

SACOSS 2010-2011 State Budget Snapshot

16 September 2010



SACOSS

*South Australian Council
of Social Service*

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Overview

SACOSS has prepared this snapshot of the 2010-2011 South Australian State Budget for the benefit of its members. It is divided into areas of interest to the SACOSS membership, not into specific portfolios, and is underpinned by the SACOSS *Blueprint to Eradicate Poverty in South Australia*.

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Each of these areas is assigned a table that summarises the Budget initiatives in the relevant area, providing SACOSS members with a quick reference with which to frame responses to the State Budget. Not all areas are covered in this Snapshot due to both time restrictions and availability of detail in the Budget Papers.

Cost figures are for four years unless otherwise referenced.

1. Economic Data

This Budget comes against a backdrop of expectation of major expenditures cuts driven by the recommendations of the Sustainable Budget Commission – itself a response to fear of economic contraction resulting from the global financial crisis. However, since the gloomy economic predictions the economic context has changed with Australia largely surviving the depression and recording significant growth in the last financial year.

The headline economic data for South Australia is as follows:

Item	2010-11 Budget	2009-10 Actual	2009-10 Budget
Gross State Product - growth	2.75%	2%	-0.5%
Net debt	\$3,335m	\$1,587m	\$2,142m
Net financial liabilities to revenue ratio	100.1%	85.4%	97.1%
Employment Growth	1.25%	0.9%	-1.5%
SA Wages Growth		2.9%	
Unemployment Rate		5.3%	8.4%
Gross State Revenue	\$15,086	\$15,531	\$14,444
Gross State Expenditure	\$15,475	\$15,364	\$14,748
State Budget Deficit	\$389m	\$167m	\$304m

The budget is predicted to return to surplus in 2011-12.

All the figures point to the fact that the SA economy is progressing well. Employment is growing, GST inflows are ahead of even the most ambitious projections. This puts a large question over the necessity for a large number of cuts in the budget.

2. Poverty

Poverty remains a persistent feature of South Australian society and is "multi-dimensional". It effects different groups of people in different and multiple ways. National data (HILDA report) suggests that the percentage of people living in relative poverty (ie. less than 50% of median household income) has increased over the last decade. Given that average household income in SA is lower than the Australian average, poverty is likely to be a particular problem in this state.

Item	Description	SACOSS Comments
<p>Reform of delivery of financial assistance</p> <p>SAVINGS \$8 million over three years</p>	<p>This initiative will transfer some responsibilities for financial counselling and the administration of emergency financial assistance to community sector agencies.</p> <p>Families SA will retain the capacity to provide integrated social work and financial counselling for care and protection cases.</p>	<p>There have been concerns about the delivery of the financial counseling program from within Families SA service centres, and SACOSS welcomes this initiative as a useful way to increase the outcomes from the program.</p> <p>It is not clear how much money is going to flow to the community sector, and SACOSS believes that it should be at an equivalent level to current expenditure.</p>

A key failing of South Australia’s Strategic Plan is the lack of an explicit objective to reduce poverty and there are no major moves in this Budget to alleviate poverty.

3. Sector Development

The community sector provides a huge range of support and services for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged South Australians. To provide high standard, professional services requires support and investment in the organisations and people who provide those services.

Item	Description	SACOSS Comments
<p>Grant prioritisation of the Family and Community Development Program</p> <p>SAVINGS \$3 million over two years</p>	<p>This initiative will save \$3.0 million over two years by prioritising grant funding provided under the Family and Community Development Program to the most effective programs.</p>	<p>It is not clear what this initiative actually means, however it may directly impact on SACOSS and other peak bodies funded by the program, and we remain somewhat alarmed at the potential implications.</p> <p>Insufficient detail at this point, and we will be seeking immediate clarification.</p>
<p>Efficiencies of industry skills boards</p> <p>SAVINGS \$1.3 million over three years</p>	<p>This initiative will save \$1.3 million over three years through efficiencies to the industry skills boards network through co-location and targeted savings.</p>	<p>This will reduce the capacity of the skills boards to a level that will render them almost dysfunctional.</p>

Wages in the community sector are around 25% lower than pay rates for equivalent work elsewhere. The current pay equity case may see wages increased, but will require major new funding from state and federal governments to maintain current levels of services. The budget contains no funding for pay increases in the community sector.

4. Child Safety and Wellbeing

Data for 2009-10 notifications are not available due to a transition in the data recording systems. There was an increase in the number of financial support services provided, and financial assistance payments were similar to 2008-09 levels. Domestic violence assistance payments increased slightly.

SACOSS continues to argue for instituting a public health model for the child protection system in South Australia that directs resources towards prevention and early intervention, rather than the current crisis model that directs funds and services towards the tertiary end.

The public debate and lack of confidence in the efficacy of systems to keep children and young people safe is of ongoing and major concern to SACOSS.

