



MEDIA RELEASE

Prevention, early intervention missing from NT Budget

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Today's Northern Territory Budget has failed to focus on early intervention and prevention strategies in health, corrections and child and family welfare.

The Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) is concerned that preventive programs have been undervalued and the government's Budget does not provide strategic measures in family support, mental health and youth justice to support the NT's most vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

NTCOSS notes allocations of small funds for social housing and homelessness programs, but is concerned at the overall considerable reduction in the housing budget.

The \$4.4m for the delivery of intensive family preservation services is welcomed, but NTCOSS is concerned that this comes at the cost of universal family support programs which don't appear to have further funding allocated after June this year.

Government commitment to spending on public hospitals is welcomed, but additional funding to community health services, particularly mental health services seems lacking. NTCOSS notes too that mental health spending has been on a decline for the last 3 years.

NTCOSS supports early intervention programs which provide preventive approaches to social issues.

NTCOSS Executive Director Wendy Morton said,
"We agree with Treasurer Tollner that injecting funds into programs like grassroots, community sport will go some way to saving money and putting less pressure on the health system in the future

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Northern Territory Council of Social Service

“We are, however, disappointed that early intervention investment has not been made for Out of Home Care and particularly youth justice”.

While focusing its attention on ‘tough on crime’ approaches to youth justice, the Northern Territory government has shown a disappointing lack of effort in reducing incarcerations rates for young people.

Ms Morton continued,

“NTCOSS had hoped to see a real focus on and investment in diversion and preventive programs such as after hours youth services

“But what seems clear in this Budget is lack of long term vision for strengthening children and their families in the NT to reduce rates of incarceration and the demand on Out of Home Care services.”

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