

**NSW GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

to the

REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL ISSUES

**INQUIRY INTO SERVICES PROVIDED OR  
FUNDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF  
AGEING, DISABILITY AND HOME CARE**



DECEMBER 2011

## Introduction

The NSW Government is committed to the continued improvement and reform of disability services in NSW. This commitment has been demonstrated by the development and implementation of *Stronger Together: A new direction for disability services in NSW 2006-2016*.

In 2006, upon the release of *Stronger Together* the NSW Government committed \$1.3 billion in growth funding for the first five years. Planning for the second five years provided an opportunity to reflect upon the successes and areas for improvement from the first phase. 20,000 extra places were provided through *Stronger Together 1* including more than 4,000 new respite places, 2,200 therapy places, 1,000 supported accommodation places and the expansion of individual packaging options that give real choice and flexibility to people with a disability.

It was essential that planning for *Stronger Together 2* occurred in consultation with people with a disability, their families and carers, service providers, peak advocacy groups and the community. Fifteen face to face consultations were held with over 300 people from across NSW. Additionally over 400 submissions were received from individuals and organisations.

The Inquiry of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues into services provided or funded by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (now a division of Department of Family and Community Services and referred to below as the 'Agency') has served as an important contributor in the development process for *Stronger Together 2*. It presented an opportunity for independent, non-partisan assessment of the reform directions identified by the Agency in the consultation and evaluation processes. The NSW Government would like to take this opportunity to thank the Members of the Legislative Council, people with a disability, families, carers, service providers, peaks and members of the public who participated in such a valuable process.

The Government supports the intent of all the recommendations made by the Committee in its report. The Government notes its approach to implementation may vary from that proposed by the Committee in certain recommendations.

The total funding for *Stronger Together* is \$4.04 billion<sup>1</sup> and will focus on establishing a person-centred focus on disability services across NSW. This focus will ensure people with a disability, their families and carers are at the centre of decision-making and the key determiners of how the disability system supports them. Individualised funding packages will be a key part of this reform and will put people with a disability and carers in control of their funding arrangements giving them choice, control and certainty over their lives and futures.

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<sup>1</sup> This is \$2.02 billion in additional growth funding for ST2 and \$2.02-billion to continue to fund the additional services rolled out in ST1.

## ***Stronger Together 2: 2011-2016***

*Stronger Together 2* includes a commitment to expand individualised funding arrangements and to develop a system where anyone receiving disability services will have the option of using an individualised and portable funding arrangement by the end of 2013/14 (Recommendation 6).

As a part of *Stronger Together 2*, the Agency has committed to seeing that the right mix of formal and informal supports are available to people at each stage of their life, as flexibly as possible, and in a way that puts people front and centre in making their own life choices. This approach will maximise the independence and skills of older people and people with a disability. Equally, the Agency aims to ensure their families and carers are effectively supported in their caring roles to strengthen the resilience of these relationships.

### **Person Centred Approaches**

Through *Stronger Together 2*, the NSW Government has committed to ensuring people with a disability, their families and carers are at the centre of decision-making and are the key determiners of how the specialist disability system supports them. A key priority is to implement individualised funding arrangements that will enable people with a disability, their families and carers to be in control of what services they receive (Recommendation 10). As part of a new person centred approach, people with a disability will have a greater choice of supports and service providers.

During the second half of 2011, ADHC undertook a comprehensive consultation process so that all stakeholders could contribute to the development of a reformed system.

Consultations with people with a disability, families and the sector have had a strong focus on identifying the support people with a disability and their families and carers need to assist them to work out what they want their supports to achieve. This includes how they want their supports organised and what role they want to play in managing their supports.

As the Agency moves to establish a person-centred disability services system, ongoing consultation will be critical. To date there have been over 150 consultation sessions with 1,329 people with disabilities, their families and carers, and 1,077 service providers attending. In addition, there have been 70 combined written and verbal submissions on person centred approaches and individualised funding.

From September until December this year targeted consultations are occurring with Aboriginal, CALD communities and people with intellectual disabilities. Consultations are also occurring with large residential centre clients and with people residing in accommodation services.

As part of an enhanced person centred approach, Local Area Coordinators will be provided to make it easier for people with a disability to access both specialist disability and mainstream or community supports.

The Agency regularly reviews its Client Charges Policy and Guidelines in collaboration with NSW Treasury and other stakeholders. The next review will address recommendations relating to client charges (Recommendation 19).

Commitments to person centred planning made as part of *Stronger Together 2* will deliver programs that more closely meet the individual needs of service users including greater responsiveness to their cultural diversity (Recommendations 32, 33 and 34).

Cultural competency training is an important element in developing and maintaining individual and organisation cultural competence maturity and cultural awareness is a mandatory element of the Agency's learning and development program (Recommendation 33).

The Agency is currently working with the non government sector in developing cultural competence capability. Consideration is being given to the non government sectors' cultural competence needs in developing the Agency's cultural competency resources.

### **Lifespan Approach**

Through *Stronger Together 2* the NSW Government recognises that greater certainty about the future is a critical element in enabling people with a disability and their families to plan their lives and build their expectations of what they can set as life goals.

