless we unite in a sincere effort to make amends.

**We therefore commit ourselves to the reconciliation process** and to promoting the rights and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Each in our own way will strive to match our words of apology with actions aimed at moving forward together to share responsibility for the future and establish a sound foundation for reconciliation.

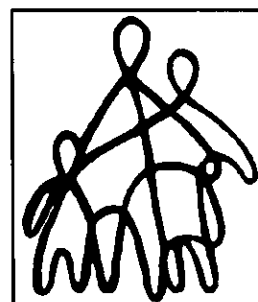
In deciding how best to make our individual contributions, we will be guided by the recommendations made by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in its report, *Bringing them home*. We pay tribute to all who told their painful stories and to the Commissioners. Their thorough and moving exposure of the facts will be of lasting benefit to all Australian children and their families, and strengthens our resolve to ensure that such a terrible infringement of human rights never occurs again in our country.

**We collectively call on the federal government, as the embodiment of the will of the people, to make an unqualified apology on behalf of all Australians** for the damage caused by the removal of indigenous children. This step is a fundamental building block in the process of healing the nation and would significantly assist all of us, both indigenous and non-indigenous, who are presently engaged in coming to terms with the past and creating a better future.

**We further call on the federal government to accept and implement the recommendations of the Commission**, including the establishment of a National Compensation Fund and the provision of programs designed to assist the affected people and communities to maintain their languages, cultures and histories. We are particularly mindful of the important role played by the primarily ATSIC-funded Link Up and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child care services and the need for such services to be expanded.

**governments and non-government organisations to make reparation and the support of the  
and indigenous Australians can heal the wounds of the past and create a solid foundation for a  
ent, the reconciliation process, embarked upon with such hope, will be rendered meaningless.**

Council of Social Service • Queensland Council of Social Service • South Australian Council of Social Service  
Council of Social Service • Alcohol and Other Drugs Council of Australia • Alzheimers Association of Australia  
ish Speaking Background Women of Australia • Association of Services Supporting Australia's Families  
• Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes • Australian Council for Volunteering  
ian Financial Counselling and Credit Reform Association • Australian National Association for Mental Health  
• Australian Psychological Society • Australian Youth Policy Action Coalition • Carers Association of Australia  
• Family Planning Australia • Family Services Australia • Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies  
ciation of Community Based Children's Services • National Association of Community Legal Centres  
Federation of Blind Citizens of Australia • National Institute of Industrial and Economic Research • National Shelter  
Relationships Australia • The Abbeyfield Society of Australia • UNIYA • WESNET • YWCA of Australia



**NCOSS**

# HACC 'expressions of interest' process arouses concern

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by Gary Moore

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## **HACC services have expressed concern about aspects of the expression of interest process with the current round of HACC growth funding.**

NCOSS met with Paul Sadler, Manager of HACC in NSW, and put some of these concerns to him.

### **(i) HACC Area Planning Process**

It was noted that there have been problems of translation between the priorities identified in HACC planning grids and the writing of specifications for the EOI process.

ADD and other Departments recognise that there are inadequacies in the Area planning process, and have already moved to make some changes based on feedback from HACC providers and consumer groups.

It was agreed that the communication process in this area needed significant improvement. It was also agreed that the interface of the Area planning process and the EOI process should be included as part of the 1998 review of the EOI process (see following)

### **(ii) Review of EOI process**

At the meeting, Mr Sadler tabled a draft proposal for reviewing the EOI process. It was indicated that this review might commence once funding decisions for this HACC Growth round were finalised (approximately April 1998)

The community sector participants in the meeting outlined problems being experienced by some HACC providers in different areas of the State with the promotion of consortia or lead agency network contracting models by ADD.

It was acknowledged that this type of funding reform in HACC will have impacts on organisational structures and capacities of HACC providers,

particularly, although not exclusively small ones.

The notion of industry restructuring assistance, being provided by ADD, for HACC providers was raised, as well as the role to be played by HACC Development Officers in this, and how they should be properly resourced to undertake some of these responsibilities.

It was indicated that there will be new legal issues in the area of contracting and sub contracting between agencies to be addressed by HACC providers. Mr Sadler acknowledged that ADD would examine providing some assistance to providers in this area.

In relation to other specific elements of the EOI process, he indicated that if no bids were received in particular areas, then the EOI would either be readvertised or ADD would enter into direct negotiations with a specific provider to meet this gap. He also indicated that ADD would negotiate details of projects with successful EOI bidders by March 1998.

NCOSS also raised the experience of community sector providers in the Commonwealth Employment Assistance Market, where it is quite clear that, as a result of the Commonwealth Government's creation of a competitive market for employment services, bidding community sector consortia have had to seek advice and authorisations from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission in relation to potential breaches of the Trade Practices Act.

Although this HACC growth round is small in funding scale, it was agreed that these issues could arise and therefore, needed to be considered by ADD and HACC providers.

The issue of an appeal process for HACC providers whose bids are not approved in the EOI process was raised. Mr Sadler agreed that ADD would examine the possibility of an independent appeals mechanism in relation to the conduct of the EOI process.

It was also indicated that establishing a consortium to bid on an area wide basis was not the only model which ADD, as the funder of HACC, was pursuing. It was agreed that all models should be included in the review of the EOI process.

### **(iii) Funding agreements**

ADD proposes to release the new funding agreement for comment in January/February 1998. It is noted that ADD's new funding agreement will not apply to HACC projects funded by the Department's of Health, Housing and Transport.

### **(iv) Quality measures**

It was acknowledged that specific qualitative performance measures in HACC, as in other human services, are difficult to determine.

For the EOI process, ADD is suggesting that quality benchmarks which prospective providers could use include operating in line with the HACC National Services Standards, having in place effective consumer complaints mechanisms and conducting consumer satisfaction surveys as part of management practice.

