MEDIA RELEASE

Linda Burney MP
Deputy Leader of the Opposition
Shadow Minister for Family & Community Services

Dr Andrew McDonald MP
Shadow Minister for Health

Sophie Cotsis MLC
Shadow Minister for Housing
Shadow Minister for the Status of Women

Wednesday, 11 June 2014

NSW GOVERNMENT MUST LISTEN TO THE EXPERTS AND RESTORE FUNDING FOR SPECIALIST HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

NSW Labor today called on the NSW Government to heed the advice of health experts and abandon plans to cut funding for more than 20 specialist homelessness services in Sydney.

“Homelessness is a complex issue which requires experienced service providers who can provide specialised care for people in need,” Deputy Leader of the Opposition Linda Burney said.

“The closure of women’s refuges will make it harder for women fleeing domestic violence to find shelter and rebuild their lives.”

“The NSW Government’s plan to cut $6 million from homelessness service providers in the inner-city will increase pressure on hospitals,” Shadow Minister for Health Dr Andrew McDonald said.

“These services have helped more than 40,000 women over the past two decades.

“If the NSW Government forces these services to close, hospitals will struggle to provide the care and support that homeless people need.”

“The NSW Government must listen to the experts and abandon these short-sighted and heartless reforms,” Shadow Minister for Housing and the Status of Women Sophie Cotsis said.

Expert views on homelessness funding reported in Sydney Morning Herald, 11 June 2014:

“These people are not going to disappear or go. They have become reliant on the services in the inner city. If the services in the city are reduced, it will only fall on the health system … or the police. It’s actually going to be more expensive to the state government overall.”
- Toby Hall, Chief Executive Officer of St Vincent's Health Australia

“It would be a terrible idea if in order to save money we were going to just make generic services”
- Dr Peter McGeorge, Director of the Mental Health Service at St Vincent's Health Australia

“Often people who are homeless have mental health issues, and that falls through the cracks. Just because you put a [medical] practice somewhere, it doesn't mean they are going to turn up to it, and that's why you have these outreach programs, to try to make sure you do interact with them and get the best outcomes you can”.
- Dr Saxon Smith, AMA NSW President

MEDIA CONTACT: SOPHIE COTSIS 0407 945 914