A lifespan approach focuses on a number of significant life stages and transition points. The pre-school years have a focus on early detection and outreach. The school years focus on working intensively within the education system to maximise development of vocational and life skills. Once the school years are complete, the focus is on ensuring young people have the skills to live as independent a life as possible. In their adult years, people will have access to services and flexible respite options to continue participating and living in their communities.

### **Large Residential Centre Redevelopments and Shared Private Residential Accommodation**

Through *Stronger Together 2* the Agency has commenced the planning process for the redevelopment of the remaining Large Residential Centres (LRCs). The Agency has adopted a centre-by-centre approach in the planning process and recognises that the 'one size fits all' model does not meet the needs of all clients. Extensive consultations are occurring with the families and carers of each client and other key stakeholders to ensure the accommodation needs of each client are met.

Under *Stronger Together 2* the Government has committed to improving the viability, quality and supply of shared private residential accommodation (Recommendation 50). ADHC already operates a number of programs and in 2010/11 \$4.5 million was spent through the Boarding House Reform Program to support residents of licensed boarding houses through case management, advocacy, primary and secondary health care and leisure and recreation activities.

The NSW government is currently considering further reform of boarding house regulation and recently released an independent report showing broad support in the sector for industry wide reform to protect the rights of vulnerable people residing in this type of accommodation

### **A service system with the right capacity**

The Agency undertook consultation with key internal and external stakeholders in the development of its updated Community Complaints Policy (Draft). The final Policy is due for completion in early 2012. The Agency is updating the NSW Standards in Action resource which is the guide to assist NGOs in implementing the NSW disability standards. The first standard to be reviewed is Complaints and Disputes (Recommendation 46, 47). The update of the Standards in Action will include sector training in collaboration with peak bodies and development of resources including best practice examples for handling complaints to ensure that people with a disability, their families and carers who make a complaint get a satisfactory outcome.

Complaints handling will be reviewed as part of progressing person centred approaches and individualised funding. We will also make available annual reports of issues received from advocacy providers to the Ombudsman.

The Agency is working to develop a Quality Framework for Disability Services in NSW. This work aligns with the development of the National Quality Framework. Other options for realigning and expanding advocacy and other types of services to support participation and decision-making will be developed based on feedback provided by people with a disability (Recommendation 47).

In June 2010, an additional \$4.273 million was allocated to extend the Workforce Recruitment Project (WRP II) for 2 years effective September 2010. The 2010 allocation is for the provision of core infrastructure for 2 years and campaign activities for 1 year (Recommendation 51).

A stakeholder group representing employers and employee peak bodies was established by the Agency in 2010 to consider work needed in preparation for the final outcome of the Equal Remuneration Order. Stakeholders agreed to work in collaboration to develop workforce reform strategies with the aim of improving workforce attraction and retention for the sector (Recommendation 52).

## **Measuring the Progress**

The implementation of *Stronger Together 2* has and will continue to involve consultation with stakeholders including government, NGO and peak groups.

The Agency is committed to transparency about how resources are used. The Minister for Disability Services will provide an annual report to Parliament that will reconcile expenditure with outcomes and provide new research and data showing the effectiveness of initiatives.

Additionally the public release of the actuarial modelling with annual updates will provide transparency on the reasons behind funding allocations across the *Stronger Together* reforms.

## **A Changing Environment**

The reforms of *Stronger Together 2* complement the national directions set out in the National Disability Agreement (including the National Disability Strategy) and better align NSW policies to comply with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The reforms also position the NSW disability sector well in readiness for transition to a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

### *United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with a Disability*

The UN Convention on the Rights of People with a Disability (2006) aims to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. Australia has ratified the Convention and its Optional Protocol. The Optional Protocol provides a mechanism for individuals and groups to submit a complaint to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that a State has breached its responsibilities or obligations under the Convention.

The *NSW Disability Services Act, 1993* regulates administration of disability services and is consistent with the Convention, but Australia's adoption of the Convention gives an opportunity to refresh and enhance the approach to administering disability services. *Stronger Together 2* will progress key actions in this area.

### *National Disability Strategy*

The NSW Government has agreed to the national reform directions set out in the National Disability Strategy (NDS). The NDS aims to guide government activity to improve the performance of community and mainstream services in delivering outcomes for people with a disability. The NDS also provides leadership for a community-wide shift in attitudes to look beyond the disability to the person and their contribution to the

community. The NSW Government is developing an NDS implementation plan for adoption across all NSW Government agencies in 2012.

#### *National Disability Insurance Scheme*

The final report of the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Disability Care and Support was released by the Australian Government on 10 August 2011. The report proposes a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and a National Injury Insurance Scheme (NIIS).

The NSW Government is committed to working with other jurisdictions in the design, establishment and implementation of such a scheme. The Agency, in partnership with the non-government sector, will need to ensure that the NSW disability sector is well placed to transition to a NDIS.

The Agency is preparing both the Hunter and Western Sydney as sites for a proposed trial of the NDIS. The NSW Government is working together with the Commonwealth and States and Territories on the Select Council on Disability reform, comprising Treasurers and Disability Services Ministers.