### **(v) EOI Declaration clauses**

It was noted that HACC providers who submitted an EOI by the current due date of 5 December 1997, could cross out the clause "will cooperate in assisting the Home and Community Care reform agenda..." when signing the Declaration section of the EOI, if they so chose.

However, ADD points out that all agencies will be bound by relevant Government policies when they sign a deed of funding to receive HACC funding.

*For further details contact Gary Moore at NCOSS, tel 9211 2599, email <garym@ncoss.org.au>*

# NSW Health under scrutiny

## IPART review

In January, the Government announced that it had commissioned a review of NSW Health by the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).

The Review, which has been under way since September, has the following terms of reference:

- to examine the impact of Commonwealth policies on the effectiveness of NSW Health
- the impact of changes in the level of private health insurance coverage and utilisation
- appropriate benchmark indicators of performance
- the key "outputs" and programs provided by NSW Health, including the identification of "community service obligations" within those outputs and programmes
- the relative contribution of factors to the increased cost of health service delivery
- opportunities for, and the barriers to, achieving an effective and efficient allocation and utilisation of available health resources.

The Review is related in part to the renegotiation of the Medicare agreement with the Commonwealth. The first two terms of reference are clearly focused on this question.

The remaining terms of reference are a more general consideration of the economic fundamentals of the NSW Health system and issues of performance evaluation.

The Review was commissioned jointly by the Minister for Health and the Treasurer and is due to make its final report in June 1998.

It is not yet clear whether or not there will be public hearings and whether or not the report will be publicly released.

NCOSS has met with IPART staff and will be making a submission to the Review.

## NSW Parliamentary inquiry

The Legislative Council of the NSW Parliament is undertaking an inquiry into the funding of rural and regional health services.

The review is to examine the financial management and the budgeted, actual and projected financial positions for 1995/6 financial year to the budget projections for 1997/98 of the eight rural health services and the Hunter and Illawarra health

services. It is also to consider the implications of those financial positions for the delivery of health services in rural and regional New South Wales.

The Committee undertaking the inquiry has called for public submissions and the closing date is Thursday 12 February 1998. The Committee Secretariat can be contacted on (02) 9230 3432.

For further information contact Ros Bragg at NCOSS, tel 9211 2599 ext 116, email <rosbragg@ncoss.org.au>

## Boarders and lodgers legislation may be flawed

It is extremely likely that the Department of Fair Trading will be releasing the exposure draft of legislation which provides tenancy protection for boarders and lodgers in February or March this year.

At present boarders and lodgers are specifically excluded from the main tenancy legislation in NSW, the *Residential Tenancies Act*, and have very few enforceable rights.

The provision of tenancy protection for boarders and lodgers was an election promise of the current NSW Government when it was elected in 1995. The enactment of legislative protection for boarders and lodgers has also been recommended by the Olympic Social Impacts Committee.

While the imminent release of the exposure draft is good news, the Boarders and Lodgers Action Group is concerned that the proposed Bill may have two serious flaws:

- no capacity for a resident to defend an attempted eviction at the Residential Tenancies Tribunal; and
- extremely short minimum notice periods for the eviction of residents.

Without the right to defend an attempted eviction at the Residential Tenancies Tribunal, any resident's

rights provided by the legislation are effectively unenforceable.

Additionally, a resident must be entitled to notice periods which allow a reasonable opportunity to locate and move into alternative accommodation.

It is essential that there is a strong response to the exposure draft from organisations which advocated on behalf of boarders and lodgers.

For further information contact: Catherine Stuart, CP&SA, tel 9281 9804; David Ramsay, Tenants' Union, tel 9247 3813; Veronica Wise, Aged Care Rights Service, tel 9281 3600.

## Little Book of Rhetoric

The Forum has just published The Community Services Little Book of Rhetoric. It is useful for those conversations where you find yourself discussing the nature of life, politics and 'what do you lot in the community services do anyway'. This little book identifies some of the rhetoric we hear about community services in the media and in conversations and offers some other pieces of rhetoric to help your arguments along.

It is available from the Forum for \$5.00 a copy. Ph: 0242 57 1490

# *Report calls for* **Consumer participation in health system**

By Ros Bragg

**In 1997, NCOSS undertook a structured consultation of health consumers across the State to develop recommendations for "a multifaceted consumer participation strategy" for the NSW Health system.**

Key recommendations of the Health Consumers Consultation Project include

- ❑ establishing effective participation structures at Area Health Service level;
- ❑ resourcing self help groups and improving their relationships with health professionals;
- ❑ establishing a NSW Health Consumers Network to resource health consumers; and
- ❑ consolidating a range of disparate requirements for consumer participation into formal policies and effectively resourcing their implementation.

An executive summary of the report has been sent to the 1600 individuals and organisations on the project database. The report is currently with the Minister awaiting release.

## **Improving consumer participation at Area Health Service level**

The project found that health consumers want a stronger and more coordinated voice at all levels of the health system, but improving consumer participation at Area Health Service level is a priority.

NCOSS recommended that a structure be established in each Area Health Service to facilitate formal and ongoing consumer access to area health boards by April 1998.

This structure could link existing

mechanisms for consumer participation at an area level. The title of this structure should be determined in each area, but for the purposes of the project, we will call them "area health forums".

The role of the forums would include:

- ❑ advising area health boards on strategic planning and priority setting for the area;
- ❑ establishing effective consultation processes by participation of and reporting back to consumer groups;
- ❑ consultation with consumers and improving consumer awareness about the health system; advise on service delivery; and
- ❑ providing a forum for expressing concerns and raising issues with the board.

