



# NSW 2024-25 Budget and Young People

June 2024



# Acknowledgment of Country

Youth Action acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We understand that sovereignty was never ceded and recognise their continuing connection to lands, languages, waters, and cultures.

Our office is located upon the land of the Gadigal people. We recognise their traditional and ongoing Custodianship, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.



# About Youth Action

Youth Action is the peak organisation representing young people and the services that support them in NSW. We work towards a society where all NSW young people are supported, engaged, valued, and have their rights realised. We represent over 150 Member organisations and regularly engage with young people and youth workers from all over the state, as we have for over 30 years.

We give a particular focus to young people who are regional, First Nations, LGBTIQ+, with disability, from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including migrants and refugees, and doing it tough. We use a rights-based lens to focus on programs, policy and advocacy that achieve meaningful outcomes, embed strengths-based approaches, and are informed by data and evidence. We are an ally to the self-determination of First Nations communities, are led by the expertise of young people and the Sector, and work to be a trust-worthy partner and collaborator.

## Youth Action

262 Liverpool Street,  
Darlinghurst 2010 NSW  
(02) 8354 3700  
[info@youthaction.org.au](mailto:info@youthaction.org.au)  
ABN 17 209 492 539  
[www.youthaction.org.au](http://www.youthaction.org.au)

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# Introduction

Young people in NSW continue to live with the cumulative impacts of the cost-of-living crisis, with many telling us about their challenges with food insecurity, housing and homelessness, transport expenses and the rising cost of utilities. Intergenerational inequity and young people's unique living situations means that some are hit particularly hard. All areas of their lives have been impacted from education and how they learn, their mental health and wellbeing, their families and connections to communities and support networks, where they call home, and their employment and future career opportunities.

Youth Action welcomes the NSW Budget focus on young people doing it tough such as those in contact with child protection and law, justice systems and those disengaged from education and learning. The announcement of \$86.9 million for youth justice initiatives over 4 years, \$224 million to support children and young people in the out of home care system, and \$4.9 million to help young people re-engage in education are important steps to ensuring these young people are supported to thrive. The \$5.1 billion investment in social housing and homelessness are also critical to addressing the disproportionate impact of the housing crisis on young people.

Other key announcements include a new Bulkbilling Support Initiative to protect the cost of seeing a GP; a suite of mental health reforms; investment in the building of new and upgraded schools, especially in Western Sydney and Regional NSW; investment to target the teacher shortage; and a funding injection to bring the NSW public education system to 75 per cent of the School Resourcing Standard.

However, as can be seen in the Budget announcements listed below, benefits to young people will come predominantly through their inclusion in larger population groups rather than through targeted support measures. It is heartening to see investment aimed at improving outcomes for the community in relation to issues such as such homelessness, domestic and family violence, mental health, and cost of living. However, we know that young people are less likely to access or be eligible for universal supports and services, especially those from socially excluded groups. This invisibility of young people as an identified priority means there is a very real risk that many will not receive the assistance they need and will fall further behind.

Youth Action's [2024-2025 Pre-Budget Submission](#) contained a number of recommendations co-designed with young people and the services who support them. The recommendations recognised the unique experiences of young people as a population group and highlighted the need for specialist youth programs and services across areas such as cost-of-living, employment, mental health and wellbeing, housing and homelessness, and domestic and family violence. They also recommended investment in the preventative, early intervention, and youth development function of the youth sector to strengthen social capital and young people's capacity to participate in their communities.

There was a missed opportunity again in this Budget to invest in supports and services to address the challenges faced by those young people particularly affected by the housing and cost of living crises through building the social infrastructure needed to establish the conditions for young people to thrive and reach their full potential.

# Responses from Peaks



[NCOSS Budget Response](#)



[Homelessness NSW Budget Response](#)



[Community Housing Industry Association Budget Response](#)



[Domestic Violence NSW Budget Response](#)



[Fams Budget Response](#)



[Tenants Union of NSW Budget Response](#)

# Summary of key announcements impacting young people

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## Youth Justice

- **\$86.9 million** in youth justice initiatives over the next four years
  - **\$66.9 million** to secure the future of early intervention and diversion programs to help guide young people at risk away from anti-social or criminal behaviour and onto a more positive path.
  - Includes funding for Youth on Track and the Bail and Accommodation Support Service
- Build on the existing **\$26.2 million** package of funding and reforms announced in March to support community safety and wellbeing, particularly for regional NSW, with a focus on strengthening early intervention and prevention programs for young people.
- **\$20 million** to develop a new technology platform to house sensitive case file information and support youth justice workers to deliver essential frontline services.
- **\$1.4 million** to help fund PCYC club manager wages.

