

Media Release

MEDIA RELEASE

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NCOSS WELCOMES NSW GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

NSW's peak social services body, NCOSS has welcomed the NSW Government's [decision](#) to improve access to vital mental health and wellbeing support in NSW public high schools.

The announcement comes after [calls](#) by NCOSS to increase investment in and expand the budget for mental health and wellbeing programs and initiatives in NSW schools. This includes calling for increased investment in student support officers.

NCOSS CEO, Joanna Quilty said increasing investment in mental health support services in NSW public schools was a great initiative which will help young people lead healthier lives.

"The NSW Government's decision to ensure every public high school student in NSW has access to a highly-qualified mental health professional is a welcomed move," Ms Quilty said.

"We know that one in four people in NSW experience a mental health problem at any one timeⁱ, and this includes students throughout the state.

"Good mental health and wellbeing enables children and young people to lead healthier lives, cope with the stresses of life more effectively and realise their full potential."

Across NSW, NCOSS continues to hear that key barriers for youth access to mental health services include the stigma around mental health and a lack of affordable community mental health supports (and the means to access them), particularly in regional and remote communities.

This is consistent with ReachOut and Mission Australia's 2018 research finding that:

- 4 in 10 young people feel too embarrassed to seek professional help (42.4%).
- Almost half couldn't afford to get professional help even if they wanted to (48.1%).
- Around 1 in 4 didn't have transport to get to a service (28%), wouldn't have time to get professional help (25.4%), or said local services were unavailable to them (24%).

Ms Quilty encouraged all political parties to follow the Government's lead and improve access to mental health support in NSW schools.

For more information on NCOSS, go to www.ncoss.org.au.

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ⁱ Source: Mental Health Commission of NSW