

NCOSS Local Connect social sector forum

Illawarra Shoalhaven and Southern NSW

AGENDA AND INFORMATION

Gallery room, Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre ([map](#))

Tuesday 17 Mar 2026

Opens: 8.30am for a 9.00am start

Closes: 3.00pm

After the forum, attendees are invited to join our workshop, [Disasters and community sector capacity](#) (3.30 - 5pm) or continue networking at Postman's Tavern (from 3pm). More information below.

If you have any questions, contact Michelle Shackleton by email michelle@ncoss.org.au.

AGENDA ITEM	Who	Time
Registration, meet the NCOSS team		8.30 – 9.00 am (30 mins)
Acknowledgement to Country		9.00 – 9.15 am (15 mins)
Opening remarks	Cara Varian, NCOSS CEO Partner: Nicky Sloan, Community Industry Group CEO	9.15 – 9.45 am (30 mins)
Session 1: The latest on what is impacting the community and health services sector (with Q&A) This will include the latest on Fair Work Commission's proposed new classification structure for SCHADs and other sector-wide issues.	Cara Varian, NCOSS CEO Ben McAlpine, NCOSS Director, Policy and Advocacy	9.45 – 10.35 am (50 mins)
Morning tea		10.35 – 11.05 am (30 mins)

AGENDA ITEM	Who	Time
<p>Session 2:</p> <p>Discussion – What solutions and fixes should NCOSS prioritise in the next 18 months?</p> <p>Small and large group discussion</p>	Facilitated by NCOSS and CI Group	11.05 am – 12.35 pm (1 hour 30 mins)
Lunch		12.35 – 1.25 pm (50 mins)
<p>Session 3:</p> <p>AI and the social services sector – ethical, legal and gender considerations</p> <p>A thought-provoking workshop designed for professionals in the community services sector. The workshop offers critical insights into the unique impact AI technologies pose to sector service delivery, legal processes and ethical responsibilities.</p> <p>EJ Wise is a cybersecurity lawyer from Wise Law. She has previously run AI workshops for Women’s Health NSW and Community Legal Centres NSW.</p>	EJ Wise, Wise Law	1.25 – 2.50 pm (1 hour 25 mins)
Thank you and next steps	Cara Varian, NCOSS	2.50 – 3.00 pm (10 mins)
Forum closes		3.00 pm

After the forum, we have two more opportunities:

1. Informal networking meet-up (from 3pm)

NCOSS has booked a table downstairs at [Postman’s Tavern](#) for those who wish to continue discussions. Drinks and dinner are available for purchase, and everyone is welcome – feel free to invite colleagues and networks.

2. Workshop: Disasters and community sector capacity (3.30 – 5pm)

The NCOSS Community Organisations Disaster Adaptation (CODA) Project is holding a workshop after the forum on [how to build disaster preparedness and](#)

[resilience among community service organisations](#) and people most vulnerable to disaster impacts. The workshop will explore the main roles of the NSW community service sector across the disaster management cycle – relief, recovery, mitigation and preparedness – and hear what organisations need to do provide these vital services.

Organisations registered to attend the forum

- ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS)
- Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Australian Community Support Organisation
- CatholicCare Wollongong
- Community Connect South Shoalhaven
- Community Industry Group
- COORDINARE
- Department of Communities and Justice
- Department of Social Services
- Eden Community Access Centre
- Financial Counselling Service NSW
- Firefly Bay and Basin
- GambleAware
- GIVIT
- Healthy Cities Australia
- Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District
- Immune Deficiencies Foundation Australia (IDFA)
- MacKillop Family Services
- Mission Australia
- Monaro Family Support Services
- NSW SES
- Oracle Support
- ROCC for Women
- Shelter NSW
- Shoalhaven Council
- South Coast & Country Community Law
- Southern Cross Housing
- Southern Youth and Family Services
- Vinnies NSW
- Waminda
- West Street Centre
- Wollongong Homeless Hub and Housing Services

About NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS)

NCOSS is the peak body for the social services sector in NSW. With over 350 members and a wider network of organisations and individuals who share our values, we advocate for a NSW free from poverty and disadvantage. NCOSS is uniquely placed to

provide a platform for sharing information and resources, developing agreed positions and seeking greater transparency and delivery on commitments from government.

This event is part of our commitment to engage, connect with and provide capability development opportunities for our members and the wider community services sector by holding social sector forums in each of the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ's) seven districts across NSW.

<https://www.ncoss.org.au/>

About Community Industry Group (CI Group)

CI Group is a not-for-profit supporting community organisations, promoting social justice and driving change across South East NSW. We promote expertise and innovation, and fostering industry development. Our work is driven by a commitment to social justice and to ensuring positive outcomes for the sector and the region.

<https://www.communityindustrygroup.org.au/>

About EJ Wise

EJ opened the doors to her specialist cyber security law firm in December 2018, after retiring from 21 years in uniform as an Officer in the Royal Australian Air Force. This was the first time an Australian military cyber security lawyer with years of both Cyber Squadron and Pentagon experience could be engaged commercially to talk about cyber security, AI and risk.

EJ is an ecologist and lawyer who studied computer science in the 1980s, environmental law in the 1990s and policy and governance in the 2000s. She actively practised humanitarian law for over two decades and is now a keynote speaker, lecturer at several universities, Principal and founder of Wise Law, and servant to two cat overlords.

EJ started her law firm at the age most women become invisible – mid-life. EJ is a passionate advocate for dignity and compassion in women's health, domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV), and community legal sectors.

<https://www.wiselaw.com.au/>