Item	Description	SACOSS Comments
<p>Additional support for alternative care</p> <p>COST \$137.7 million</p>	<p>This initiative provides \$137.7 million over four years from 2010-11 in additional resourcing for children requiring alternative care arrangements. This is in addition to the \$25.2 million provided for 2009-10.</p> <p>This additional support will contribute towards the home based, residential and emergency care of children in need of alternative care.</p>	<p>SACOSS' major concern is the way in which this money is actually used. Allocating more money to a system that clearly is not working to do more of the same would be counter-productive.</p> <p>SACOSS hopes that the Department engages with the sector in order to ensure these resources are targeted to activities that prevent and/or reduce the overall number of young people under the Guardianship of the Minister.</p>
<p>Reform of Children and Community Services Ombudsman</p> <p>SAVINGS \$1.3 million over three years</p>	<p>This initiative will save \$1.3 million over three years by reforming the provision of Children's and Community Services Ombudsman's service functions. The consolidation of functions of the Housing Appeals Unit, Child Death and Serious Injury Special Investigations Unit, Office for the Guardian, Council for the Care of Children and the community service component of the Commissioner for Health and Community Services Complaints, under a single statutory body will enhance service delivery and generate efficiencies through a streamlined approach.</p>	<p>The important question here is, whether or not a series of crucial functions such as these can in fact be brought into a single statutory body and retain their independence and capacity?</p>

5. Disability

There is a wide understanding that people who live with a disability, and their families, have not had access to the support that they might need on a day-to-day basis to live good lives in their local community. While reviews of disability support are happening at both state and federal government level, people with disabilities still face the increased risk of social isolation, financial hardship, difficulties with access, exclusion from community, and of being congregated together.

Item	Description	SACOSS Comments
<p>Additional support for children with autism</p> <p>COST \$4.2 million</p>	<p>This initiative includes additional grant funding of \$2.1 million to Autism SA for assessments and early intervention services for children with autism, and \$2.1 million to SA Health for a multi-disciplinary assessment team to work across the Women’s and Children’s Hospital, the Lyell McEwin Hospital and the Flinders Medical Centre.</p>	<p>This initiative delivers on the government’s election commitment, and is welcomed, especially if the early intervention is oriented to ensure children with autism are actively included in their local schools and communities.</p>
<p>Additional support for Disability SA</p> <p>COST \$70.9 million</p>	<p>This initiative provides \$70.9 million over four years from 2010-11 in additional resourcing for people with disability and their carers, which includes a \$7.7 million revenue offset for a reduction in Commonwealth funded and privately funded clients. This is in addition to the \$9.6 million provided for 2009-10.</p> <p>This additional support will assist disability clients requiring accommodation support, community support, community access and respite services for carers.</p>	<p>On the surface appears like a big investment, however comes off a very low base.</p> <p>Concern about ensuring that the resources are used in ways that promote responses to individual needs and support people to take their rightful place in community.</p>
<p>Additional equipment for disability services</p> <p>COST \$13.8 million</p>	<p>This initiative provides \$13.8 million over four years for the ongoing provision of disability equipment and to reduce waiting lists. This is in addition to the \$3.8 million provided for 2009-10.</p> <p>The resources will assist in providing additional adult and children’s equipment, extra adult and children’s clinical assessments, and equipment program sustainability measures to ensure longevity and utilisation of equipment.</p>	<p>This initiative delivers on the government’s election commitment, to address long waiting lists of people requiring re-fitting and assessing for equipment.</p> <p>\$6.4m is to be available in the 2010-11 year; \$2.4m in the following years.</p>

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<p>Transfer disability client trust management to the Public Trustee</p> <p>SAVINGS \$2.2 million over three years</p>	<p>This initiative will save \$2.2 million over three years from the transfer of disability client trust management responsibilities to the Public Trustee from 2011-12.</p>	<p>While there may be some logic in the transfer, SACOSS is concerned that this will result in extra expenses incurred by the individuals, who are already financially disadvantaged.</p>
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6. Employment, Education and Training

Education and training are vital for a strong economy and vibrant society. South Australia has historically had lower levels of educational attainment and workforce participation than other states and territories. It is important that these issues are addressed as the economy shifts away from the traditional manufacturing base.

Education in particular is one of the most important determinants of health and wellbeing throughout the lifecycle, beginning in early childhood. State and Commonwealth funding for public schools is a first step in promoting health and wellbeing through education, and must be followed up with programs that ensure lifelong learning opportunities are available for workers to gain the skills required to compete in a competitive job market and in new and emerging industries.

It is also in the interests of all in society to ensure that the long term unemployed and those from at-risk groups are not left behind by employment, education and training programs.

