

MEDIA RELEASE

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Pensioners overlooked in NSW Budget

The NSW Budget 2024-25 was always going to be a tough one, but CPSA is disappointed to note a lack of targeted measures to support the health, wellbeing and social inclusion of pensioners and other Centrelink payment recipients.

"Many people are doing it tough at the moment. In a recent survey of our members, 86% of respondents indicated that cost-of-living pressures were a major issue for them", said CPSA Policy Manager Ash Fowler.

Despite steep increases in council rates across the state, the pensioner council rate rebate remains stagnant and has not been increased since its introduction over 30 years ago. This leaves many people on a low income who own their own home in an increasingly precarious position.

Seniors in regional and rural NSW are still feeling the loss of the Regional Seniors Travel Card, which provided \$250 to offset the increased cost of transport in these communities. The discontinuation of this program has left older people struggling to access essential services and participate in their communities.

"CPSA has heard from people who are skipping meals, putting off medical treatments and missing out on seeing family and friends because there are bills to be paid. People shouldn't have to make decisions like this to afford to live", said Ash Fowler.

CPSA welcomes the news of increased investment in health funding across New South Wales, particularly the Bulk-Billing Support Initiative which will provide tax rebates to medical practices that offer gap-free medical appointments. This initiative will increase the uptake of bulk-billing across NSW including in regional areas.

Unfortunately, despite record funding towards a better health system for NSW communities, the 2024-25 NSW Budget has once again failed to invest in the State's beleaguered public dental system. Nearly 80,000 people are waiting for assessment and treatment in public dental services across NSW.

"Oral health is essential healthcare, and everyone should have access to adequate dental care regardless of income or where they live," said Ash Fowler.

CPSA welcomes the announcement of \$6.6 billion to be spent on social housing, including 6200 new homes to be built over the next 4 years. This program will provide much needed relief for people experiencing housing insecurity.

"The NSW Government is finally taking responsibility for building homes rather than selling them off. After years of underinvestment in public, community and Aboriginal housing, we hope to see this trend continue." said Ash Fowler.

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