



**MEDIA RELEASE:** Wednesday 19 June 2019

## **NSW Budget: A Missed Opportunity to Invest in Young People Across the Continuum of Care**

Young people doing it tough will find little relief in the NSW State Budget released yesterday.

Youth Action, the peak organisation for young people and youth services, said that while it welcomed investments in regional youth, mental health and vocational education and training, the 2019-20 NSW Budget fails to provide support for young people across the continuum of care.

Youth Action Chief Executive Officer Katie Acheson said that "it was concerning that despite a robust surplus, young people are still not getting the level of support they need or being seen as partners in solving social issues that impact them".

"While there are positives in this budget, too much focus is placed on building infrastructure at the expense of delivering a coordinated and systemic response to the complex needs and issues facing young people in NSW."

One positive is the roll-out of the Regional Youth Strategy and the Regional Youth Task Force promises to identify and enhance youth programs in regional NSW.

"We welcome the allocation of \$50 million for regional youth programs and infrastructure but would like to see this focus rolled out state-wide", Ms Acheson said.

"We do see some wins in mental health for young people, with 88.4 million for school counsellors and psychologists. and free TAFE and VET courses for young people across the state".

"Concerning omissions in this budget include: no mention of the role of young people as agents of change in domestic violence, no mention of the specific and overlapping challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in our communities, and most importantly, no mention of the need to resource a coordinated and systemic approach to supporting young people across the state."

"The research on this is loud and clear. If we want to really support and lift up young people, we will need more than a piecemeal approach to service provision and support." Ms Acheson said.

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## **What the NSW 2019 Budget includes for young people:**

### **Vocation Education and Training**

- \$34 million over 2 years to establish a pilot program for 2 senior, vocational schools in Western Sydney & North Coast to support young people to build skills and get into a trade
- Productivity Bootcamps in Western Sydney & South Coast, to help young people secure career in construction industry
- \$61.7 million over four years to construct eight new TAFE Connected Learning Centres in rural and regional locations, including Byron Bay, Nelson Bay, Bateman's Bay, Jindabyne, Nambucca Heads, Hay, Cobar and West Wyalong
- \$71 million over 4 years for: 100,000 free TAFE & VET courses. From 1 January 2020, 70,000 fee-free traineeships will be provided to young job seekers
- \$5.9 million over 4 years to offer online courses for women to build financial literacy

### **Housing**

- \$1 billion in 2019-20 in continued funding towards a range of homelessness and social and affordable housing programs

### **Regional NSW**

- Minister for Regional Youth to deliver a Regional Youth Strategy, the establishment of a Regional Youth Taskforce and an Office for Regional Youth
- Establish Regional Industry Education Partnerships with local schools and industries to provide employment opportunities for young people in the regions
- \$50 million allocated for supporting young people through the Country Communities Fund for projects and programs in the regions

### **Protection**

- \$30 million in 2019-20 to help support the health and wellbeing of vulnerable children with complex needs in out-of-home care
- \$16.8 million in 2019-20 to support the delivery of child protection services through the continuation of funding for 45 Child Protection Helpline workers and for 66 case support workers

### **Western Sydney**

- \$79.6 million over four years to deliver a new Western Sydney 'Mega TAFE' specialising in construction trades



- \$4.3 million over four years to provide a co-working startup hub in Western Sydney
- \$2.2 billion over four years towards More Trains More Services

### **Education**

- \$88.4 million over four years to employ 100 additional school counsellors/psychologists and an additional 350 student support officers

### **Health**

- \$9.6 million over four years to increase access medical and mental health support for treating an eating disorder
- Commitment for specialised mental health beds for mothers and their babies, children and young people in public hospitals
- \$3.3 million to commence construction of Grace's Place - helping children and young people through the trauma of losing a loved one due to homicide

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Young People**

- Commitment from the Premier to ensure Aboriginal voices inform policy, but no detail about how this will happen

### **Transport**

- \$69.6 million over four years to reduce the Opal Weekly Travel cap to \$50 per week for adults and \$25 per week for child/youth and concession travel