

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Budget Wins and Losses**

This year's budget announcement once again contains a mixed bag for the region's community services organisations and for its many vulnerable residents, according to the Community Industry group, the peak body for community services.

The Community Industry Group welcomes Budget initiatives to support ageing in place and enable older people to live well in their own homes.

“We welcome the announcement of a further 14,000 new high level Home Care Packages over four years” said CEO, Nicky Sloan “Home Care Packages were certainly on our wish list, and while this is a step forward, let us not forget that there is currently an estimated shortfall of 104,000 packages across the country.”

“The commitment of \$146m towards improving aged care in rural, regional and remote Australia is also welcome, as is the commitment to ensure more older Aboriginal people are able to receive culturally sensitive accommodation.”

The investment in mental health services is also welcome. The recognition of the mental health needs of older people in residential aged care has resulted in an \$83m investment in psychosocial services in residential aged care, and the budget includes the announcement of a pilot program to support socially isolated older Australians to connect to their communities.

‘Sadly some of the most urgently needed budget measures were once again ignored,’ Ms Sloan said. ‘There was nothing in this budget to address homelessness or increase the supply of affordable housing. And no mention of the much-needed increases to Newstart and Youthstart.’

The reality is that keeping people living under the poverty line is not conducive to employment outcomes. It is difficult to look for work while you are concentrating on day to day survival.

‘The rise of the ‘KeepMyTenDollars’ hashtag on Twitter shows the resounding support ordinary people have for an increase to income support for people who are unemployed. It is heartening to see that Australian people on middle incomes would rather forgo their meagre tax break in order to ensure a better life for people who are currently subsisting on these welfare payments,’ said Ms Sloan.

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### **About the Community Industry Group**

Community Industry (formerly known as Illawarra Forum) is the peak body working for community services and organisations in the South East of NSW. It supports community organisations, promotes expertise and innovation in community development, fosters industry development and provides advocacy for social justice. Community Industry Group is an independent organisation governed by a committee of management elected annually by the membership.

Community Industry Group represents the non-government community services industry in the South East of NSW, which consists of approximately 300 organisations, and works closely with numerous organisations which provide support to vulnerable people across the region.