The forum would be made up of a series of groups some of which would represent geographical areas and others particular interests. The mix of groups would be determined locally. Each group would nominate a person to a central forum. A key principle of the forum is that each of the members are representative of their group and responsible to them. The forum would be resourced by the area health service.

NCOSS recommended the creation of at least one consumer advocate position in each Area Health Service.

This position, based on the model of the Illawarra Area Health Service, would be responsible for assisting consumers to participation in health decision making, to develop processes and structures for community participation, and to encourage a "consumer friendly" organisational structure. This position would report directly to the chief executive officer.

NCOSS also recommended that each Area Health Service develop a policy on consumer participation which clearly sets out the opportunities or mechanisms for consumer participation.

## **Improving consumer participation at State level decision making**

NCOSS recommended the establishment of a NSW health consumers network to give consumers a stronger and more coordinated voice on health issues, particularly at the state level. The role of the network would be:

- ❑ to provide health consumers with an opportunity to discuss local issues and concerns as well as strategies to address state health issues
- ❑ to improve information flow between consumers and between consumers and service providers
- ❑ to provide training and support for consumer representatives
- ❑ to provide NSW Health with an important accountability structure in the development of consumer participation processes
- ❑ to develop health policy. Consumers were divided over whether policy should be developed by paid staff or by members of the network.

The project found that requirements for Area Health Services to demonstrate consumer participation are located in numerous departmental policies and documents.

NCOSS recommended that NSW Health develop a comprehensive policy on consumer participation to consolidate these disparate requirements and provide clear guidance to Area Health Services and departmental staff.

## **Strengthening current ways of participating**

The project found that self help groups are an invaluable source of information and emotional support for people with a specific illness and their carers.

It was widely agreed that the activities of these groups are not adequately

## Health consumers continued...

supported by health professionals and most groups receive minimum or no funding for their activities.

NCOSS recommended that NSW Health develop a policy for funding and support for self help groups and that it be developed in conjunction with groups and their associations. Issues included ensuring that support groups in rural areas received a fair share of the funding.

It was recommended that each Area Health Service establish and maintain a directory of self help groups in their area. The directory should be promoted to all service providers within the area and be linked to a central NSW Health Department database.

NCOSS further recommended that NSW Health undertake a Statewide awareness campaign about the activities and value of self help groups, targeting health professionals.

The project found that consumers welcomed the opportunity to be consulted about health issues and services, but were critical of consultations which have unreasonable time frames and budgets, do not employ special strategies to reach target groups, do not provide assistance with childcare, transport and interpreters and fail to give consumers feedback on outcomes.

NCOSS recommended that NSW Health develop a protocol which sets out the basic principles and guidelines for consultation with consumers. The protocol should address the issues outlined above, and should incorporate protocols developed for particular target groups.

NCOSS also strongly recommends a staff training program in community consultation which should involve senior management as well as more junior staff.

The project considered patient satisfaction surveys administered by NSW Health. NCOSS recommended that NSW Health develop guidelines on the design and conduct of these surveys.

Further, NCOSS recommended that NSW Health develop and public indicators of health service performance from a consumer perspective, and that Area Health

Services demonstrate an adequate response to consumers' concerns.

The project found that consumers are unlikely to complain directly to a health service or service provider because most were unaware of how or where to complain; they feared the possibility of repercussions from service providers, particularly in rural communities; and consumers felt no one would take any notice of their complaint or it would not be resolved.

NCOSS recommended that all Area Health Services implement guidelines to ensure a consistent, comprehensive and fair approach to complaints handling. NCOSS is aware that best practice guidelines on complaints handling were being finalised by NSW Health last year.

The project sought consumer comment on Health Care Complaints Commission patient support officers and found that few consumers were aware of their existence, which is unsurprising given that this is a new role.

NCOSS recommended alternative accommodation to Area Health Service offices for these staff to remove the perception that they are not independent, and also recommended expansion of the geographical coverage of the program pending a positive evaluation.

NCOSS recommended the evaluation of the Patient Advocate Program which is a health service program of in-house patient representatives or patient advocates.

When asked about their participation in advisory committees, consumers commented on a wide range of concerns about these processes.

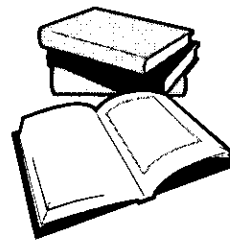
NCOSS recommended training and support for consumers performing these roles; training for Area Health Service staff involved in these processes; adequate reimbursement for costs incurred by consumers; removal of barriers to participation such as jargon and poor timing of meetings; and that full information be provided to all members of committees on an equal basis.

*Copies of the report will be available from NCOSS following its release*

*For further information, contact Ros Bragg at NCOSS, tel 9211 2599 ext 116*

## NCOSS LIBRARY

from the



### Recent important releases

#### **Balancing Prevention and Protection in the Best Interests of Children**

*A submission to the NSW Government from the Forum of Non Government Agencies, August 1997*

A short paper setting out its FONGA's priorities. There are still some copies available at \$5.00 each.

#### **Strengthening Attachments**

*by Mandy Charman, Alison Mclelland, Meg Montague and Vincent Sully; published by the Brotherhood of St Laurence, 1997*

The report of the Prevention of Youth Homelessness Project, it demonstrates the potential for work with schools to improve young people's attachment both to schools and families.

#### **Juvenile Justice: Recent changes to the law**

*Published by the Legal Information Access Centre [LIAC]*

#### **A NSW Children's Commission Green Paper**

*Published by the Office of Children and Young People for the NSW Government, 1997*

The aim is to obtain the views of interested organisations, agencies and individuals on the creation of the Children's Commission, as recommended by the Wood Royal Commission.

