



youth affairs council
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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The State Budget: What's in it for young people?

The Youth Affairs Council of South Australia (YACSA) says that this year's state budget holds some good news for young people but leaves more questions unanswered.

YACSA's Executive Director, Jennifer Duncan, said, "Whilst there has been pleasing investment in public transport, it focuses entirely on metropolitan Adelaide and could be better targeted towards improved services. This spending does nothing to recognise that the absence of public transport in regional areas continues to be one of the most significant problems for regional young people."

Justice spending is strongly oriented towards policing and prosecution, with no obvious investment in community safety through prevention. Ms Duncan said, "The tough on crime stance of the government hasn't translated into an approach that is tough on the causes of crime. Rather, the focus continues to be on trying to close the stable door once the horse has bolted. In addition, the state government has cancelled the construction of a new youth detention centre which was to replace existing, sub-standard accommodation for young people in secure care."

Ms Duncan said, "The government's investment in the Skilling Australia for the Future program is necessary and welcome. The real test will be in how this money is spent on the ground. Young people need access to high quality, relevant education and training during this period of downturn. However, they also need access to jobs now as many young people are ready and willing to join the labour market. There is no doubt that this is a tough challenge for governments but it is one that is essential to meet, in the interests of young people's short and long-term futures.

"The budget investment in housing is good news, however the likely impact on improved housing opportunities for young people is difficult to measure and the sell-off of existing public housing stock continues. The investment in housing in Indigenous communities is decades overdue and we would expect that the safety and wellbeing of children and young people will be significantly improved through this initiative."

All in all, the state government has been able to avoid the expected slash-and-burn budget as a result of significant federal investment in a number of key areas. This might be the best outcome we could have hoped for this year.

Actively supporting young South Australians

Available for interview and further information

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