

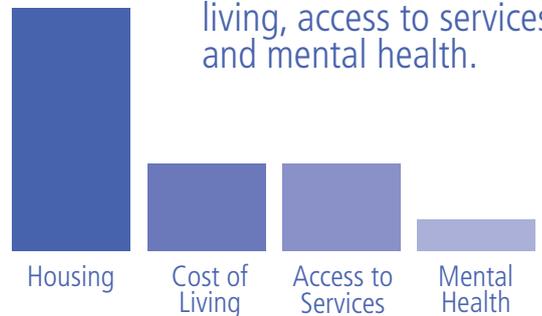
# MEMBER TEMPERATURE CHECK

During May and June 2022 we surveyed our membership to check in and find out what issues were most concerning to their organisations, what their biggest challenges were and what they needed most.



What is the biggest issue currently facing your community?

**41.03%** named Housing as their biggest concern, others included cost of living, access to services and mental health.



Forty one responses were received from organisations across the Illawarra, Shoalhaven, Southern Highlands and South Coast.



Organisations worked across Child Youth & Family, Domestic Violence, Mental Health, Housing, Aged Care and Disability Services.



What is the biggest challenge currently facing your organisation?

Staffing/Recruitment	41.03%
Funding Levels	25.64%
Other	15.38%
Contracts/Funding Agreements	12.82%
Operational Expenses	2.56%
Industry Reforms	2.56%



What my organisation needs right now is:

- Additional Funding
- More staff/volunteers
- Support for staff and management
- Training/professional development opportunities
- New/improved premises
- Information about reforms and changes



Things that are working:

- Quality and dedication of existing staff members
- Support from the community
- Collaboration with other providers

Amount and certainty of funding were highlighted as barriers to attracting suitably qualified and experienced staff.



For a three week period in May and June 2022, Community Industry Group conducted a 'Temperature Check' of community sector service providers to understand more about what is going on for them, their community, and their work.

This temperature check paints a picture of a sector that is passionate about its work and committed to its communities but is feeling the pressures of working with limited resources. Respondents identified insecurity around government contracts as a critical factor impacting their ability to recruit new staff and retain existing skill sets within their organisations.

The survey was completed by 41 people, from 33 member organisations, across the Southern NSW LGA's of Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama, Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla, Bega Valley, Snowy Monaro and Queanbeyan-Palerang.

Sectors represented by our members included Child, Youth, and Family, Housing and Homelessness Support, Domestic Violence, Aged Care, Disability Support, Mental Health, Legal and Education.

41% of respondents identified Housing as the greatest issue currently facing their community, followed by Cost of Living (15%), Access to Services (15%), Mental Health (5%), Discrimination (2.5%), and Climate Change (2.5%).

## Current Challenges

When asked about challenges currently facing their organisation, respondents highlighted the following:

### Staffing: (41%)

Where staffing was identified as an organisational priority, respondents were primarily focused on the availability of suitably qualified and experienced workers to meet organisational demand (93.75%) and retention of existing staff (6.25%) rather than access to professional development or leadership training.



### Funding Levels: (25%)

Of the respondents who selected funding levels as a priority for their organisation, 50% indicated inadequate funding for the type and level of service they deliver, with lack of recurrent funding and payment in arrears identified as issues for another 30% of respondents. Increased staffing costs were also highlighted as an issue for organisations struggling with operational expenses.

### Contracts: (12%)

Funding agreements and contracts were at the top of the list for 12% of respondents with a specific focus on the impacts of short-term contracts (60%), short notice periods for changes to contracts, including completion and commencement (20%), and the challenges associated with outcomes focussed funding (20%).

## What we need

When we asked what does your organisation need right now? Here's what they told us:

1. Additional funding
2. More staff/volunteers
3. Support for staff and management
4. Training and professional development opportunities
5. Additional/new technology
6. New/improved premises
7. Information about reforms and changes

The follow-up question What do you need right now? echoed these sentiments, with responses suggesting that lack of resources and staffing were making it difficult to do the important work of engaging effectively with clients and the community.

It's not all bad, one thing that's working right now is...

Overwhelmingly respondents acknowledged the dedication, enthusiasm, and skill of their existing staff and volunteer base as the key to their organisation's ongoing viability and success.

## The Bigger Picture

Workforce wellbeing was linked directly to being adequately resourced to do the work the organisation has been contracted for. Housing affordability, cost of living, and mental health are growing challenges across Southern NSW. Supporting communities without adequate funding and staffing is likely to push more long-term employees out of the sector.

Put in simple terms, workers in our sector just want the resources they need to do their jobs effectively.