

Time to reclaim SA's reputation for social justice

SACOSS Executive Director Ross Womersley today said, "This election represents a real chance for all politicians, from every party, to commit to reclaiming South Australia's reputation for exemplary social infrastructure – housing, transport, and community support services."

SACOSS today issued its list of top priorities for parties and candidates to consider in this State Election. "We believe that any candidates who truly wish to make South Australia a better place by their election will join us in making these 11 critical issues a top priority." Womersley said.

1. Apply **early intervention strategies to prevent homelessness** and to issues surrounding inappropriate housing. This requires radically increasing social housing stocks - both public and community housing, and upgrading our existing ageing public housing infrastructure.
2. **Construct communities not housing ghettos**, by making sure anyone living in newly-developed areas has: housing that's environmentally sustainable and built using lifetime design principles; immediate access to essential services and public transport; the opportunity to access training and secure reasonable employment within easy reach.
3. Address the social conditions that actually lead to child abuse/neglect by **switching to a public health model of child protection**, and completely re-orienting the besieged crisis-driven system.
4. Develop better responses to all families under stress by **resourcing, connecting and coordinating** programmes across all levels of government and the community sector.
5. **Review**, and clearly define, the exact aim of every concession in South Australia.
6. **Index concessions** to the real cost increases for essentials such as energy and water, so that they ensure essential goods and services are genuinely affordable.
7. **Break the cycle** of repeat offending, by identifying young people who are at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system, and assisting them with early intervention strategies.
8. Focus on **rehabilitative and restorative justice** by engaging both victims and offenders, with an emphasis on 'restoring' to the victim and the community and rehabilitating the offender.
9. Fund **education and training support** for the **long-term un and under-employed** and not just the newly retrenched.
10. **Increase the workforce participation rates** of under-represented groups (bringing SA up to the national workforce participation rate), and make **sustainability**, as well as **sustainable green industry** and infrastructure, the main consideration when deciding where and how to spend public money.

And last but not least...

Commit to provide genuinely sustainable levels of ongoing funding to **the non-government community services sector** as it continues to deliver and value add to a vast range of essential community services on behalf of government.

"These 11 priorities were developed over the last six months by SACOSS' members" said Womersley. "This represents a wide range of large and small non-government social services, joined by many leading thinkers from around South Australia concerned with social justice issues".

The detail behind these priorities, including easy to read factsheets, can be found at:

www.createabetterstate.wordpress.com