Item	Description	SACOSS Comments
<p>Additional support for children's centres</p> <p>COST \$26.5 million</p>	<p>This initiative provides \$26.5 million over four years to further expand the network of children's centres with the establishment of an additional 10 centres. These centres will offer preschool, childcare, health and parenting services.</p>	<p>This initiative delivers on the government's election commitment, and is welcomed by SACOSS, especially if it leads to children and families receiving better support in the early years.</p>
<p>Establish new disability unit facilities</p> <p>COST \$9 million over three years</p>	<p>This initiative provides \$9.0 million over three years to establish six new special education units for children with a disability on state school grounds, catering for an extra 120 students.</p>	<p>This initiative delivers on the government's election commitment. SACOSS remains concerned that special units are likely to increase the exclusion of students with a disability. Funding would be better directed to supporting those same children to be well-integrated into mainstream school communities.</p>
<p>Support for students with disabilities in non-government schools</p> <p>COST \$3.6 million</p>	<p>This initiative provides \$3.6 million over four years to support the specific needs of students with a disability at Independent and Catholic schools. An additional \$500 000 will be provided in 2010-11 from within existing resources bringing the total to \$1.0 million in that year.</p>	<p>This initiative delivers on the government's election commitment, and is welcomed if it increases students' inclusion in the mainstream school community.</p>

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<p>Discontinue adult re-entry programs in public schools</p> <p>SAVINGS \$20.3 million over three years</p>	<p>Access to re-entry education will continue to be provided to adults up to the age of 21. Adults above the age of 21 will have limited access to schools and will need to access their education needs primarily through the TAFE system or from alternative providers.</p>	<p>This may create financial hardship for adults wanting to obtain Year 12 qualifications.</p> <p>People in rural and remote regions will potentially be quite disadvantaged as a result of this.</p> <p>This appears to undercut aspirations to have a highly skilled South Australian workforce.</p>
<p>Cease support for policy development in selected education programs</p> <p>SAVINGS \$3.8 million</p>	<p>This initiative will save \$3.8 million over four years by removing central office support to programs where policy development has been completed and schools are implementing the programs. The program areas are the Drug Education in Schools program, the Healthy Food Guidelines program and the Responsible Gambling program.</p>	<p>SACOSS is concerned that schools will not be able to maintain, update and deliver these programs with the same quality following funding withdrawal.</p>
<p>Increase in student fees (TAFE)</p> <p>SAVINGS \$7.5 million over three years</p>	<p>This initiative will increase revenue by \$7.5 million over three years by introducing a revised fee schedule of concessions and student fee caps to increase TAFE student contributions to the cost of training they receive. The revised schedule of fees will commence from the 2012 calendar year. This could see the average hourly fee rise from around \$2.00 to around \$2.40.</p>	<p>This places extra financial burdens on students seeking to obtain highly employable skills, and undermines the SA Strategic Plan Target to increase VET participation (T6.21)</p>
<p>Support 100 000 new training places</p> <p>COST \$127 million</p>	<p>Combined with the existing Productivity Places Program, which will deliver almost 38 000 training places, this will bring the total number of additional training places to 100 000 over the next six years. The additional support will provide training at all levels, from foundation literacy and numeracy, to higher level skills across industries experiencing skills shortages. It will also provide dedicated training places for Aboriginal people.</p>	<p>This initiative is welcomed, in particular the dedicated training places for Aboriginal people.</p>
<p>Creation of Sustainable Industries Education Centre</p> <p>COST \$125 million</p>	<p>An additional \$125.0 million has been provided for the development of a Sustainable Industries Education Centre at Tonsley Park, which will provide a training facility for a range of trades in the building and construction, water and renewable energy industries.</p> <p>This initiative saves \$10.6 million over</p>	<p>This initiative appears to focus on creating and supporting the “green jobs” sector, an area SACOSS has been advocating for.</p> <p>SACOSS has concerns about the impacts of closing three TAFE campuses.</p>

	four years and provides ongoing savings of \$14.5 million per annum from 2014-15 as a result of improved efficiencies in service delivery. This includes the closure and sale of three TAFE campuses at Panorama, Marlestone and O'Halloran Hill.	
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SACOSS' 2010-11 Budget Submission proposals in relation to Employment, Education and Training were:

1. Provide training opportunities for young adults who have been under Guardianship. *Cost estimate: \$90,000 in 2010-11.*

We welcome new funding for children under the Guardianship of the Minister, but note that there is no specific commitment to ensuring training opportunities are available.

2. Review of existing school support programs for children from low income groups, with a view to extending school-to-work transition programs. *Cost estimate: \$250,000 in 2010-11.*

No review announced

3. Focus on creating and supporting the "green jobs" sector. *Cost estimate \$48.5m over 6 years from already promised money. Additional cost: Nil.*

We note the development of the Sustainable Industries Education Centre.

4. Increase the quotas for long term unemployed people working on government projects (particularly in the Northern suburbs) and assess the viability of rolling the program out across the state. *Cost estimate: Nil.*

We note that the Budget contains a number of major infrastructure development including housing development and roads. We believe this is a perfect opportunity for state government to insist on a certain level of participation from people who are long-term unemployed.

7. Health

The shift towards primary health care is a positive move that SACOSS believes will benefit all individuals, especially those from low income and disadvantaged groups. Similarly, integrating health services in a culturally appropriate manner is a step forward in bringing equitable health services to all Australians.