**Recommendation 1**

That the Minister for Disability Services audit the existing data that is collected by ADHC and data that is available to ADHC, identify any additional data that is required to accurately assess unmet and under-met need for ageing and disability services in NSW.

That the NSW Government amend the Disability Services Act 1993 to require the Minister for Disability Services to table a biannual report into unmet and under-met need for ageing and disability services in NSW.

**Supported**

The limitations on data availability make the accurate assessment of the unmet need and under-met needs of people with a disability, their family and carers challenging. Since 2005 the Agency has engaged PricewaterhouseCoopers to undertake actuarial studies and modelling to provide the evidence to underpin *Stronger Together*.

The Agency has made, under *Stronger Together 2*, the following commitments:

- Public release of the modelling, undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), on the long-term pathways of people with a disability through the NSW service system (the 'lifespan approach'), which underpins the key reform areas of the *Stronger Together 2*,
- Annual updates of this modelling that takes account of new population and administrative data,
- The NSW Need and Supply Model developed by PwC will be used to build a National Need and Supply Model. The NSW need and supply model will be used as the basis for developing a nationally consistent approach for measuring the level of demand not currently supported by specialist disability services.
- The NSW Government will provide funding to the development of a three year Survey of Disability (currently only done on a six year cycle) through the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This will ensure more robust, relevant and timely data to enhance the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers.
- Annual reporting to Parliament, reconciling actual expenditure and increases in places with the published plans for *Stronger Together*.

**Recommendation 2**

That ADHC prioritise the attainment of its targets for supported accommodation places, as identified in *Stronger Together 1*.

**Supported**

The Agency has allocated all supported accommodation places under *Stronger Together 1*.



**Recommendation 3**

That the NSW Government commit at least \$2.5 billion to deliver *Stronger Together 2*. That phase two funding is provided in addition to the \$1.3 billion in funding that was provided during phase one and is announced by the end of December 2010.

**Supported**

The NSW Government is investing \$4.04 billion in *Stronger Together*.

**Recommendation 4**

That the Minister for Disability Services table an annual report to Parliament on the implementation of, and expenditure on, *Stronger Together 2*.

**Supported**

*Stronger Together 2* includes a commitment that the Minister for Disability Services table an annual report to Parliament.

**Recommendation 5**

That the Minister for Disability Services report publicly on ADHC's implementation of the recommendations of the NGO Red Tape Reduction report by November 2011 including the level of third party outsourcing by ADHC/ NGO-contracted service providers.

**Supported**

An interim report on implementation of the recommendations in the Red Tape Reduction Report was published on the Agency's website in April 2010 and updated in June 2010. A report in response to all recommendations was publically released in May 2011 and is on the Agency's website. On the matter of third party outsourcing the Agency has publicly reported on this during the Budget Estimates process in October 2011.

**Recommendation 6**

That *Stronger Together 2* include development of a comprehensive strategy to make individualised funding models available to all people who receive services from ADHC who wish to utilise them.

**Supported**

*Stronger Together 2* includes a commitment to expanding individualised funding arrangements from 2011/12 and developing a system where anyone receiving disability services will have the option of using an individualised and portable funding arrangement by 2013/14.

**Recommendation 7**

That the Minister for Disability Services ensures that all service users who are in, or are likely to remain in, long-term placements have access to individualised planning.

**Supported**

The Agency currently has mechanisms in place to ensure all people who are in, or are likely to remain in, long-term placements have access to individualised planning through the *Individual Planning Policy and Procedures*. The Quality and Safety Framework monitors the currency of Individual Plans for people who reside in Agency operated accommodation support service.

**Recommendation 8**

That the Minister for Disability Services develops and implement an outreach approach for the planning of disability services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities.

**Supported**

Through the *Stronger Together 2*, the Agency has committed targeted funds to improve services to Aboriginal people with a disability. The Agency is conducting a pilot of an innovative service model, *Services Our Way – Aboriginal Support Packages*.

Further research will be undertaken to explore flexible and innovative responses to meet the needs of Aboriginal communities.

**Recommendation 9**

That the Minister for Disability Services convene a Working Group made up of government Departments, NGO service providers, representatives of the Disability Council of NSW and other stakeholders, to develop and implement a comprehensive service planning framework, in consultation with disability service stakeholders, to identify how the disability service system will develop over the next five years.

That the framework:

- identifies how and when policy priorities, including person-centred planning, will be incorporated into service provision
- integrates planning at a state, regional, local and organisational level and provides tools to strengthen planning at an organisational level
- demonstrates how data and research will be used to inform development of the disability service system over time
- is published on ADHC's website

**Supported**

A comprehensive, 12 month consultation strategy is being undertaken. The strategy commenced in June 2011 and will conclude in June 2012. The strategy will support the development of a detailed implementation plan for further reform and service expansion under *Stronger Together 2*.

A person centred approach is the cornerstone of *Stronger Together 2*. It includes a commitment to expanding individualised funding arrangements as well as significant investment in additional resources designed to place people with a disability at the centre of decision making.

A person centred service system will require significant changes to the traditional way in which services for people with a disability have been funded and delivered.

