

# What matters to our communities

The top priorities for the 2022 Federal Election,  
from Australians who participate, work or  
volunteer at Neighbourhood Houses and  
Community Centres.



Australian  
Neighbourhood Houses  
and Centres Association

# What is a Neighbourhood House or Community Centre?

Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres bring people together to connect, learn and contribute to their local community through social, educational, health and wellbeing, and support activities.

These inclusive community-based organisations welcome people of all ages, abilities and walks of life, creating opportunities for people to enrich their lives through connections they might not otherwise make.

There are:

**1,000+**

locations across Australia,  
with over

**400,000**

visits a week



In April 2022, Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres across Australia invited participants to complete a survey identifying their **top 5 priorities** for the next Federal Government to focus on.

There were:

**1,388**

**survey respondents**

Representing:

**470**

**postcodes**

**121**

**federal electorates  
across Australia**

# Table 1: Number of respondents by preferred priorities

Priority areas	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Climate Change	748	54%
Housing and Homelessness	735	53%
Cost of living	723	52%
Health services and infrastructure	688	50%
Loneliness, Social Isolation and Mental Health	610	44%
Family and Domestic Violence	465	33%
Jobs and addressing skills shortages	407	29%
Education	377	27%
Centrelink support payments	294	21%
Reconciliation with First Nations Peoples	287	21%

## Table 1 continued...

Priority areas	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Refugees / Detention	267	19%
Women's safety	267	19%
Impacts of COVID on communities	219	16%
National security	179	13%
Other (please specify)	163	12%
Gender equity	156	11%
Racism	103	7%
LGBTIQ+ rights and equality	77	6%

Among the 163 that identified their own issues, aged care, childcare, environmental protection and federal integrity oversight (including ICAC) were the major themes.

## The top 5

Climate change, housing and homelessness, cost of living, health services and infrastructure, and loneliness, social isolation and mental health were the top 5 priorities respectively for respondents, with the top 4 attracting 50 per cent or more of all respondents.

These 5 priorities were consistently identified across gender and age ranges, the exception being under 25s who identified family violence as a top 5 priority, displacing health services and infrastructure.



### Priority 1: Climate change

This priority was supported in the top 5 by almost all demographic cohorts with the strongest support from older and younger participants. Additionally, there was very strong support at 65 per cent and 69 per cent from respondents in the two least disadvantaged SEIFA deciles respectively, based on the 2016 postcode-based SEIFA Index of Relative Disadvantage.

Climate change was the highest priority for people in Liberal, National, ALP and Greens held seats.



## Priority 2: Housing and Homelessness

**This priority had its strongest support from Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and unsurprisingly, from people in private rental or public housing with the highest level of support amongst public housing tenants.**



## Priority 3: Cost of living

**People with lower incomes such as tertiary students, renters, people in public housing identified cost of living at a higher rate as did Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people for whom English was not the primary language spoken at home. Additionally, people in the age group where they were most likely to have dependent children, 18-44 years of age, identified cost of living as the primary concern with the rate tapering down with each successive age bracket.**



## Priority 4: Health services and infrastructure

Health services and infrastructure was identified as a priority at a higher rate for older Australians including retirees, and for people living in supported accommodation. Conversely, for younger people it was low priority.

Health services and infrastructure was the highest priority in independent held seats.



## Priority 5: Loneliness, Social Isolation and Mental Health

This priority was identified at higher rates by young people and people living in the two most disadvantaged postcode deciles based on postcode-based SEIFA Index of Relative Disadvantage.

Neighbourhood Houses have a documented history of successfully providing connection for isolated and lonely people through activities in a safe space, and there is substantive evidence that these types of programs are effective in reducing adverse health and other costly outcomes. Despite this, calls for the systematic funding of Neighbourhood House programs aimed at social engagement and connection as part of a preventative health strategy remain unanswered.



## Table 2: The top 5 by party affiliation of the current MP

The following table shows the per cent of respondents that identified top five priorities based on the political party or independent that holds the seat currently\*.

	Climate Change	Cost of living	Health services and infrastructure	Housing and Homelessness	Loneliness, Social Isolation and Mental Health
LIB	57%	50%	54%	51%	45%
NAT	56%	50%	51%	51%	44%
ALP	54%	49%	50%	54%	45%
GRN	54%	38%	38%	46%	31%
IND	60%	58%	66%	43%	43%

\*Based on the post redistribution projections from the ABC: Pendulum - ABC News

# National peak body

**Australian Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association**  
[anhca.org](http://anhca.org)

# State peak bodies

## New South Wales

**Local Community Services Association**  
[lcsansw.org.au](http://lcsansw.org.au)

## Queensland

**Neighbourhood Centres Queensland**  
[ncq.org.au](http://ncq.org.au)

## South Australia

**Community Centres SA**  
[communitycentressa.asn.au](http://communitycentressa.asn.au)

## Tasmania

**Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania**  
[nht.org.au](http://nht.org.au)

## Victoria

**Neighbourhood Houses Victoria**  
[nhvic.org.au](http://nhvic.org.au)

## Western Australia

**Linkwest**  
[linkwest.asn.au](http://linkwest.asn.au)

