

Media Release

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INVESTMENT IN WESTERN SYDNEY SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IS URGENT. IT NEEDS TO BE INCREASED, FAIR AND TRANSPARENT

The NSW Auditor-General's report [today](#) highlights that WestInvest did not always deliver the critical support that Western Sydney needs, so it now falls to the current NSW Government to urgently fix this.

The WestInvest scheme was supposed to support economic recovery in Western Sydney areas impacted by COVID lockdowns.

The Auditor General made various findings about the way that infrastructure funding allocations in Western Sydney were assessed, documented and ultimately allocated.

NCOSS, the peak NSW social services body, says identification of the need for more support for disadvantaged Western Sydney communities was right, even if the process was wrong.

“Make no mistake that the issues raised here are about *the way* social and economic programs were funded in Western Sydney, not *the need* for that funding,” said NCOSS CEO Cara Varian.

“What we have here is an identified need for support in Western Sydney but a program which did not adequately deliver it. It now falls to the NSW Government to urgently address that gap.

“The fact of the matter is that \$3 billion in additional funding is needed every year for essential social services in South West Sydney alone.

“Funding for social services in Western Sydney needs to be allocated fairly, increased substantially and aligned with need.”

NCOSS' recent *Beyond roads and bridges: Critical social infrastructure for South West Sydney* report, revealed substantial investment is required in the area by 2041.

The study, conducted by Impact Economics and Policy, found residents in South West Sydney in particular, already face some of the highest levels of financial and social hardship in the state.

“A healthy and prosperous community needs more than roads and bridges – the Government needs to ensure there is also adequate investment in social infrastructure and services,” Ms Varian said.

“We desperately need the Government to, at a minimum, match social infrastructure funding increases to increases in population growth. Otherwise, these communities will fall further and further behind.

“Simply to keep up with population growth, South West Sydney needs 11,000 additional social housing units by 2041. That’s triple what will be built based on the current funding trajectory.”

Modelling shows by 2041 in South West Sydney there will be:

- 13,768 additional households facing severe rental stress.
- 5,620 more women experiencing physical or sexual violence each year.
- 1,728 children at risk of significant harm each year.

“We need the government to urgently commit to increased funding and to put these dollar figures where they matter – in the Budget papers,” Ms Varian said.

“Let’s not lose sight of the fact that Western Sydney has a significant social infrastructure funding need, and that needs to be met through a quality program.”

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