The Agency will be consulting extensively with people with a disability, their families and carers, peak advocacy and consumer bodies and service providers to identify the system changes required to give people greater choice, flexibility and control. Consultations will focus on obtaining advice and feedback from people with a disability about their needs and aspirations for personalised service delivery.

**Recommendation 10**

That the Minister for Disability Services work in collaboration with the non-government sector and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement a person centred approach for all funding programs and service types during *Stronger Together 2*.

**Supported**

The NSW Government is committed to making *Stronger Together 2* even more effective for people with a disability, their families and carers. A key priority is to implement client directed support and funding arrangements.

The focus of reform will be on supporting people with a disability and their families and carers to be the key determiners of how resources are used, including availability of individualised and portable funding arrangements.

The Minister for Disability Services has established a Reference Group to provide advice on key issues arising from the state-wide consultations and the proposed policy directions for the implementation of person centred approaches in NSW. The Reference Group is made up of representatives from the non-government service provider sector, peak bodies, parents and carers, people with a disability and the Agency.

The NSW Government's commitment to working in collaboration with the non-government sector is supported financially through the \$17 million Industry

Development Fund (IDF). Over \$1 million of the IDF has been allocated towards developing a three year development program to:

- challenge and support funded providers to develop the internal capabilities and strengths to holistically review their approach to person centred approaches
- plan for new ways of working; engage the sector in a series of activities that promotes the sharing of good practice, and
- resource and re-engage funded providers to develop the external capabilities and strengths to build community connectedness and develop social capital.

**Recommendation 11:**

That the Minister for Disability Services, in consultation with Department of Education and Training, review and amend transition planning policies as part of *Stronger Together 2*.

That the review:

- Is conducted in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including service users, carers and their families.
- Increases awareness of the Transition to School program.
- Ensures that all people with a disability leaving school are able to access transition planning as early as possible.
- Improves transition support and planning provided to people from non-English speaking backgrounds that are leaving school.
- Provides clear resources for service users, carers and their families who are seeking information on how to access transition planning services.
- Ensures that people with a disability receive appropriate support upon entering the education system and that access to education does not result in adverse consequences such as a reduction in necessary services or supports.

That the review and actions resulting from the review are published on ADHC's website

**Supported**

As part of *Stronger Together 2*, the Agency is in the process of developing the Lifespan and Person Centred Approaches, which will capture transition planning as a cornerstone to individual lifelong planning across life stages.

As part of this the Agency is working with the Department of Education and Communities as part of the ongoing implementation of their transition to school guidelines. This will assist in ensuring that transitions to and from school occur with the maximum supports and information available to families and the person with a disability.

**Recommendation 12**

That the NSW Government review and amend transition policy and processes for people with disability who transition from hospital to home.

That the outcome of the review ensures that people have appropriate, accessible and well-coordinated support available prior to transitioning out of hospital and during the period of readjustment to their home. The review should consider existing successful programs and models, such as the South East Sydney Illawarra Area Health Service Agency for Clinical Innovation Transition Model.

**Supported**

The Agency is improving transition and referral pathways. This involves supporting people following discharge from hospital, to assist with resettlement and improving information sharing between agencies during discharge and transition planning.

An example of this is the development of Draft Joint Guidelines between NSW Health and the Agency to support residents of Agency operated and funded accommodation support services who attend or are admitted to a NSW Public hospital. The Guidelines are currently being jointly revised by NSW Health and the Agency following a consultation process for final endorsement.

**Recommendation 13**

That the NSW Government review and clarify current staff responsibilities in transition planning, including reviewing whether hospital social workers are the most appropriate role to conduct this planning and whether there is a greater coordinating role for ADHC caseworkers.

That the review identifies clear staff roles responsible for providing support to service users while they complete transition planning in hospital and as they re-settle in their home. That the outcomes of the review are communicated to relevant staff.

That the review identifies safeguards to prevent people with a disability from being discharged from hospital with inadequate support.

**Supported**

The Agency supports this recommendation as it links with current work relating to transition planning and clarification of staff responsibilities and planning to develop cross-Agency business rules for the referral pathways and management of complex clients. This work includes clarifying the roles of discharge planning, hospital social workers and community case managers in planning, assessment, sharing of information, service co-ordination and review.

**Recommendation 14**

That the Minister for Disability Services provide ADHC case management to all ADHC service users who are being discharged from hospital.

**Supported**

The needs of each service user vary depending on their available natural and funded supports. Not all people being discharged from hospital require specific case management services. Case management support is available to Agency eligible clients and would be available to support a transition from hospital, if required.

*Stronger Together 2* provides for the establishment and expansion of a range of decision support resources (including case management and Local Support coordination) at a total cost of \$141.2 million over five years. These services will be able to assist in discharge planning when required.

In most instances the transition from hospital will be supported through the discharge planning process by NSW Health. The Agency will continue to work with NSW Health to ensure discharge planning processes are appropriate and meet the needs of people with a disability, their families and carers.

**Recommendation 15**

That the NSW Government consider the Spinal Cord Injuries Response initiative for relevance to the NSW disability service sector.