## Out of Home Care

- **\$224 million** to support the 14 000 children and young people who use the out of home care system. This funding will expand the Government's role as a foster care provider to move vulnerable children and young people out of emergency accommodation and increase the recruitment of urgently needed, longer-term foster carers.

# Housing and Homelessness

## Social Housing and Homelessness

- **\$5.1 billion over four years** for the Building Homes Program. The Program will build 8,400 social housing dwellings (6,200 new and 2,200 replacement). More than 50% of these dwellings will be prioritised for victim-survivors of domestic-violence.
- **\$810 million** in repair and maintenance investment to upgrade 33 500 homes and kick start the new Maintenance Hub on 1 July 2024.
- **\$203 million** over four years for the Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) to support critical capital maintenance on 3,500 homes.
- **\$528 million** over four years across a range of homelessness services including reforms to Temporary Accommodation, Specialist Homelessness Services, funding to grow Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, and a Homelessness Innovation Fund.

## Renters

- **\$8.4 million** for frontline rental inspectors and engagement officers to help the Rental Commissioner enforce quality standards.
- **\$655.1 million** for key workers and rental housing including
  - \$450 million for a Key Worker Build to Rent Program across metropolitan NSW
  - \$200.1 million for key health worker accommodation cross rural and regional areas
- **\$11.8 million** to support the growing number of renters in apartments with an expanded Strata & Property Services Commissioner to regulate strata schemes.

- **\$8.4 million** for the Rental Commissioner to develop and enforce renter protections.
- Ongoing private rental assistance through Rent Choice, Advance Rent and Bond Loan and other programs to continue.

## Cost of Living

- **\$188.8 million** over four years to introduce the Bulk Billing Support Initiative to incentivise GPs to increase bulk billing through tax concessions.
- **\$100 million** to expand existing energy rebates for low-income households in 2024-25, including:
  - Family Energy Rebate for those receiving Family Tax Benefits – from \$180 to \$250
  - Low-Income Household Rebate and Medical Rebate for eligible concession holders from \$285 to \$350
- **\$6 million** over two years to continue the Learn to Swim program targeted at culturally and linguistically diverse and low socioeconomic communities.
- Continuation of existing cost-of-living relief:
  - Gas rebate for eligible concession card holders – \$110
  - \$60 weekly toll cap for private motorists
  - Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) for people experiencing financial hardship
  - Learn to Swim program targeted at culturally and linguistically diverse and low socioeconomic communities
  - \$25 weekly opal charge cap for children and students on a concession card

- Two \$50 Active and Creative Kids vouchers for eligible families
- School Student Transport Scheme to provide subsidised travel to and from school for eligible students

## Education & TAFE

### NSW Public Schools

- An additional \$481.1 million for public education in NSW to fund 75 per cent of the School Resourcing Standard (up from 72 per cent).
- \$8.9 billion in the Rebuilding Public Education Program which includes funding to build new schools and upgrades to 83 schools.
  - \$3.6 billion for new schools in Western Sydney
  - \$1.4 billion for new and upgraded schools in regional NSW
- \$1.08 billion in funding for school maintenance and minor upgrades to work through the multi-year backlog of works previously promised to schools but not delivered.
- Teacher shortage
  - \$1.2 million in 2024-25 to expand support to more than 110 schools experiencing significant teacher staffing challenges through Priority Recruitment Support
  - \$700 000 in 2024-25 for the Grow Your Own Local Teacher Pipeline, expanding the program to include Western Sydney, Dubbo, Queanbeyan and the Murray.
- \$4.9 million to continue Get Back in the Game which helps at-risk young people re-engage with education, training and employment.

## TAFE, Apprenticeships and Traineeships

- \$2.5 billion budget investment in TAFE NSW
  - \$83.1 million boost to support increased permanency within TAFE NSW through the conversion of 500 casual teachers to permanent employment
- \$190 million to undertake urgent repairs at campuses across the state, upgrade 5 000 digital devices and improve Wi-Fi at 40 campuses.
- Vocational training Assistance Scheme for travel and accommodation for apprentices or trainees who travel more than 120 kms round trip to attend training.
- \$16.3 million to continue funding fully subsidised training for all apprentices and trainees.