*The NCOSS Library is available to members, but cannot loan material. Open Mon to Thurs, office hours.*

*For further details contact NCOSS Librarian, Bill Pope, tel (02) 9211 2599, fx (02) 9281 1968, email <billpope@ncoss.org.au>*

# NCOSS reviews its Strategic Plan

Report: Janet Green

**Over the past few months NCOSS has been reviewing its 1996–1998 Strategic Plan, with input from external stakeholders, Board members and staff.**

The review provided an opportunity for us to get some feedback on how we are going against the plan and to extend the plan forward for the next 18 months.

## **What people said we are doing well**

- ☐ NCOSS has raised its profile in the media and gained good coverage of social policy issues
- ☐ It has done excellent policy work, involved the sector in its policy development, and lobbied effectively on its policy positions
- ☐ It has “filled a gap” by taking up cross-sector issues
- ☐ NCOSS’ PBS has been well presented and has had an impact
- ☐ Internally it has become more professionally managed, improved communication, had better teamwork, and improved administration and information technology systems

## **What we could have done better/differently**

- ☐ Managed workloads. Staff are still overworked and stressed
- ☐ Been clearer about our priorities and stuck to them
- ☐ Achieved more in terms of developing strategies to support how we work
- ☐ Built relationships with indigenous organisations
- ☐ Achieved better regional participation

## **Our priorities for the next 18 months**

The original plan has been amended to take it forward for the next 18 months with some changes to our strategies and identification of the next steps and current priorities.

The key changes are

☐ An amended list of priority policy areas, with some additions, deletions and reshaping, and detail added identifying what we will do in each area, in order to provide more focus to our priority areas and better manage the workload. Our priority policy areas for the next 18 months are to be -

- ☐ Cross sector issues
- ☐ Children, Family and Youth issues
- ☐ Rural
- ☐ Homelessness
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Emergency Relief
- ☐ Ageing
- ☐ Disability
- ☐ HACC
- ☐ Community Services
- ☐ Regional development
- ☐ Utilities
- ☐ Olympics
- ☐ Tax reform
- ☐ Working with Aboriginal communities

Associated with this new list of priorities there will be some reallocation of responsibilities among NCOSS policy staff (see inside cover of *NCOSS News*).

☐ We have also defined what we will do in our “minor” policy areas — we will support the work of other organisations, make input to the NCOSS PBS and respond on important issues, but we will not play a major coordination role.

☐ We will be working on action plans to develop a number of the strategies identified in the original plan (e.g. communications, publications, membership, human resources).

☐ We have identified actions to continue to improve the way we work,

including development of systems, improved management processes and more teamwork.

## **Our priority policy areas**

# **What we'll be focusing on**

Current key policy areas for NCOSS are:

### **Cross sector issues**

- ☐ Micro Economic Reform
- ☐ Social Justice Statement — review 1998
- ☐ Budget: PBS and response to Budget
- ☐ Tendering
- ☐ Accreditation
- ☐ Benchmarking
- ☐ User pays
- ☐ NSW Alliance of peak councils
- ☐ Compact between NSW Government and NGOs
- ☐ Better community management
- ☐ Community development
- ☐ Industry working group
- ☐ Election 99

### **Children, Family and Youth issues**

Integrated approach to

- ☐ Children's Services
- ☐ Substitute Care
- ☐ CSGP
- ☐ Family Support
- ☐ Child Protection
- ☐ Children's rights
- ☐ School Education

### **Rural**

- ☐ New funding models
- ☐ Community Development
- ☐ Transport
- ☐ Welfare dependency
- ☐ Rural Policy Statement

# NCOSS strategic plan...

- ☐ Office of Rural Communities
- ☐ Rural and Remote Policy Advisory Group

## Homelessness

- ☐ SAAP reform process
  - ▶ standards
  - ▶ accreditation
  - ▶ evaluation of program
- ☐ Coordination role

## Health

- ☐ Promoting non-acute care
- ☐ Rural health
- ☐ Community participation
- ☐ NGO's
- ☐ Linkages between community health and community care, coordinated care etc
- ☐ Intergovernmental issues

## Emergency Relief

- ☐ Current Emergency Relief project
- ☐ Coordinate Forum

## Ageing

- ☐ Coordinate community sector views and actions regarding ageing issues
- ☐ Resourcing the Aged Care Alliance

## Disability

- ☐ Link with existing disability networks in order to remain informed and provide strategic support on key issues such as the Review of the Disability Services Act and implementation of the Wood Royal Commission

## HACC

- ☐ Promote and coordinate community sector understanding of and participation in the HACC Program and community care
- ☐ Provide advice to government and influence government decisions regarding the HACC Program and community care

## Community Services

- ☐ Integrated Community Services Planning
- ☐ Restructuring and reform within DoCS
- ☐ Community Services Commission

- ☐ Consultation Protocol

## Regional development

- ☐ In the sector:
  - ▶ funding program for regional network
  - ▶ establishment of regional forums across the State
  - ▶ service the regional network
- ☐ In our policy work promoting economic and social development in regions

## Utilities

- ☐ Privatisation
- ☐ CSOs

## Olympics

- ☐ Social impact newsletter
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Social Impact Assessment Committee
- ☐ Financial impacts

## Tax reform

- ☐ Promote a progressive tax reform agenda in NSW
- ☐ State revenues
- ☐ State and Commonwealth relationships in relation to revenue

## Working with Aboriginal communities

- ☐ Native Title and Wik
- ☐ Building links and relationships with Aboriginal organisations

# Women Wanted!

## International Women's Day

### Unite for Justice and Native Title

For International Women's Day each year, women of all ages and cultures and from all walks of life come together around the world to celebrate achievements and demand justice for all women.

For 1998, capital city collectives around Australia are organising this year's march and rally around the theme of *Women Unite for Justice and Native Title*.

