



MEDIA RELEASE

NSW Budget a mixed bag for Aboriginal families

Wednesday 19 June 2024

AbSec has welcomed some of the major announcements in the NSW budget, particularly the \$5.1 billion investment in social housing and the \$118 million for capital maintenance of social housing in Aboriginal communities.

AbSec CEO John Leha identifies these as key items in the budget for Aboriginal families and communities across NSW.

“Housing security is a crucial factor in the safety and welfare of Aboriginal children and young people,” Mr Leha said.

“A great number of those currently living in out-of-home care would not have been removed from their families if they had better housing options.

“Investment in rectifying this unfortunate situation is a step in the right direction.”

AbSec is currently working in partnership with Lumenia to study the relationship between access to housing and child protection outcomes for Aboriginal families.

In other good news, AbSec member Waminda Birth Centre and Community Hub for First Nations Women and Families received \$21.3 million so that Aboriginal women on the South Coast can access good perinatal care and give birth in line with traditional cultural practice.

However, AbSec is not entirely pleased with the budget.

AbSec’s pre-budget submission implored the Government to invest heavily in keeping Aboriginal families together and bringing children home.

Instead, all \$224 million in new funding went to the foster care system.

“This is incredibly disappointing, sending money in exactly the wrong direction,” Mr Leha said.

“The fact this comes immediately after a scathing report from the NSW Audit Office, demanding a reorientation of the child protection system, is frankly quite insulting.”

Another disappointment is the ongoing refusal to establish a Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, despite the fact NSW and Tasmania are the only states and territories without one.

In summing up the budget, Mr Leha repeated a line that comes up often in dealings with government.

“There are some good measures but not ones that will transform a broken child protection system. It could have been a lot better.”



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