
Media Release

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Pre-election budget: no big wins, pain spread thin

We are in turbulent economic times and as such this Budget has charted a course that is fairly balanced but does not offer much for those most in need. This Budget is firmly pre-election, pretty strategic, and heavily underpinned by Commonwealth investment.

“A significant amount of the dollars announced are associated with Commonwealth initiatives,” says SACOSS Executive Director Karen Grogan, “which is essentially not a bad thing. It shows a positive relationship between the two layers of government, and a subsequent ability to provide a coordinated approach to spending.”

“The initiatives in housing are a positive step and will benefit South Australia for many years to come, and there are also good moves in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health spending. However there is nothing in this Budget for many of the most disadvantaged groups in SA.”

“Cancelling the new prison still leaves us with an estimated 232 prisoners who will have to go to already overcrowded facilities. This gives new meaning to Foley’s mantra of “rack’em, pack’em and stack’em”. In addition there is no provision in the Budget for any more rehabilitation programs or prison staff. Significantly, there is no further money for any diversionary or preventative programs to focus on reducing the causes of crime.”

“Falling crime rates over the past 10 years are a worldwide trend; it is time to direct more funding to prevention, early intervention and restorative justice, which international evidence shows really work.”

“The biggest concerns are the efficiency dividend target, the justice system adjustments and the fact that there is no real additional spend across the Health and Community Services Sector, even though there is significant unmet need.”

“The efficiency dividend of \$750 million over three years will be in part determined by the newly formed “Razor Gang” – indicating that there are clearly hard times ahead. While the detail will not be determined until the ‘Gang’ has done its work after next year’s State Election, SACOSS is concerned at the impact it will potentially have on the H& CS Sector and on the vulnerable South Australians it serves.”

“There are increases in fees and charges, with no increases in concessions for those least able to afford them. While we appreciate that some are in line with CPI increases, others are much higher. A particular concern is water. All South Australians should be able to afford the water that maintains their health and wellbeing regardless of their level of income, therefore the first tier of water usage charges need to be much lower.”