

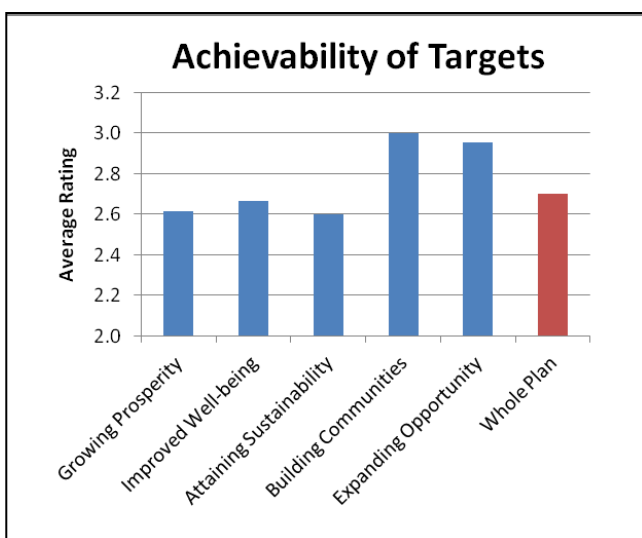
## New Report Questions Budget Cuts

The South Australian Council of Social Service today released a new analysis of progress in *South Australia's Strategic Plan*. The report raises questions about the wisdom of expenditure cuts heralded for Thursday's state budget, by revealing that progress on the Plan's social welfare targets already lag behind the average progress of the Plan as a whole.

SACOSS Executive Director Ross Womersley said, "We are aware of the report last month from the Australian Institute for Social Research at Adelaide University that shows with mid-year budget revisions and better than expected economic growth and revenue streams, there is no economic justification for drastic expenditure cuts in the budget. Our report adds to that by pointing out that South Australia is travelling better towards the government's economic goals than towards social goals."

"Any drastic cuts to social welfare expenditure and community services will not only have an immediate on real people who need support, but will also further skew progress in the government's own goals as expressed in the Strategic Plan."

The SACOSS report, *South Australia's Strategic Plan: What Progress on Poverty?* uses the government's own ratings to analyse progress in different areas of the Plan. The headline results are in the figure below — noting that the *lower* the number the more achievable the target.



The *Growing Prosperity* Targets are the key economic and employment targets, while *Building Communities* and *Expanding Opportunities* categories contain a variety of education, welfare and social inclusion targets.

The SACOSS report also looks at progress in relation to more specific targets. The general trend is the same, but the more nuanced analysis highlights housing as a major issue, as the targets for increasing access to affordable housing and decreasing housing stress are both unlikely to be met.

Womersley said, "It is clear we are not facing the gloomy economic prospects first feared at the onset of the global financial crisis, and it would be counter-productive now to cut programs necessary to achieving the goals of the Plan that Premier Rann has consistently flagged as marking out South Australia's path to 2014."

The SACOSS Report is available at: [www.sacoss.org.au/media/current.html](http://www.sacoss.org.au/media/current.html)