

MEDIA RELEASE

Stop Closing The Door On Vulnerable People - Member Delegation Outside Luke Howarth's Office Thursday, 9 June @4pm

6 JUNE 2016

Members of The Services Union who work in Community and Social Services recently sought a meeting with the Federal Member for Petrie, Luke Howarth MP to discuss why over \$1 billion has been cut from frontline community services in the most recent Turnbull and previous Abbott Government Budgets.

Unfortunately, Mr Howarth declined to meet at his electorate office in Clontarf.

Cuts have been made to services such as Domestic and Family Violence Services, Community Legal Centres and Housing and Homelessness Services.

Assistant Secretary of The Services Union, Jennifer Thomas said when there are no beds available at a women's refuge, no community legal services, no financial counselling support, we want to know what the Member for Petrie's response might be to a person who might need to access these services!

"This Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull also needs to answer this," Ms. Thomas said.

"That's cuts to women's refuges for women and their families leaving violence, along with other support services like legal and financial counselling. Cuts to homelessness funding, mental health programs for young people, Aboriginal legal services and targeted Indigenous programs."

The Services Union is calling on Mr Howarth to increase funding for community services and for a fairer funding model that provides greater certainty for services.

"We are also asking that every dollar of funding for essential community services, is spent on services provision and that businesses looking to make a buck aren't able to profit from vulnerable people," Ms. Thomas said.

"Our members work in these services and they are seeing first hand what these cuts mean. Do we want a society where we are told a \$50 billion tax cut to corporations is absolutely fine, but doors are shut on the most vulnerable in our communities? These are the questions we all need to ask ourselves on 2 July," Ms Thomas said.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Belinda Hogan-Collis, Media/Communications Officer on 07 3010 4446 or 0401 710 039.

A Member Delegation will still be meeting outside Luke Howarth's Electorate Office.

**WHEN – Thursday, 9 June 2016 at 4pm.
WHERE- Outside Luke Howarth's, 40 Hornibrook Esplanade,
Clontarf Beach**

ALL MEDIA WELCOME

What the Cuts Mean -

Over \$1 billion in cuts since September 2013 via three successive Federal Budgets:

- \$240 million from community services funding through the Department of Social Services, big hits to support services like financial counselling for women leaving violence and targeted early intervention youth programs;
- \$165 million from the freeze on the indexation of DSS grants payments to 2017;
- \$500 million from Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander programs through consolidation of 150 diverse programmes into 5, the defunding of targeted health services and the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples;
- \$230 million from National Partnerships on Homelessness with no funding certainty beyond June 2017, impacting on refuges for women and young people;
- \$45 million from community legal services and Aboriginal legal services;
- Cuts to mental health services including a 75% cut in funding over two years for specialist youth mental health programs provided by Headspace and the Youth Psychosis program; and
- Abolished the successful Youth Connections Program that helped young people stay on track.