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NSW budget struggles to plug gaping holes left by federal budget

The devastating holes punched in NSW's social safety net by the Abbott Government will remain dangerous traps for the state's youth, despite measures in the NSW budget announced today, according to the state's peak body for youth affairs.

Youth Action today acknowledged the efforts of the Baird Government, but noted it was nigh on impossible for the state to satisfactorily rectify the federal policy changes that threaten to drag thousands of NSW young people into unemployment and homelessness.

"We acknowledge the intentions of the Baird Government today in attempting to mitigate against the severe blows handed to youth in the March federal budget," Youth Action Policy Director Eamon Waterford said.

"The more than \$1 billion committed today to child protection, homelessness and disability services over the next financial year is welcome. But the sad fact is when you have a federal government ripping billions away from Newstart, school education, higher education, and employment support programs, the NSW Government is always going to struggle to summon sufficient resources to patch things up adequately.

"The Abbott Government's cuts set thousands of young people in NSW on a path toward long term unemployment and homelessness. Unfortunately the reality is that this state budget does not contain sufficient measures to fundamentally alter that path for many.

"While it is not the state government's fault that the federal budget was so draconian on the youth of NSW, it is their responsibility to do something about it. We have seen efforts toward that goal in today's budget, but it is our assessment that the course toward a crisis of youth unemployment and homelessness in NSW has not been averted.

"We urge Premier Mike Baird and Treasurer Andrew Constance to work hard to convince their federal counterparts that the Australian government needs to change course aggressively if we are to avert a crisis of youth homelessness in NSW.

"All modern, credible research indicates that the kind of cuts we saw in March will lead to a sharp increase in youth homelessness, youth unemployment and their associated problems, like substance abuse, crime, and mental health issues. We need desperately to change our policy settings before it is too late."

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