Item	Description	SACOSS Comments
<p>Additional resources for health services</p> <p>COST \$502.2 million</p>	<p>This initiative provides additional resources of \$502.2 million over four years. This meets the additional cost of the provision of health services as well as the removal of some previous savings measures.</p>	<p>Insufficient detail.</p> <p>SACOSS is concerned that this funding is likely to be directed towards hospitals and other tertiary care, rather than preventative, primary health care initiatives.</p>
<p>Revised arrangements for hospital car parks</p> <p>SAVING \$16.8 million over two years</p>	<p>This initiative will increase revenue by \$16.8 million over two years by setting car parking fees at metropolitan hospitals at commercial rates. Some hospitals already charge commercial rates for car parks. As the management of car parks is not a core hospital service, all metropolitan car parks will eventually be sold. It is intended to negotiate an annual revenue stream as part of the sale process in addition to an upfront payment for the car parks. The expected proceeds have not been disclosed to ensure a competitive bid process.</p>	<p>SACOSS opposes this fundraising measure. People visiting loved ones in hospital should not be placed in additional financial hardship.</p>
<p>Transfer recovery centres to the non-government sector</p> <p>SAVING \$4 million over two years</p>	<p>This initiative will save \$4.0 million over two years through the transfer of operational responsibility for community recovery centres to the non-government sector, resulting in a more cost effective service.</p>	<p>This is probably welcome (the devil will be in the detail), however in principle SACOSS supports this as it is likely to lead to fewer people ending up in hospitals and forensic mental health facilities.</p>
<p>Additional resources for Adelaide Dental Hospital</p> <p>COST \$2.2 million</p>	<p>This initiative provides \$2.2 million to establish 10 additional dental chairs within the Adelaide Dental Hospital. This initiative will support undergraduate dental students and reduce reliance on the private dental sector for equivalent services. This expenditure is offset by additional revenue from the Commonwealth.</p>	<p>This is welcome funding to increase the capacity of the public dental service. SACOSS continues to advocate for a universal oral health system.</p>

<p>Residential rural general practitioner</p> <p>COST \$20.5 million</p>	<p>This initiative provides \$20.5 million over the next four years for increases in the rates of payment for on-call allowances and attendance at meetings for rural general practitioners.</p>	<p>This funding will be welcomed by rural communities, many of whom struggle to retain access to general practitioners.</p>
<p>Personal alert systems rebate scheme</p> <p>COST \$2.9 million</p>	<p>This initiative provides \$2.9 million over four years to assist older South Australians who live alone with the costs of a monitored personal alert system for use in emergencies.</p>	<p>This initiative delivers on the government's election commitment, and is welcomed by SACOSS.</p>

SACOSS' 2010-11 Budget Submission proposals in relation to Health and Wellbeing were:

1. Develop a comprehensive early years intervention plan. *Cost estimate: \$2m to develop and implement the plan.*
2. Develop a response and comprehensive plan to address South Australia's rapidly ageing population and the impacts upon the health care system. *Cost estimate: \$2m to develop and implement the plan.*
3. Address the issues arising from SACOSS' Social determinants of health paper. *Cost estimate: \$2m to implement a prevention and early intervention plan.*
4. Address Aboriginal health inequalities in a systemic and meaningful way. *Cost estimate: \$2m over 4 years.*

There is a great deal of welcome health expenditure in the 2010-11 Budget, however SACOSS notes a continuing dearth of investment in primary, preventative care which is, in the financial long run, always more cost effective. Preventative health care is also the focus of the SA Strategic Plan health targets. There were no initiatives in this budget relating to the SACOSS proposals.

8. Housing and homelessness

A lack of affordable housing, and housing stress, are pressing issues that directly impact upon low income groups. Government support in public and social housing is most likely to generate the capacity required to meet the affordable housing shortfall. A number of areas have received funding over recent years, which will assist those who are living in inadequate dwellings, or who have limited access to affordable housing, but the affordable housing and homelessness targets in South Australia's Strategic Plan are still unlikely to be met.

Item	Description	SACOSS Comments
<p>Adjustment of public housing rent assessment for pensioners</p> <p>SAVINGS \$28 million over three years</p>	<p>Increase in rent payable by pensioners by including the full Commonwealth pension income in tenants' ongoing rent assessments from 2011-12.</p> <p>This initiative will create parity amongst public housing tenants where income increases are normally part of assessable income.</p>	<p>This increase will absorb up to one-third of last year's pension increases and will increase hardship for pensioners in public housing.</p>
<p>National Rent Affordability Scheme</p> <p>COST \$5.3 million over three years</p>	<p>This continues participation in the Commonwealth Government's National Rental Affordability Scheme as part of a 10-year program.</p> <p>This scheme aims to increase the national supply of affordable rental dwellings to low and moderate income households and represents a state contribution of 25 per cent with the Commonwealth providing 75 per cent of the funding</p>	<p>This continues to be a very important initiative, although SACOSS notes that it targets people with moderate incomes rather than the most disadvantaged.</p>
<p>Retarget and enhance first home bonus grant</p> <p>SAVINGS \$76.9 million</p>	<p>The first home owners' grant will be increased from \$4000 to \$8000 with eligibility changed. It will now apply only to first home buyers who build or purchase a newly constructed home. The grant phases out for newly constructed dwellings valued between \$400 000 and \$450 000.</p>	<p>While capping the first homeowner's grant is overdue, and targeting the first homeowners' bonus grant at new homes will boost housing supply, SACOSS is deeply concerned that this will encourage even more new, fringe developments with a dearth of early infrastructure planning.</p>

