

10 March 2018

Re: SA State Election 2018

SA-BEST is pleased to provide its response to South Australian Council of Social Services' SA State Election 2018 policy survey as follows:

Digital Inclusion:

SA-BEST supports an increase in the capacity of all South Australians to access digital information at all levels of service delivery.

We support the completion of an audit of current gaps in service and access particularly in regional and remote regions.

We support increased levels of and access to digital training for consumers, including access to tertiary and higher education programs.

We support the expansion of free public WIFI networks in all commercial, and government buildings.

Cost of Living:

SA-BEST fully supports the investigation of a sustainable funding model that provides for energy costs to be based on a percentage of a consumer's bill. This is also in line with calls from COTA which have been supported by SA-BEST.

We support increased public awareness in respect of consumer's rights to 'shop around' for best price energy.

SA-BEST is open to reviewing requirements regarding landlords paying water supply charges unless otherwise agreed with the tenant. This should also include more robust protection in instances of financial hardship to prevent unnecessary disconnections which have the potential to place families at risk.

Children, Young people and Family Wellbeing

SA-BEST supports fully all SACOS recommendations in this area and if successful at the election, will push for a thorough review of all child protection legislation and the levels of appropriate skills, knowledge and values needed to provide meaningful outcomes. SA-BEST sees this as a whole of government issue and will work in a bipartisan approach to achieve improved outcomes. This should include funding for prevention and early intervention, the establishment of a commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People and support for young people in out of home care until 21 years of age.

Support for the Social Service Sector

SA-BEST supports all recommendations in this area.

Gambling Harm Protection

Refer to SA-BEST Policy. SA-BEST has clearly stated its support for the reduction in spending limits, the removal of EFTPOS machines in gaming areas as well as the staged reduction of poker machines across South Australia.

Health Housing and Justice

SA-BEST fully supports the recommendations of SACOS in the areas of Health, Housing and Justice.

SA-BEST is determined to improve the level of governance, inclusion and transparency of SA Health in a new government. The appointment an independent Chief Public Health Officer, is seen as a sound strategic management process.

Health

SA-BEST supports in-principle, the establishment of two non-government Comprehensive Primary Health Care Centres subject to proper modelling.

SA-BEST supports the prioritising of mental health by resourcing and fully implementing the SA Mental Health Strategic Plan. Further, SA-BEST supports a review of our mental health services and funding base, with particular reference to increasing preventative health funding for BPD and community mental health support services. This should include consumer awareness programs, short stay crisis management centres and increased numbers of skilled profession staff at all levels.

Housing

SA-BEST supports an audit of all public housing to include population projections to meet the needs of socially disadvantaged consumers into the future. SA-BEST is open to supporting a detailed examination of the successful Home at Last program introduced by the Victorian Government.

Justice

SA-BEST is open to investigating the merits of the introduction of a summary fines process based on a proportion of a person's income.

The provision of online access to tertiary level education is also supported. Additionally SA-BEST strongly supports the significant increases in advocacy and interpreter services required for Indigenous persons who face police and or court processes.

We believe that there are significant injustices currently being experienced through a lack of appropriate supports in these areas. It is worth noting that federally (in September of last year) our team called on the coalition government to urgently negotiate a solution with those jurisdictions that have yet to implement a Custody Notification Service consistent with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, and also called on those jurisdictions, including South Australia, that have yet to implement a Custody Notification Service consistent with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody to do so.

TAX and Expenditure

SA-BEST supports maintaining current levels of income indexed to CPI for all health services and agencies. We also support a review of operational practices and the development of meaningful key performance indicators. Any efficiencies that are created across the sector will not result in reductions in funding but rather the discretionary reallocation of funds within the appropriate service.

My team and I look forward to further meaningful discussions with you if we are successful in the upcoming election.