**Supported**

The Spinal Cord Injuries Response (SCIR) initiative in Queensland is a collaborative, cross-Agency response designed to support individuals with new spinal cord injuries in their transition from hospital rehabilitation to community living.

The general philosophy and approach to SCIR is relevant to NSW and is mirrored to a certain degree by the Agency's Attendant Care Program and Transition Model in conjunction with the Spinal Cord Rehabilitation Outreach Services operated by NSW Health.

Formalised support and commitment from other agencies will be sought to achieve the collaboration and success of the SCIR initiative.

**Recommendation 16**

That the Minister for Disability Services ensure that current policy regarding transition planning in accommodation services is understood and implemented by all relevant staff, to ensure that a person-centred approach is

implemented, for both the person who is transitioning into accommodation options and existing residents.

**Supported**

The Agency has a transition planning process implemented for clients entering accommodation support services through the *Allocation of Places in Supported Accommodation Policy and Procedures*. A review of the policy is due to commence. Part of the review will specifically address the recommendation to ensure a person centred approach is implemented, for both the person who is transitioning into the accommodation service and existing residents.

**Recommendation 17**

That the NSW Government review and amend the process by which ADHC and NSW Health share sensitive information about service users who access both agencies.

That the review:

- develops and applies a common understanding of the meaning of 'confidential information' in the context of health and disability service user information sharing;
- identifies how confidential information can be shared between agencies to improve the quality of services provided, including considering issues of consent;
- learns from the successful models of information sharing between ADHC and NSW Health that exist in some regions;
- learns from the achievements of information sharing in Keep Them Safe and applies them as appropriate.

That the report resulting from the review and ADHC response to recommendations are published on the website.

**Supported**

The Agency has begun work to improve information sharing between the Agency and NSW Health. As part of *Stronger Together 2*, the Agency will continue to work with NSW Health to improve referral pathways for people with a disability from the time of diagnosis, including enhancing coordination and information sharing processes.

The Agency's *Privacy Management Plan* was endorsed in February 2011 and provides direction to staff about sharing confidential information.

In relation to *Keep Them Safe*, the Agency notes that while the legislation introduced under Chapter 16A of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* allows for a 'freeing up' of information exchange between prescribed bodies, there are clearly defined criteria which must be met relating to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child or young person before information can be exchanged. The Agency has undertaken staff

training to promote the use of the *Keep them Safe* information sharing provision.

**Recommendation 18**

That the NSW Government amend the requirement for people with a disability to obtain multiple statements from General Practitioners to confirm their disability when accessing ADHC services, to allow the General Practitioners statement to be valid for varying periods of time that are relevant to the disability and needs of the individual.

**Supported**

The Agency will focus on eligibility and assessment as part of its work over the next 12 to 18 months to improve intake and assessment processes including minimising assessment burden. The requirement for people with a disability to obtain multiple statements from General Practitioners to confirm their disability when accessing ADHC services will be reviewed as part of this. Refer to the response to Recommendation 21 for further details.

The Agency has also drafted a new medication form in consultation with stakeholders. The draft medication form has been designed to meet the requirements of people with a disability, their families and carers, the non-government sector and Agency respite services and day programs. This new medication form will reduce the need for families to have multiple medication forms completed by their General Practitioner. Additionally, updates to the medication form will only be required either every 12 months or when there are changes to the client's medication.

Consultations with the National Disability Services, the NSW Carers Advisory Council, regional Agency staff and the Public Service Association of NSW has occurred and the medication form is now in final draft. It is anticipated that the medication form will be available for use by non government organisations and Agency operated services from early 2012.

**Recommendation 19 & Recommendation 20**

That the NSW Government review and amend means testing policy for people with disability attempting to access services, to include assessment of expenses, so that people with disability are not disadvantaged through being required to provide an incomplete picture of their financial position.

That the amended policy is communicated to ADHC staff, funded organisations and disability service users.

That the Minister for Disability Services introduce standardised income/means testing forms across all ADHC provided and funded programs and ensures forms are available in multiple languages and formats.



**Supported**

The Agency regularly reviews its Client Contribution Policy and Guidelines in collaboration with NSW Treasury and other stakeholders. The next review will address these recommendations.

**Recommendation 21**

That the Minister for Disability Services expedite the review of the intake and assessment process for disability services to:

- develop a single, well-defined and clear entry point into the service system
- prevent duplicate needs assessments being completed, through not requiring ADHC to complete an assessment when one has been completed by the referring professional
- provide immediate notification of eligibility and entitlement for ADHC provided and funded services
- develop and implement a consistent intake and assessment policy across regions
- improve navigation of intake and assessment, including the provision of clear information about service options, eligibility and support
- review the eligibility criteria for the Attendant Care Program.

That the outcomes of the review, recommendations and ADHC's response to the recommendations are published on the ADHC's website.

**Supported**

Work on these issues will be undertaken over the next 12 to 18 months. It will also take into account work on assessment being undertaken by the Senior Officials Working Group on behalf of the Select Council on Disability Reform to deliver on major reform of disability services in Australia through a national disability insurance scheme.