The (8-page) national IWD broadsheet will focus on indigenous rights. Aboriginal women are invited to lead the marches and will be speaking at rallies.

In Sydney, thousands of women march behind organisation banners or as individuals each year. It would be great if your organisation took to the streets for 1998!

### What you can do

- ☐ Make an organisation or justice-for-women banner
- ☐ March as an organisation
- ☐ Come along as an individual or with friends
- ☐ Bring your whistles, bells and tambourines for a bit of fun
- ☐ Just come along
- ☐ Book a stall at the rally to handout information or sell goods
- ☐ List your local or regional IWD events on the internet
- ☐ Party on at the women's dance in the evening
- ☐ Help with preparations now and/or on the day
- ☐ Spread the word

### When? Saturday 7 March

Gather at Sydney Town Hall Square at 10.30am

March down George Street to the Rally in Circular Quay park from 12.30-4.00pm.

Enquiries: Sydney IWD Collective  
PO Box K448 Haymarket PO 1240,  
phone (02) 9294 6091, fax (02) 9699 4679, email iwd1998@hotmail.com.



# Sector snippets



## Funds for family and aged services

United Way Sydney has been set up to help Sydney health and welfare agencies meet growing needs in the community.

It takes applications for funding each year, with the deadline this year being 16 March.

According to Executive General Manager Allison Wynands, "If you are an incorporated, tax deductible charity which is providing services to meet a crisis or change in circumstances in families, children or the aged, you are eligible to apply."

The United Way trust raises funds primarily via payroll deduction schemes in participating companies. It also encourages volunteering. Staff from some of Sydney's largest companies are involved, including Westpac, Fuji Xerox and QBE. United Way Sydney has been operating since 1990 and is part of the international United Way movement with 2300 organisations worldwide.

For further details, contact Allison Wynands, tel 9299 5507, fx 9299 5509.

## Human rights for Aboriginal people

In late January, Mick Dodson launched Tracking Your Rights, a national human rights community education project, in his last public duty as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner.

Tracking Your Rights is a training

package that teaches people how to effectively develop strategies to combat discrimination across the country. It includes a guide to all the agencies to whom complaints can be made.

More importantly, it spells out exactly what a person's rights are in a range of different circumstances such as dealing with the police, the media, housing departments and estate agents, employers and government departments.

The pack includes resource manuals, each individually tailored for four regions across Australia.

Tracking Your Rights has been published by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. Further details, tel 9284 9600.

## ACOSS has moved

The Australian Council of Social Service has moved its office to Redfern. The new details are:

Address: Level 2, 619 Elizabeth St, Redfern 2016

Postal Address: Locked Bag 4777, Strawberry Hills 2012

Tel 9310 4844, fax 9310 4822

## DoCS Annual Report

The Annual Report of the Department of Community Services has been released. It is available from Ms Judy Martinez, tel 9716 2683.

## Powerplay

Powerplay is a documentary about the privatisation of the electricity industry in the La Trobe Valley, Victoria.

The film focuses on interviews with people in the Valley who have experienced an unprecedented attempt to undo, fragment and destroy a community.

Powerplay charts the debt excesses of the 80s, the collapse of the State, the betrayal of community, the fetish for big industry, the end

of the Accord, the fragmentation of identity, and above all, the centrality of struggle in everyday life.

The video is in VHS format, 46 minutes long, and costs \$100 (organisations), \$50 (waged individuals). For orders contact Labour Market Alternatives, PO Box 726 Seven Hills 2147, tel 9621 82119, fx 9621 8343.

## Want better media coverage?

The National Women's Media Centre has set up Media-Assist, a new media release service for community organisations.

It offers to write your media release, help you identify your best target media, fax it out (generally overnight), design and/or implement a full promotion campaign for you.

For details, tel 9550 6734, fx 9516 3158, or email <hleonard@intercoast.com.au>.

## Studies in community welfare

The Bachelor of Community Welfare is a new degree being offered by the University of Western Sydney at its Bankstown campus.

There are a limited number of places still available in the course, and the university would like to encourage applications from people already involved in the welfare field and mature age people looking for a career in community services.

Details: Meg Smith, tel 972 6299, Genevieve Rankin, tel 9772 6249.

## Sector snippets

IF YOU have something interesting to share, please contact Phil Griffiths at NCOSS - tel 9211 2599, fax 9281 1968 email <philg@ncoss.org.au> or write:

NCOSS, 66 Albion St  
Surry Hills NSW

# Conferences & seminars

## **Pushing the boundaries: Disability, citizenship, self-determination & political action**

Feb 12-13, The Roundhouse, University of NSW. Australian and international speakers will speak about living with disability, and workshops will explore new directions for a rights movement in Australia. Details: Melissa Cater, tel 9385 1007, fx 9385 3059

## **Youth Week: Experience our culture**

Feb 22-Mar 1. Details: tel 9266 8238, fx 9266 8058, email yw@youth.nsw.gov.au

## **Tides of Change: Women's and Sexual Health Nurses Association national conference**

Feb 27-28, Sydney. Details: Eleanor Hooke or Alexandra McEwan, tel 9360 2755, fx 9360 5154.

## **Third communities networking/ networking communities conference**

Feb 27-28, Victoria University of Technology, St Albans campus

The conference aims to ensure that community values will be protected and enhanced by growing on-line services.

Details: tel (03) 9650 5322, fx (03) 9650 5817, email <vacic@vicnet.net.au>

## **POLITICS IN THE PUB**

### **Women struggling around the world**

Feb 27, Harold Park Hotel, 115 Wigram Rd Glebe, 5.45pm for a 6.00pm start.

Lead up to International Women's Day with speakers Juliana Nkrumah (Ghana), Kiri Hata (South Pacific) and Gloria Rosales (El Salvador). Have a drink afterwards with the IWD Collective and discuss your involvement in the IWD march and rally on 7th March.