SACOSS' 2010-11 Budget Submission proposals in relation to Housing were:

1. Setting new standards and design laws including the adoption of universal design principles. *Cost estimate: \$250,000 for an industry education program.*
2. An increased focus on homelessness in regional areas: *\$3m over 4 years.*
3. Location of social housing and access to adequate supports for high needs housing tenants that reflect the new housing packages. *Cost estimate: \$300,000 for the development of the plan.*

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4. Increased protection mechanisms for renters, including in the areas of energy efficiency and long term affordability. *Cost estimate: \$900,000 in 2010-11.*

None of the SACOSS proposals concerning housing have been addressed in the current Budget.

9. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander South Australians are significantly more likely to live on a lower income than the wider population, and have a much lower life expectancy.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are also more likely to be incarcerated in the overstretched and under-resourced prison system. There is an urgent need to address the societal contributors to poverty and disadvantage within this community and to improve their standards of environmental health, housing and essential services to ensure a fairer and more equitable South Australia.

Item	Description	SACOSS Comments
Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership COST \$24.1 million	Funding for the construction and operation of Aboriginal children and family centres in South Australia. The Aboriginal children and family centres are a partnership between the states and the Commonwealth.	This is welcome, but SACOSS notes it is largely federal government money.
Support Pt Augusta Aboriginal community initiative COST \$245,000 over two years	The initiative provides \$245 000 over two years for the establishment and support of the position of voluntary special advisor on government service delivery for the Port Augusta Aboriginal community, and to support a reconciliation event in Port Augusta.	

SACOSS' 2010-11 Budget Submission proposal in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (under the Income heading) was:

- Establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprise clearing house. *Cost estimate: \$1.2m over four years.*

This proposal has not been adopted, but remains an important concept that SACOSS will continue to advocate for.

10. Justice

The government's focus for much of the last decade has been on tertiary responses to crime in our communities rather than crime prevention and early intervention strategies. SACOSS believes that this "tough on [some] crime" approach is expensive and unsustainable in the long run.

Item	Description	Comments
<p>Court enforcement fee introduced</p> <p>SAVINGS \$10.9 million over three years</p>	<p>The current \$25 appearance fee, which may be awarded to SAPOL for each court file finalised by a guilty plea or finding, will be replaced with a \$100 court enforcement fee awarded at the time a defendant is found guilty in court.</p>	<p>This represents the quadrupling of a fee to be paid by those who, statistically, can least afford it.</p> <p>SACOSS is concerned that while this levy is increasing, there is no corresponding investment in early intervention or crime prevention.</p>
<p>Expiation Notice Reminder Fee Increase</p> <p>SAVINGS \$ 4 million</p>	<p>The reminder fee payable on expiation notices which are not paid within 28 days of the due date will be increased from \$30 to \$45 from 1 January 2011. This fee has not been increased since 1997.</p>	<p>This is a fee that will impact most highly on those with the least capacity to pay.</p>
<p>Victims of Crime Levy Increase</p> <p>SAVINGS \$48.9 million</p>	<p>The Victims of Crime Levy will be increased by \$30 (for example from \$30 to \$60 for expiable offences) from 1 January 2011. Revenue from the levy is paid into the Victims of Crime Fund.</p>	<p>SACOSS is concerned that, while this levy is increasing, there is no corresponding investment in alternative dispute resolution, early intervention or crime prevention.</p>
<p>Street Crime: You damage it – you fix it initiative</p> <p>COST \$15.5 million</p>	<p>Central to this will be a Southern Community Justice Court which will bring offenders before a magistrate within 72 hours of their offending. Offenders that vandalise property will be made to clean up their damage. Community Crime Prevention grants will also be increased to fund targeted graffiti programs.</p>	<p>This initiative delivers on the government's election commitment, and would be strengthened by incorporating Judge Peggy Hora's recommendations from her time as Thinker in Residence.</p>
<p>Implement changes to domestic violence legislation (early intervention orders)</p> <p>COST \$7.8 million</p>	<p>Implementation of measures approved under the <i>Intervention Orders (Prevention of Abuse) Act 2009</i>. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of an IT (information technology) system to facilitate the sharing of information in relation to intervention orders between public sector agencies; and • administrative responsibilities to 	<p>Insufficient detail available to allow comment at this time.</p>