On 19 August 2011 the Council of Australian Governments agreed to progress quickly the measures agreed to under the National Disability Agreement including the development of a national assessment framework. NSW is working closely with other jurisdictions, both multilaterally and bilaterally to progress this framework and other work to improve intake and access, including the development of national assessment tools.

**Recommendation 22**

That the Minister for Disability Services review and amend ADHC's vacancy management system for supported accommodation in consultation with stakeholders.

That the review considers:

- person-centred policy

- access to supported accommodation based on need rather than disability type
- complexity of the application process
- the distance that service users are placed from their family and community
- the compatibility of people placed together in supported accommodation
- the level of choice that service users have regarding where they live, who they live with and who supports them
- compliance with the NSW Disability Service Standards and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- provision for information sharing and co-ordination of data exchange between ADHC and NGO service providers.

That the outcomes of the review, recommendations and actions are published on ADHC's website.

### **Supported**

The Agency commenced a review of the *Allocation of Places in Supported Accommodation Policy and Procedures* in mid 2011 to support *Stronger Together* commitments. The review will occur in close consultation with stakeholders. Feedback and recommendations arising from the review and the recommendations of the inquiry will be used to inform amendments to the existing processes used in vacancy management.

Notwithstanding changes and improvements arising from the review, the current vacancy management system ensures all people with disability as defined by the *NSW Disability Services Act 1993* have access to accommodation support services based on need as set out in the *Allocation of Places in Supported Accommodation Policy and Procedures*.

To support this commitment, the *Lifestyle Planning Policy's Guiding Principles*, developed after broad consultation with people with disability, are in alignment with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and governed by the *NSW Disability Services Act 1993*.

### **Recommendation 23**

That the Minister for Disability Services improve access to disability service information for all service types, programs and supports. That this is achieved through:

- ensuring information is available and easily accessible on all ADHC provided and funded services, including locations where the services are provided, eligibility criteria and how to access a service;
- providing information in a variety of formats, including Easy Access, non-English languages, electronically and in hard copy; and
- providing references to other reputable sources of information, such as website and organisations, that can provide support and general information to service users.

**Supported**

*Stronger Together 2* provides for the establishment and expansion of a range of decision support resources at a total cost of \$141.2 million over five years. This investment will significantly improve access to disability service information.

The Agency's Disability Action Plan 2010 - 2013 includes a commitment to provide information (both published hard copies and published via the internet) in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability. The Agency's website includes accessibility features for people with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with lower literacy levels and people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. The Agency's website meets Web Content Accessibility (W3C) Guidelines and Accessibility Standards 2.0 AA.

In addition, the Agency branding and publishing guidelines give staff assistance in producing publications in accessible formats such as Braille, large print and audio.

**Recommendation 24**

That the Minister for Disability Services improve the availability of information to people who are deaf or those with vision disability through making available disability service information in relevant formats.

**Supported**

The Agency's Disability Action Plan 2010-2013 includes a number of strategies to provide information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability, including people who are deaf and those with visual disability.

The Disability Action Plan includes a commitment to provide information (both published hard copies and published via the internet) in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability. In support of this outcome teletypewriter (TTY) equipment will be installed in regional offices as required and staff will be trained in the use of TTY Equipment and the National Relay Service.

In addition, the Agency's website includes accessibility features for people with a disability (See response at recommendation 23).

### **Recommendation 25 & 26**

That the Minister for Disability Services convenes a Working Group made up of government departments, NGO service providers, representatives from the Disability Council of NSW and other stakeholders, to complete a review of eligibility criteria for all services, based on an internationally valid framework such as the WHO's International Classification of Disability Functioning and Health. That revised eligibility criteria determine service eligibility based on need rather than disability.

That the Working Group undertakes consultation with a range of ADHC service users and ensures eligibility criteria are consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

That the outcomes of the review, recommendations and actions are published on ADHC's website.

That the Minister for Disability Services develop (or revise as appropriate) and consistently implement eligibility policy for all funded and provided service, including the development and implementation of a common eligibility screening tool, and that the policy ensures that service users' are immediately notified of their eligibility and entitlement to ADHC funded and provided services.

### **Supported**

New resources, such as local support coordination, will be provided to make it easier for people with a disability to access both specialist disability and mainstream or community supports.

As the NSW government moves to establish a person-centred disability services system based on a lifespan approach where individualised funding arrangements are available for all service users, it will be critical that eligibility criteria are clear and based on the needs of people with a disability, their families and carers.

Work on these issues will be undertaken over the next 12 to 18 months and will involve consultation with key stakeholders, including service providers. A two day summit was held on the 7 and 8 of July 2011 to seek the advice of people with a disability about their needs and aspirations for personalised service delivery. The NSW Government will continue to work with peak bodies such as the Disability Council, NSW Council of Social Services (NCOSS), National Disability Service NSW and consumer organisations. It will also take into account work on assessment being undertaken by the Disability Policy and Research Working Group on behalf of Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference in accordance with the National Disability Agreement.

After this phase of consultation, the feedback will be used to produce a draft person centred model for NSW, which will also address issues regarding assessment of need.

**Recommendation 27**

That the Minister for Disability Services amend the eligibility criteria of the attendant care program as a matter of urgency to include people who are deaf and blind.