Details: Sydney IWD Collective, tel 9294 6091

## **Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade and Party**

Feb 28, details tel 9557 4332, fx 9516 4446, infoline 1900 957 800

## **International Women's Day March and Rally**

March 7, Assemble Sydney Town Hall 10.30am

## **MANUFACTURING WORKERS UNION**

### **Jobs & Infrastructure conference: Globalisation, the Asian crisis and the future of Australian industry**

March 16-17, Tom Mann Theatre, 136 Chalmers St, Surry Hills

The aim is to develop alternatives to globalisation. An open forum to give feedback time to trade union, community activists. Keynote speaker: Hans-Peter Martin, coauthor *The Global Trap*.

Details re content: A/Prof Peter Botsman, tel 4620 3778

## **LG&SA**

### **Citizens not customers — a model for dynamic communities: Local government convention '98**

March 16-17, Sheraton Sydney Airport Hotel, Mascot

A broad-based information forum. Topics will include Building community relationships, Citizens not customers, Planning and community leadership, Keeping citizens informed, Best practice for dynamic communities

Details: tel 9242 4000, fx 9242 4111, email <lgsa@lgsa.org.au>, <http://www.lgsa.org.au>

## **NCOSS**

### **Managing for Communities**

March 27, Carlton Crest Hotel, Sydney  
A conference on place management approaches to integrating social and economic development with a locational focus. Speakers to include Premier Bob Carr and the Director General of the Premier's Department, Dr Col Gellatly. Details: Kirsten Forrester, tel 9211 2599 ext 110, fx 9281 1968, email <kirstenf@ncoss.org.au>

## **CARERS ASSOCIATION OF AUST**

### **National Summit Conference: Health & Community Care in a Changing Era**

April 2-3, Rydges Hotel, Canberra

Speakers include the Governor-General, Warwick Smith (Minister for Family Services), Ian Spicer (Chair, National Disability Council), Eva Cox,

Jenny Macklin (Shadow Minister for Social Security and Aged Care).

Details: tel 6285 3000, fx 6285 3001, email <office@con-sol.com>

## **UWS**

### **Social justice, social judgement: Questions of value in contemporary Australian society**

April 25-26, University of Western Sydney Hawkesbury, Blacktown campus

The victory of capitalism in the cold war, and increasing globalisation are producing fundamental changes. Intolerance is rising and the welfare state is under threat. There is a pressing need to bring questions of value into the light.

Details: Anthony Uhlmann, tel 4570 1555, email <a.uhlmann@uws.edu.au>

## **AUST DEAFBLIND COUNCIL**

### **Deafblindness Facing the Future**

May 1-2, Ibis Hotel, Melbourne. For people with Deafblindness, their parents, families, professionals and other interested people. Details: Annie Rose, tel (03) 9827 6733, fx (03) 9827 8960, website <http://internex.net.au/~dba/confer.htm>

## **Call for papers**

## **NCOSS**

### **The inaugural NCOSS policy conference**

July 30-31, Furama Central Hotel, Albion St, Surry Hills. The conference aims to bring together the breadth of experience in the community services sector and topics for discussion will cover a wide range of current social policy issues.

Papers and proposals welcome and should reach Kirsten Forrester by 16 March. Contact tel 9211 2599, ext 110, fx 9281 1968, email <kirstenf@ncoss.org.au>

## **Conferences & Seminars**

IF YOU have a conference to advertise, please contact Phil Griffiths at NCOSS

tel 9211 2599, fax 9281 1968  
email <philg@ncoss.org.au>

or write to:

NCOSS, 66 Albion St  
Surry Hills NSW 2010

# Who's been advertising jobs on the NCOSS website?

## In our first month, NCOSS WebJobs carried ads for:

- ACWA (Association of Children's Welfare Agencies)
- ARCH (Association to Resource Cooperative Housing)
- Barnardos
- Boys Town
- Centacare
- DoCS
- Energy Industry Ombudsman Scheme
- Ettinger House
- NCOSS
- Ozanam Industries (part of St Vincent de Paul)
- St George Community Housing
- Streetwise comics
- VCOSS (Victorian Council of Social Service)

## NCOSS WebJob ads are FREE until 1 March

To get your job up onto the internet, simply post us a disk or email us with the text of your ad. Email: <philg@ncoss.org.au>. Our listings are updated every day or two. Full instructions are on the website.

## Did you miss finding out about a job you really wanted?

We've had jobs for youth workers, family support coordinators, therapist/social workers, project officers, project leaders, project development managers, education resource officers, admin assistants and more.

## Did you miss out advertising your job vacancy?

Don't spend all your money advertising for just one Saturday in just one newspaper. Jobs advertised on the internet stay up until after applications close.

**<http://www.ncoss.org.au/jobs.html>**

## Managing for Communities

A community sector conference

**Friday 27 March 1998  
Carlton Crest Hotel**

Speakers include Premier Bob Carr and Dr Col Gellatly, DG, Premier's Department

A conference on place management approaches to integrating social and economic development with a locational focus. For details, see the brochure with this newsletter or contact NCOSS, tel 9211 2599.

**CALL FOR PAPERS  
NCOSS policy  
conference  
July 30-31, Sydney**

The challenges facing the community sector have never been so great. Our conference will address a wide range of issues. Proposals for papers for our first annual Policy Conference should reach Kirsten Forrester at NCOSS by 16 March.

**Put the date in your diary NOW!**

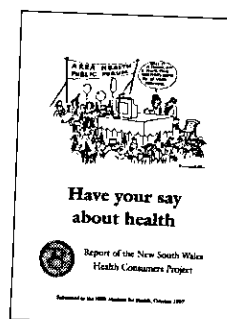
## New from NCOSS!