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	manage the expected increase in the number of intervention orders and processing requirements under the Act.	
Additional police (recruit 300) and hi-tech crime fighting equipment COST \$106.3 million	An additional 300 police officers will be employed over the next four years. Police will also be equipped with new crime fighting technology including hand held computers, a portable fingerprint scanning system, trial of the Star Chase pursuit management system and more automated number plate recognition mobile cameras.	This delivers on the government's election commitment, however SACOSS notes that South Australia already has the nation's highest quota of police per capita. We continue to believe that a similar investment in preventative crime measures would be more effective.
Additional security for public transport COST \$6.8 million	Additional police officers will be employed from January 2011 to help improve passenger safety on the metropolitan public transport system.	Passenger safety remains a community concern, and SACOSS welcomes any initiative that encourages public transport use. This initiative delivers on the government's election commitment.
Fee amnesty in Fines Payment Unit SAVINGS \$3 million	This initiative is expected to provide a net benefit of \$3.0 million in 2011-12. A fee amnesty will be conducted over a limited period of time. Under this initiative penalties associated with late payments will be waived if debtors pay their debts during the amnesty period.	This is a welcome initiative, and SACOSS draws attention to the need for incorporation of financial hardship considerations. The amnesty should be extended indefinitely in cases of acute financial hardship.
Increase in prisoner accommodation COST \$3.1 million	The additional support will meet the operating costs of accommodating additional prisoners as a consequence of changes to parole legislation.	
Additional resources for prisoner education and rehabilitation COST \$3.8 million	This initiative provides \$3.8 million over four years for increased prisoner education and rehabilitation programs enabling better integration into society for offenders.	This initiative appears to focus on rehabilitation for offenders still within the prison system. SACOSS welcomes this, however we note that this type of support is also required post-release.

SACOSS' 2010-11 Budget Submission proposal in relation to Justice (under Social Participation heading) was:

- Develop socially inclusive support structures and rehabilitation & release programs for newly-released prisoners. *Cost estimate: \$4m over 4 years.*

As per final note in table above.

11. Mental Health

The prevalence rates of mental illness remain disturbingly high in South Australia. ABS figures from 2008 demonstrate that 7.3 million out of the 16 million 16-85 year olds in Australia had experienced a mental illness in their lifetime. Further it is important to recognise that mental illness comprises 13% of the total burden of disease and injury in Australia. In addition the risk of mental illness is much greater amongst vulnerable and disadvantaged populations.

The funding and initiatives announced by the State Government have been guided by the Social Inclusion Unit's 'Stepping Up: a Social Inclusion Action Plan for Mental Health Reform 2007-2012'.

This state budget appears to progress reform initiatives contained in the Action Plan. SACOSS is cautious in its analysis due to the lack of detail available at this time.

Item	Description	SACOSS Comments
<p>Additional resources for sub-acute services</p> <p>COST \$121.2 million</p>	<p>Mental health services will be increased through the creation of 90 intermediate care places (60 metropolitan and 30 country) and the creation of 80 additional supported care packages. Forensic mental health step down facilities will be established to assist clients' transition back to the community.</p>	<p>We welcome this investment, and particularly its targeting of 30 country care places.</p> <p>SACOSS believes that step-down supports would be better provided to people within a community setting, preferably their own home, rather than creating specific facilities co-located with forensic mental health facilities.</p>

SACOSS' 2010-11 Budget Submission proposal in relation to Mental Health (under Social Participation heading) was:

- Increase the social supports available for people with mental health issues living in the community. *Cost estimate: \$4m over 4 years.*

SACOSS continues to advocate for approaches based on strengthening people's capacity for living in their own community.

12. Taxes, Fees, Concessions & Charges

Government fees and charges are set to rise an average of 3.3% in this year's Budget. Increases in the price of public transport, as well as the increase in fees and registration for car owners, will have the greatest impact on low income households.

While SACOSS recognises the necessity of fees and charges in South Australia, the State Government must recognise the need for equity in setting these charges, and ameliorate the impact on those most vulnerable.

Item	Description	SACOSS Comments
Average raise of 3.3%	Government fees & charges will rise an average of 3.3%	This is less than last year's increase but by their nature these fees are regressive in that they impact more on those on low incomes than on high incomes.
Mining royalties increases REVENUE \$65.5m	Differential increases in royalties charged to mining companies.	SACOSS welcomes the decision to extend mining royalties; the mining industry is doing very well and it's only fair that they should make a real contribution to our community. SACOSS urges the government to reinvest a significant proportion of this income to regional communities supporting the mining industry.
Concessions COST \$70.6m	To fund increases and expansion of eligibility for energy, water, sewerage and emergency service levy (ESL) fixed property concessions.	See comments under Utilities heading in relation to water and energy concessions. This delivers on the government's election commitment.
Metro Ticket Price Rises	See entries in Transport section	Increasing ticket prices is regressive taxation and may undermine the goal in the SA Strategic Plan to increase use of public transport (T3.6)
Motorist fees 3.5% car rego rise 3.7% rise in drivers' license fee. 2% rise in premiums	Car registration fees will increase: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-cylinder cars: \$99 to \$102 • 5/6-cylinder cars: \$201 to \$213 • 7+-cylinder cars: \$292 to \$302 Ten-year drivers' licenses will increase from \$270 to \$280. Increase in compulsory third-party insurance premiums; a Class 1 vehicle (average family car) will rise from \$444p.a. to \$476 p.a.	These increases will place pressure on low income groups, by making what can be their sole form of transport more expensive. The impact on those not on public transport routes will be significant.