**Supported**

The needs of people who are deaf and blind are being further investigated by the Agency throughout *Stronger Together 2*. A research project is being commissioned to investigate the needs of people who are deaf and blind, services available, gaps in services and options for addressing unmet need. Recommendations from this research may include broadening the eligibility criteria and reasonable adjustments for a number of the Agency's programs in order to meet the needs of this target group.

**Recommendation 28**

That the Minister for Disability Services ensure that appropriate services are available for people who are deaf blind, through funding and training interpreters and guides for deaf and blind service users.

**Supported**

As noted in the response to recommendation 27, the scope of the planned research on the needs of people who are deaf and blind will include investigating effective ways to communicate, such as the provision of interpreters and guides.

**Recommendation 29**

That the Minister for Disability Services develop a policy regarding the use of waiting lists in ADHC provided and funded services, to improve transparency and understanding of waiting lists through:

- Providing clear direction on when waiting lists will be kept by ADHC and funded organisations
- Providing direction on how waiting lists will be maintained
- Identifying when, how and the frequency that service users will be communicated with regarding their position on the waiting list
- Reducing the amount of red tape in accessing waiting lists
- Communicating that waiting lists will not negatively impact funded organisations' relationships with ADHC
- Being circulated to service providers, ADHC staff and peak organisations so there is a common understanding across the sector

**Supported**

The NSW Standards in Action require all service providers to have clear criteria for entry and a process for allocating priority access to services.

In accordance with *Stronger Together 2* the Agency is moving to establish a person-centred system based on a lifespan approach.

Under this system the government aims to provide greater certainty about the types of support people with a disability can access at different transition points in their life enabling them to plan their lives and build their expectations of what they can set as life goals. The implementation of client directed funding arrangements will require the development of clear eligibility and intake policies and procedures and systems for registering and prioritising an eligible person's request for services.

The policy settings to achieve this system will be developed in consultation with people with a disability, their families and carers, service planners, peak bodies and other key stakeholders over the next 12 to 18 months. The mechanisms for registering and prioritising a person's request for services will be considered within this context.

**Recommendation 30**

That the Minister for Disability Services considers the Western Australia local area coordinator model of service delivery and implements the model in NSW if appropriate.

**Supported**

The NSW government is committed to implementing the local area coordination model of service delivery. *Stronger Together 2* provides for the establishment and expansion of a range of decision support resources (including information, planning, advocacy, case management and support coordination) at a total cost of \$141.2 million over five years.

**Recommendation 31**

That the Minister for Disability Services provide culturally appropriate disability information.

**Supported**

The Agency is committed to providing accessible, inclusive and responsive services to meet the needs of clients, carers and families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

The provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate information is an essential element in the Agency's cultural diversity plan, *Cultural Diversity Strategic Framework 2010 – 2013*. To maximise accessibility to information and services, the *Cultural Diversity Strategic Framework* prioritises the development of sustainable partnerships and networks with multicultural agencies, workers, communities and other government and non-government agencies and ethno-specific organisations.

There has been an increased focus on dissemination of information via: writing of information in plain English; translation of relevant information in

languages other than English (LOTE); production and use of audio-visual material; production and broadcast of programs on SBS radio; use of bilingual facilitators to communicate in Languages other than English (LOTE); increased understanding and use of language services by Agency and funded sector staff; and use of SBS radio and ethnic press to promote key Agency consultative processes.

**Recommendation 32**

That the Minister for Disability Services provide free interpreter services to people with disability from non-English speaking backgrounds.

**Supported**

The Agency's Languages Services Policy and Guidelines sets the parameters and provides the tools for the use of language services across the Agency. In line with this Policy, all Agency services are required to support access to language services which includes interpreters, CLAS officers, and translated materials.

The Policy also requires that Agency staff use existing accredited interpreter and translation services and leverage of the NSW Health Care Interpreter Service, Community Relations Commission, Multicultural Health Communications Service and Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS). Several regions are currently employing language service brokerage models with Area Health Care Interpreter Services.

A comprehensive scoping of language services and language service delivery models is currently underway to inform the development of effective, efficient and flexible approaches to the provision of language services based on evidence and tailored to the particular needs of individual regions.

**Recommendation 33**

That the Minister for Disability Services ensure that all staff in ADHC funded and provided services receive cultural competency training to enable them to work effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from a non-English speaking background.

**Supported**

One of the key strategic priorities of the Agency's Valuing and Managing Diversity: Cultural Diversity Strategic Framework 2010-2013 is to build the organisational capacity of staff to work with the Agency's culturally and linguistically diverse clientele. An important strategy in achieving this priority is the focus on cultural competency training and development of associated resource materials.

In 2010-2011, the Agency continued to plan and implement staff development and support initiatives in regional areas. Cultural competency training strategies are being included in regional learning and development training

calendars, within staff induction programs and for ongoing professional development.

Cultural Awareness is a mandatory element of the Agency's learning and development program. Currently, access to Cultural Competence training is facilitated at a local level through the services of an external provider, using a blend of formal face to face, workshop and other delivery methods such as web based accredited learning products.