### Have your say about health

Report of the NSW Health Consumers' Project

The report outlines the concerns and ideas expressed through a series of workshops, small group interviews and forums across NSW during 1997

*NCOSS members and project participants: \$10 incl post  
Retail \$15. Available shortly*



### Investing in our community: social and economic priorities for the 1998/99 State Budget

**JUST RELEASED!**  
The 1998 NCOSS pre-Budget submission, prepared on behalf of the entire welfare and community sector.

*NCOSS members: \$15 (incl post); Retail \$19.50.*

**To order:** write to NCOSS Publication Sales, 66 Albion St, Surry Hills NSW 2010 or ring through and pay with your credit card over the phone. Tel (02) 9211 2599



## **ST. GEORGE COMMUNITY HOUSING CO-OP LTD.**

Suite 2/83A Hillcrest Avenue, Hurstville Grove 2220 Postal Address: P.O Box 416 Sth Hurstville 2221  
Phone Number: 9585-1499 Facsimile Number: 9585-1564 Office Hours: M-F 9-5p.m (Wed 9-12)

### ***HOUSING ASSOCIATION***

### ***EXECUTIVE OFFICER***

*St. George Community Housing Co-Operative Limited proves affordable housing to people on low and moderate incomes in Southern Sydney.*

*The Executive Officer is a new position, created following a recent organisational review. We are seeking a highly skilled housing professional to lead and manage the staff team of four, and implement structural and policy changes. The EO will*

- have proven housing management expertise*
- understand current social housing issues*
- possess excellent people skills and*
- demonstrate creativity and good business management in the development and delivery of high quality housing services*

*Salary package negotiable in the range of \$50,000 - \$60,000. Proposals for secondments and part time work welcomed.*

*For information package, or to discuss the position, please phone (02) 9585 1499.*

***Closing date 11 February 1998.***

***This is the second advertisement for this job.***

## Community sector conference

# Managing for Communities

Friday 27 March 1998

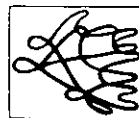
Carlton Crest Hotel, Sydney

169-179 Thomas St Sydney

Speakers include Premier Bob Carr and  
Dr Col Gellatly, DG, NSW Premier's Department

NSW is seeing new approaches to social and economic development programs and services at regional and local level, including place management and coordinated care. Join your colleagues from government, community and business organisations to listen to those undertaking many of these initiatives and discuss the costs and benefits of some of these new approaches.

— Gary Moore, Director, NCOSS



**NCOSS**

Council of Social Service of New South Wales  
66 Albion Street, Surry Hills, 2010  
tel (02) 9211 2599, fax (02) 9281 1968

## REGISTER NOW

I would like to attend the Managing for  
communities conference on 27 March 1998

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66 Albion St  
Surry Hills NSW 2010

If paying by credit card, you may prefer to fax this registration  
form to (02) 9281 1968. For further details tel (02) 9211 2599

### Registration

Before 13 March

<input type="checkbox"/> Government/corporate	\$225	\$195
<input type="checkbox"/> NCOSS Affiliate member	\$200	\$170
<input type="checkbox"/> Community sector non profit organisation	\$125	\$95
<input type="checkbox"/> NCOSS member	\$105	\$75

An "early bird" rate applies to registrations received before 13 March.  
There will be an administrative charge of \$15 for registrations  
cancelled up to 13 March. Substitute delegates are welcome, but no  
refunds will be made after 13 March.

### Payment

☐ I enclose a cheque for \$\_\_\_\_\_ (payable to NCOSS) OR:  
☐ I am paying by ☐ Bankcard ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Name on card \_\_\_\_\_  
Card expires \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## Morning

- 8.30 *Registration*
- 9.15 **Welcome**  
Annabel Senior, President, NCOSS
- 9.20 **Opening address**  
The Hon Bob Carr MP, Premier
- 9.40 **Community sector involvement**  
Gary Moore, Director, NCOSS
- 10.00 *Morning Tea*
- 10.30 **Keynote speaker**  
Martin Stewart Weeks, The Albany Consulting Group, Author of *Social capital in the Olympic City*
- 11.00 **Panel: Building regional capacities**  
Jill Lang, North Coast Regional Coordinator, NSW Premier's Department  
Eve Robinson, Manager, Central Coast Regional Economic Development Organisation  
Alex Gooding, Director, Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils  
John Foulstone, Coordinator, Illawarra Coordinated Care Project
- 12.45 *Lunch*

NCOSS gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the NSW Premier's Department in the organising of this conference.

## Afternoon

- 1.30 **Panel: Investing in local communities**  
Jan Collie, Coordinator, Cabramatta Community Centre  
Fran Rowe, Chair, Lachlan Rural Advisory Group  
Edwina Deakin, Manager, Kings Cross Place Management Project  
Kylie Frazer, President, Local Government Community Services Association
- 3.00 *Afternoon tea*
- 3.30 **Panel: Community development and corporate participation**  
Margaret Miller, Manager, Community Relations, NRMA  
Anthony Lupi, Head of Community Development, Westpac
- 4.15 **Plenary: Managing for communities—the costs and the benefits**  
Discussion and suggestions
- 5.00 **Conference close**  
Dr Col Gellatly, Director General, NSW Premier's Department

### About the issues

Several claims are being made about these new types of initiatives. They include:

- better co-ordination between agencies leads to better outcomes for consumers;
- partnerships between different sectors (e.g. government, community and business) can lead to better quality, more credible and hence more effective programs and services;
- a focus on location can give a sharper edge and greater chance of success; and
- building economic and social capital can be much more integrated.

Come, listen, discuss and decide for yourself.