## Health and Wellbeing

- Nearly **\$1 billion** to be invested in building and developing health infrastructure across rural and regional NSW.
- **\$171.4 million** to establish a “Single Front Door” to be a single point of advice, assessment, triage and referral for people in NSW with urgent non-life-threatening conditions, backed with the introduction of three additional virtual care services and helping 180 000 people avoid a trip to the ED.
  - **\$39 million** to strengthen mental health services by establishing a new Mental Health Single Front Door. The NSW Single Front Door will expand to include mental health support, allowing those in need to call Healthdirect to receive assessment advice from specialist advice from specialist clinicians and be connected with the appropriate services.

- **\$2.4 million** for the Mental Health Review Tribunal to enable a digitisation of records, an upgrade to IT systems and an investment in a new case management system
- **\$30.4 million** to expand Community Mental Health Teams across targeted areas, including regional NSW. This will provide about 35 additional mental health positions, five of which will be mental health housing liaison positions.
- **\$130.9 million** for the Family Start Package – improving access to health care services for families, including:
  - **\$17.9 million** to enhance essential services for vulnerable children by boosting the statewide public paediatric allied health workforce
  - **\$2.3 million** funding over four years to Royal Far West to increase support for children with developmental concerns who live outside metropolitan areas
  - **\$40 million** to enhance essential services for vulnerable children with specific investments in rural and regional allied health, juvenile arthritis and Karitane and Tresilian services.
  - **\$15.0 million** in vaccine coverage for hesitant and hard-to-reach communities
- **\$2.4 million** to provide support for LGBTQIA+ people and their families across the State, including through the Gender Centre.

## Support for First Nations communities and young people

- **\$73.4 million** to establish Keeping Places at the sites of former children's homes, to support reconciliation with Stolen Generations survivors.
- **\$16.3 million** to deliver Aboriginal Cultural Heritage reforms to recognise and conserve sites of cultural significance.
- **\$5 million** to undertake consultation to determine a pathway to treaty with First Nations communities.
- **\$4.9 million** to continue investment in Local Decision Making in partnership with First Nations community bodies.
- **\$3.5 million** additional support for the continued implementation of Closing the Gap initiatives.

## Domestic and Family Violence

**\$245.6 million** as part of an emergency package to enhance support for domestic and family violence victim-survivors and expand programs that reduce the rate of violence against women and children. This includes:

### Crisis response

- **\$48 million** to roll out the Staying Home Leaving Violence program statewide and expand the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Service.

### Early intervention

- **\$48.1 million** to secure and increase funding for workers who support children accompanying their mothers to refuges.

- Additional **\$700 000** to the NSW Domestic Violence Line.

### Primary prevention

- **\$38.3 million** for the implementation of the NSW's first dedicated Primary Prevention Strategy: *Pathways to Prevention: NSW Strategy for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence 2024-2027* will develop a range of initiatives to address the drivers of DFSV.
- **\$8.1 million** for the 'All in' early childhood pilot to prevent domestic violence by teaching young children about healthy relationships.
- **\$10 million** to expand Men's Behaviour Change Programs to enable men to recognise their violent behaviour and develop strategies to prevent the use of violence.

### Sector support

- **\$5 million** for workforce training on the implementation of a newly developed risk assessment framework and other priority areas.
- **\$3.6 million** to expand Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW).

### Improving the justice system for victims

- **\$45 million** has been set aside to improve bail laws and justice system responses to domestic violence.
- **\$24.1 million** has been set aside to improve bail laws and justice system responses to domestic violence.
- **\$24.1 million** for the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (WDVCAS) to meet the increasing demand of victim survivors requiring support to navigate the justice system.

- **\$5.5 million** in 2024-25 to expand the WDVCAS hearing support and Police co-location pilot programs.
- **\$2.1 million** to support the Domestic Violence Death Review Team and its work to deliver research around risk factors, trends and impact of service delivery.
- **\$2.1 million** over two years to improve and continue the Corrective Services EQUIPS Domestic and Family Violence program, delivered to offenders in custody and under supervision in the community to prevent reoffending.

## Research

- **\$5 million** of research into perpetrators and effective interventions.

## Communities

- **\$283.4 million** over the next four years to enhance digital connectivity for rural, regional and remote NSW communities, providing faster and more reliable telecommunications.
- **\$10 million** to continue gambling harm minimisation programs which support people and minimise their risk of harm.
- An addition **\$7.5 million** to establish Multilingual NSW as a one-stop shop across governments to provide translating and interpreting services.
- **\$2.1 million** for frontline programs to build robust interfaith and cross-cultural relationships, especially targeting online hate and extremism.