SACOSS' 2010-11 Budget Submission proposal in relation to Concessions (under the Income heading) was:

- Review of the effectiveness of the current concession payment system.
Cost estimate: \$250,000 for 2010-11.

There was no announcement of a general review the effectiveness of concessions, but the value of a number of concessions was increased. The increase is welcome, although given that concession increases often did not keep pace with price rises (eg. water), a review is still clearly needed.

13. Transport and Infrastructure

Transport infrastructure is vital, not just for the economy, but for society. People rely on our transport system as a whole to connect them with employment, education and training opportunities, health and community services, and for social participation. Given that many South Australians do not own a car, public transport is even more vital for the low income and disadvantaged, and recent State and Commonwealth funding for public transport infrastructure is welcome. Additionally, infrastructure itself is vital for economic growth, as well as acting as a stimulus for skills formation and job creation.

Item	Description	SACOSS Comments
<p>Greenways and cycle paths</p> <p>COST \$12 million</p>	<p>This initiative provides \$12.0 million over four years for the construction of a 15 kilometre 'greenway', from Adelaide to Marino Rocks adjacent to the Noarlunga rail line.</p>	<p>SACOSS welcomes this initiative as a contribution to a healthy population.</p>
<p>Public transport – additional buses and services</p> <p>COST \$8 million</p>	<p>This initiative provides \$8.0 million in 2013-14 for 10 additional buses, and associated running costs, to supplement the Adelaide metropolitan bus network.</p>	<p>This is a really important initiative for many people, in particular those on low incomes who depend upon public transport. SACOSS presumes that new buses will in fact be fully disability accessible.</p>
<p>Public transport – additional outer metro bus services</p> <p>COST \$28.1 million</p>	<p>This initiative provides \$28.1 million over four years for an additional 20 new buses for the Adelaide public transport system. These new buses will improve services to the Outer Metropolitan (north and south) and Gawler regions.</p> <p>This initiative also provides for improved bus services for the Playford Alive Regeneration Project.</p>	<p>Good public transport networks promote social inclusion, one of the determinants of health and wellbeing.</p> <p>SACOSS welcomes these additional services, however notes that there is little in the budget to correct the absence of public transport services in regional communities, and this continues to be an issue of serious concern.</p>
<p>Public transport – upgrade and replace bus shelters</p>	<p>This initiative provides \$5.2 million over four years to build new and upgrade existing bus shelters for the Adelaide public transport system. This initiative</p>	<p>SACOSS welcomes this investment in promoting both accessibility and social inclusion.</p>

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<p>COST \$5.2 million</p>	<p>will deliver approximately 700 to 800 bus shelters that will be <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> compliant.</p>	
<p>Increases in ticket prices for public transport</p> <p>REVENUE</p>	<p>Single trip increasing by 20c. Multitrip increasing by \$1.</p>	<p>Increasing ticket prices is regressive taxation and may undermine the goal in the SA Strategic Plan to increase use of public transport (T3.6)</p>
<p>Introduce fines for unroadworthy vehicles</p> <p>SAVINGS \$7.9 million over three years</p>	<p>This initiative will introduce a fine for vehicles that are declared unroadworthy and receive a defect notice. The fine will be set at \$120 for a minor offence and \$250 for a major offence. \$7.9 million in fine revenue will be collected over three years.</p>	<p>While SACOSS recognises the importance of having roadworthy vehicles, this is another fine that will have most impact on those who can least afford it, and in this case are most likely to be targeted. This can be contrasted with the federal government's incentive program to replace old vehicles.</p>

14. Utilities

Utilities such as water, electricity and gas represent basic human rights, as well as important prerequisites for health and wellbeing.

However, at least 15% of South Australian households struggle to pay utility bills because they are on very low incomes, paying significantly more for electricity, gas and water as a percentage of income than higher income households, despite using less.

The 2010-11 Budget includes the already announced increases in water prices, and in concessions.

The energy concession will increase from a maximum of \$120 to \$150 per annum in 2010-11 and will then increase by five per cent each year to 2012-13.

Water, sewerage and emergency services levy fixed property concessions will also increase by five per cent each year to 2012-13.

However, increasing water prices will climb to over 21% in the next year, which reflects a general trend of concessions not keeping pace with hikes in all utilities.

