

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 4 APRIL 2019

2019 BUDGET: \$528M RC FUNDING WELCOME, NOT MUCH ELSE

Social Futures CEO Tony Davies has welcomed the Federal Budget announcement that \$527.9 million has been set aside for the proposed Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People With a Disability – but says there is little else to celebrate for residents of the Northern Rivers.

“Congestion-busting initiatives are all well and good for big city residents but we actually want some decent social and economic infrastructure in places such as the Northern Rivers,” Mr Davies said.

“Beyond the Royal Commission there’s not much for vulnerable people in this Budget.”

Mr Davies said the most obvious area overlooked by the Budget was the urgent need to lift the Newstart allowance, as called for by organisations including the Australian Council of Social Service and the Business Council of Australia.

“A single person on Newstart gets \$175 a week less than someone on the pension. That is not only inequitable, it also makes it hard to get a job or put a roof over your head and feeds directly into Australia’s homelessness crisis.

“That’s one of the reasons we have 20 per cent of the state’s homeless in our region.”

Mr Davies called for resources to be put into helping Australia’s long-term unemployed back into the workforce, into secure housing and into mainstream community life.

“The Everybody’s Home Campaign has identified the need for 500,000 new affordable homes to be built across Australia over the next 10 years and there was nothing in the Budget to fill that shortfall,” he said.

“Meanwhile the Government maintains negative gearing and capital gains tax exemptions worth \$11.8 billion for property investors.”

- ENDS -

Media enquiries: Lisa Machin, Communications and Marketing Officer, Social Futures. Ph. 0438 611 165 e: lisa.machin@socielfutures.org.au



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where we live and work and their continuing connection to land, water, sea and community. We pay respects to Australia's First Peoples, to their unique and diverse cultures, and to Elders past, present and future.

Notes to editors:

1. Social Futures is a social justice organisation based in Northern NSW. We have more than 40 years' experience as a regional leader, advocating with the communities we work in; working in partnership with others; and providing services that promote inclusion, fairness and social justice. Our work encompasses homelessness and housing supports, youth and family services, programs that promote genuine participation for people with disability, community sector support, professional development, and systemic advocacy.