

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW Election 2019

Calling on Candidates to Save Our Local Community Services

Community Industry Group is calling on candidates for the upcoming NSW election to declare their support for the ongoing funding of programs delivered by small to medium local, place based services, including community centres and neighbourhood centres, and recognise their valuable contribution to the development of engaged, supportive and connected communities.

“Government policy has been changing the way community organisations access the funding they need to deliver their services,” said Nicky Sloan, CEO of Community Industry Group. “We are increasingly seeing small place-based funding contracts being collapsed into large regional or state-based delivery models. Community services providers are now effectively competing with those organisations they used to collaborate with, and that can only impact negatively on the people who desperately need their services.”

Small and medium place-based community organisations have often grown as a result of local community need. They are deeply embedded and enjoy relationships of trust with their communities, have a strong understanding of local needs and issues, and are able to vary their delivery to respond quickly to changing community needs. Current policy is putting their existence in jeopardy. Loss of funding contracts would herald the closure of many of these agencies, and the forfeiture of many decades of community engagement.

“Don’t get me wrong,” Ms Sloan said. “We recognise and value our large community service organisations of course, but the business sector has long recognised the value of small business. Just like small businesses, local community organisations employ locals, understand their community, and offer responsive services. We need a rich and diverse community service sector which values large, medium and small providers – just like the business sector.”

A number of local organisations have already been lost in this region, while others have turned to larger organisations to take over their service delivery. These organisations have often been formed by the community and governed by community members for many years. We need our candidates to recognise the value of this social infrastructure, and to fight to support it, before it is too late.

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About Community Industry Group

Community Industry Group (CI Group) is the peak body working for community services and organisations in South East NSW. It supports community organisations, promotes expertise and innovation in community development, fosters industry development and provides advocacy for social justice.

The CI Group represents the non-government community services industry and works closely with numerous organisations which provide support to vulnerable people across the region including:

- social housing providers
- homelessness services
- home and community care services
- people with disability
- individuals and families with multiple layers of social and financial disadvantage
- victims of domestic violence and sexual assault
- youth work programs
- community health services, including mental health and drug/alcohol services
- community legal centre services
- community development and community capacity building.

Visit our 2019 NSW Election virtual forum, available [here](#) for information and resources. We will be collating questions from our stakeholders and sending them to candidates for comment. Responses will be shared on our website.

We will also be updating our 'Promises Calculator', which will record commitments from candidates and parties which are relevant to community organisations and their clients. This calculator will remain on our website after the election, and enable our elected representatives to 'tick off' their completed commitments.