15. Young people

Following sustained community action, it is positive to see the allocation in the Budget for the replacement of the Magill YTC. However, programs and staffing within the new facility must meet best practice principles, without undue emphasis on “bricks and mortar” at the expense of programs. In this context, we are pleased to note one of the current DFC targets is: “Increase community support for young people on their release from youth training centres to reintegrate them with their communities.”

Following the GFC, it is imperative we do not limit young people’s access to training and further education, to ensure the workforce has the skills necessary to take advantage of South Australia’s finds relatively stable economic position. The increase in TAFE fees – however small – runs counter to this goal.

Budget measures that SACOSS notes will impact on young people, that are covered elsewhere in this Snapshot document, include:

- *Increased public transport police presence*
- *Public transport cost rises*
- *Driver’s license fee increases*
- *Reform of Children and Community Services Ombudsman*
- *Additional resources for the support of children under the Guardianship of the Minister*
- *Increased TAFE fees*

16. Other SACOSS Budget Submissions

There are four SACOSS budget proposals which do not relate directly to the subject headings above.

Income

1. Increase state government research and development funding to establish clearer pathways for disadvantaged groups into key growth industries. *Cost estimate: \$200,000 per year over four years (\$800,000 in total).*

SACOSS urges the government to ensure that the new Sustainable Industries Education Centre deliberately targets and provides opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

2. Determine essential vs. non-essential expenses within the cost of living, and provide safety nets for essential expenses. *Cost estimate: \$200,000 for determining the issues – future funding based upon the findings.*

SACOSS still advocates for this proposed review.

Social Participation

1. Develop 'social impact assessments' for all new state government policies and proposals.

SACOSS notes and endorse Monsignor Cappelletti's advice to the government in the Sustainable Budget Commission's second report, to use a 'social and community needs filter' when making decisions on any savings measure.

2. Ministerial Taskforce to address the long-term viability of environmentally-stressed rural communities. *Cost Estimate: \$750,000 in 2010-2011.*

SACOSS notes there has been a major investment in the Riverland Sustainable Futures Fund.

17. Summary of SACOSS 2010 - 2011 Budget Proposals

SACOSS Proposal	Cost Estimate 2010-11	Outcome
Income		
Review of the effectiveness of the current concession payment system.	\$250,000 in 2010-2011 for the review	No review, but there are increases in concessions.
Establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprise clearing house.	\$300,000 per year over four years (\$1.2m total)	Not adopted
Increase state government research and development funding to establish clearer pathways for disadvantaged groups into key growth industries.	\$200,000 per year over four years (\$800,000 total)	Not adopted
Determine essential vs. non-essential expenses within the cost of living, and provide safety nets for essential expenses.	\$200,000 for determining the issues. Future funding based upon the findings.	Not adopted
Employment, Education and Training		
Provide training opportunities for young adults who have been under Guardianship.	\$90,000 in 2010-2011, funded through employer contributions and the DECS <i>Skills for the Future</i> program.	Not adopted
Review of existing school support programs for children from low income groups, with a view to extending school-to-work transition programs.	\$250,000 in 2010-2011 for the review	Not adopted
Focus on creating and supporting the "green jobs" sector.	\$48.5m over six years (from already promised money) Additional: Nil	Provided through Sustainable Industries Education Centre.
Increase the quotas for long term unemployed people working on government projects (particularly in the Northern suburbs) and assess the viability of rolling the program out across the state.	Nil	Not adopted

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Health and Wellbeing		
Develop a comprehensive early years intervention plan.	\$2m to develop and implement the plan	No plan, but increased investment in new children's centres
Develop a response and comprehensive plan to address South Australia's rapidly ageing population and the impacts upon the health care system.	\$2m to develop and implement the plan	Not adopted
Address the issues arising from SACOSS' <i>Social determinants of health</i> paper.	\$2m to implement a prevention and early intervention plan	Not adopted
Address Aboriginal health inequalities in a systematic and meaningful way.	\$2m over four years	Not adopted
Housing		
Setting new standards and design laws including the adoption of universal design principles.	\$250,000 for an industry education programme	Not adopted
An increased focus on homelessness in regional areas.	\$3m over four years	Not adopted
Location of social housing and access to adequate supports for high needs housing tenants that reflect the new housing packages.	\$300,000 for the development of the plan	Not adopted
Increased protection mechanisms for renters, including in the areas of energy efficiency and long term affordability.	\$900,000 in 2010-2011	Not adopted
Social Participation		
Develop socially inclusive support structures and rehabilitation & release programs for newly-released prisoners.	\$4m over four years	Similar program adopted
Develop 'social impact assessments' for all new state government policies and proposals.	\$300,000 in 2010-2011	Not adopted
Ministerial Taskforce to address the long-term viability of environmentally-stressed rural communities.	\$750,000 in 2010-2011	Not adopted
Increase the social supports available for people with mental health issues living in the community.	\$4m over four years	Some measures in place