

Media Release

MEDIA RELEASE

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LOCAL SERVICES AND DISASTER RELIEF PAYMENTS VITAL TO FLOOD COMMUNITIES

Peak social services body, NCOSS is urging the NSW Government and Resilience NSW to better use the network of frontline NGO services in its response to the flood emergency in northern NSW.

NCOSS members in the region have expressed their concerns regarding smaller towns, including, Mullumbimby and surrounding areas such as Wilson's Creek, Billinudgel and New Brighton.

NCOSS CEO Joanna Quilty urged Resilience NSW in partnership with other agencies to work with NGOs on the ground to support affected communities.

"NGOs are community assets that have local connections and are trusted by local communities," Ms Quilty said.

"We have seen the valuable role that they play in recent emergencies from providing support, information, essential supplies and other assistance.

"NGOs like Mullumbimby Neighbourhood Centre are currently providing life-saving support - food, shelter and other essentials - to local residents who have been evacuated and are stranded.

"We would encourage Resilience NSW to work closely with these services and provide them with additional resources that can be quickly rolled out in communities.

"All too often NGOs are a late inclusion in the emergency response, meaning valuable knowhow, on-the-ground coordination and timely deployment of resources can be lost.

"That's why we are urging the NSW Government to utilise these services in the emergency response, and provide them with the resources and backing to play their role effectively."

NCOSS is also calling on the Federal Government to increase the disaster payment to affected communities.

The current Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment is only \$1000 per adult and \$400 per child, and should be increased to \$3000 per adult and \$1000 per child.

The adult payment has been only \$1000 since 2006 and hasn't been increased in 15 years.

"This is a devastating situation unfolding across Northern NSW and it is vital that disaster payments are increased to better support affected communities," Ms Quilty said.

To find out more about NCOSS, visit: www.ncoss.org.au

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