**'a searing critique'**  
- The Australian Financial Review 11 Dec 97

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH ALLEN & UNWIN

# TURNING POINT

## The State of Australia

Edited by Christopher Sheil

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"The State of Australia series has become an indispensable guide to the sweeping changes in public sector management and shrinkage of government responsibility imposed during the 1990s. This latest volume makes a thorough and compelling case to think again about the economy and society we want in this country."

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"Turning Point is a vital antidote for the too frequently served neoliberal diet and a veritable mine of information and insight."

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- Glyn Davis, Associate Professor, Politics & Public Policy, Griffith University

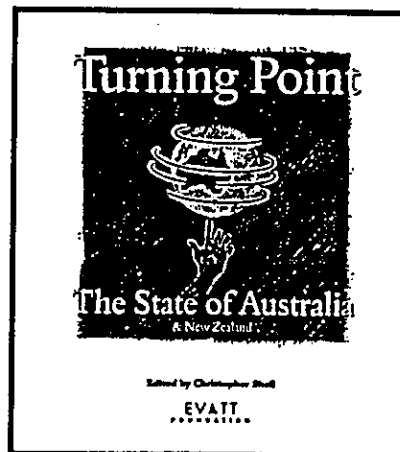
☞ In Part One *Turning Point* thoroughly examines Australia's unemployment and joblessness trends, assesses prospective changes to the financial system (the Wallis inquiry), and provides a critical stocktake of manufacturing (the Mortimer review), the maritime industry, public infrastructure, the health system, emergency services and the public sector.

☞ In Part Two *Turning Point* traces the contradictions in Bob Carr's NSW government, offers new and disturbing insights into Jeff Kennett's Victorian government, and questions whether Rob Borbidge is trying to turn Queensland back to the Bjelke-Peterson era. *Turning Point* also looks at Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and the two Territories.

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## PAYMENT

Individuals must pay before the course starts.  
Only organisations paying for staff can be invoiced on supply of a written order. Terms 30 days.

☐ Law for Non Lawyers Course...\$250

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It is helpful to the LNL presenters to know your occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate which concurrent sessions you wish to attend:

☐ Administrative Law **OR**

☐ Duty of Care, Confidentiality and Record Keeping

☐ Children, Young People and the Law **OR**

☐ Going to Court

☐ Would you like to know more about our in-house training services?

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Carolyn Grenville is a qualified Social Worker with a number of years of professional practice. She has a Masters Degree in Adult Education and many years of experience in designing and presenting adult education courses.

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LAW FOR NON LAWYERS is an intensive training course over two days which will give you a good understanding of the law and how the legal system works. You will also learn how to do basic legal research and locate a range of legal and welfare services.

Thousands of students have attended **LAW FOR NON LAWYERS**

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## Who needs to know about the law?

Anyone who provides information or assistance will benefit from **LAW FOR NON LAWYERS**.

It is popular with social workers, youth and community workers, medical practitioners, union organisers and welfare officers, journalists, legal publishers, teachers, librarians, justices of the peace, police, government workers, clergy, court officers, legal staff, as well as MPs and their staff.

Everyone who attends **LAW FOR NON LAWYERS** is presented with a personalised certificate which is highly regarded in the government and community sectors.

## Course Format

**LAW FOR NON LAWYERS** combines lectures, handouts, small group discussions, plus question and answer sessions. All presenters are well known specialists in their fields and use real case studies to ensure that the course is stimulating and up-to-date.

Extra sessions can be convened for organisations who send 10 or more staff to the course.

Contact Course Convenor, Carolyn Grenville for more information.

Redfern Legal Centre Publishing has been providing information about the law to the community for 17 years.

## Course Program

### About the legal system

This introductory session provides information on where we get our laws from, lawyers and the legal system, and a framework for understanding the specialised sessions that follow.

### Contracts and Consumer Law

Understanding contract law and tort law is crucial to understanding how the law works. The session also gives a brief outline of credit regulation and consumer protection laws in NSW.

### Law and Relationships

This session will explain the legal framework which underpins family law and update you on divorce, de facto relationships, family violence orders, child maintenance, spouse maintenance, the Child Support Scheme, parenting orders and property.

### Crime and Punishment

This session provides a detailed account of the criminal justice system with many case studies. It explains: what a crime is, the role of police, the court system, rules of evidence, sentencing, appeals, the role of prisons, lawyers, barristers and other professionals.

### Finding the Law

Librarians from the Legal Information Access Centre (LIAC) will show you the latest plain language legal resources available and where to find them.

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS

### Administrative Law – Keeping the Government Honest

Administrative law deals with the processes, powers and decisions of government bodies. You will learn how to get information from the government, how to make complaints, and how decisions can be reviewed. (We will also discuss the new NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal.)

OR

### Duty of Care, Confidentiality and Record Keeping

Can the law make a counsellor, social worker or doctor disclose information given to them in confidence? This session will consider issues of confidentiality in light of recent confidential communications legislation, discuss subpoenas and the implications for record keeping.

### Children, Young People and the Law

This session covers the rights of children and young people, children and the criminal justice system, child protection and care proceedings and the role of the Department of Community Services.

OR

### Going to Court

This introduction to the Local Court explains what sort of legal matters the court deals with; who's who in court and how the Local Court works; Legal Aid and other sources of legal assistance.

## Details

### Cost

\$250, including handouts, gourmet lunches (vegetarians catered for), refreshments and a personalised certificate. Discounts are available for multiple enrolments.

### Dates and times

Thursday/Friday 5/6 March 1998, 9am-5pm both days.

### Venue

Dixon Room at the State Library of NSW, Macquarie St, Sydney. Close to buses and trains (Martin Place Station). Disabled access throughout the building. RLCP thanks the State Library for assistance with the venue.