The Agency is currently working with the funded sector in developing its cultural competence capabilities through regional interagencies and local partnerships. Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association (MDAA) has also been contracted to conduct cultural competency audits on a number of ADHC funded NGOs.

In conjunction with staff training, the Agency has ensured that information and educational resources are developed to support and complement the release of the major cultural diversity policies. For example, the Language Services Guidelines and a series of fact sheets on the effective use of language services were developed as a resource to assist in the implementation of the Language Services Policy.

A Cultural Diversity Statement was developed to inform Agency funded service providers and key external stakeholders of the *Cultural Diversity Strategic Framework*.

A Cultural Diversity Data Fact Sheet was developed to promote changes to the collection of data and increase understanding of why collection of this data is important to the Agency's business. These resources and others complement and extend cultural competency training activities.

In addition, the Agency funds Multicultural Access Projects through the HACC program. The Multicultural Access Program aims to promote cultural competence throughout the sector and improve access and cultural responsiveness of Home and Community Care (HACC) services.

The Agency is currently preparing an Aboriginal Cultural Competency training framework that supports its Aboriginal Employment Capabilities Framework.

**Recommendation 34**

That the Minister for Disability Services incorporate diversity measures and outcomes in all program guidelines.

**Supported**

The Agency's *Cultural Diversity Strategic Framework 2010-2013* states that the integration of diversity into planning, monitoring and evaluation is a priority for the Agency. The provision of culturally appropriate services is a key result area in the Agency's program guidelines.



There is increased evidence that cultural diversity principles and requirements are built into requests for proposals, tendering processes, program standards, specifications and guidelines. This includes diversity key result areas being specified in funding agreements.

**Recommendation 35**

That the Minister for Disability Services increase the number of supported accommodation options available as a priority, through *Stronger Together 2* to meet the need on the Register and the anticipated ongoing, growing demand.

**Supported**

Under *Stronger Together 2*, the NSW Government has already committed more than \$724 million to provide people with a disability an extra 1,750 supported accommodation places over the next five years(2011-2016). These places will be provided under a range of current and new accommodation models including: individual packages; drop-in services; transition services for people who want to live more independently; Supported Living Fund packages to assist people to plan their own supports as well as group home and similar places.

**Recommendation 36**

That Ageing, Disability and Home Care regularly communicate with all families on the Register of Request for Supported Accommodation to assess their eligibility for supported accommodation, communicate how long the anticipated wait is and to ensure that families receive an appropriate level of support while waiting for accommodation.

**Supported**

The Agency has mechanisms in place to regularly communicate with families on the Immediate Need Register of Request for Supported Accommodation.

As vacancies and accommodation support packages are allocated on the basis of meeting client needs, their preferred locations and priority, it is not possible to predict the anticipated wait. The Agency acknowledges that families have the right to select their preferred accommodation locations and are informed that their application will be considered by the regional allocation committee for all available vacancies that arise in their preferred locations.

The Agency is currently conducting a case file review for all clients registered for accommodation support services to ensure clients and families are being regularly assessed by case managers and have appropriate supports in place while waiting for accommodation.

A review of the Allocations Policy commenced in mid 2011 and will be concluded by 30 June 2012.

**Recommendation 37**

That the Minister for Disability Services establish an out-of-office hours staff member in all regions to coordinate after hours changes to service delivery for all ADHC provided home care programs. That this staff member communicates with service users when there are after hours changes to service provision.

**Supported**

Home Care recognises the importance of having an effective and responsive mechanism to deal with after hours changes to service delivery and non-medical after hours emergencies outside of rostered service times for its clients. In order to manage after hours changes to service delivery and non-medical emergencies, Home Care works with clients who receive essential services out of normal business hours to develop a contingency plan that can be activated when they have an unscheduled need for personal support that is not a medical emergency.

In addition, non-government organisations which provide Home and Community Care services are required to have a process in place to support clients who receive services out of office hours. This is monitored by the Agency's Regional staff in their ongoing contract management activities.

**Recommendation 38**

That the Minister for Disability Services ensure that all relevant staff are aware of current policy and procedures in the home care program, to improve consistency in this program across regions, through the implementation of regular training.

**Supported**

The HACC program is a well established program. In recognition of the importance of workforce development, the program has infrastructure to support staff training and implementation of policies and procedures. Currently, 189 Projects are funded across NSW to provide a range of sector support activities. The total funding provided to these projects in 2009/10 was \$16.2 million.

In addition, the Agency's regional contract managers ensure that non-government organisations receive necessary support to implement policies and procedures.

The Agency will continue to consider the ongoing training and development needs of the HACC workforce in any future changes to the program arising from the aged care reforms.

**Recommendation 39**

That the Minister for Disability Services ensure that there are HACC staff available in every region who are trained to communicate with, understand and respond to the needs of deaf people.

**Supported**

As noted in the response to recommendation 27, the scope of planned research on the needs of people who are deaf and blind will include appropriate resources within the Agency to communicate effectively with people who are deaf. This will involve establishing where resources would be placed in the service system, and links with current regional eligibility, intake and assessment processes for HACC and disability services.

**Recommendation 40**

That the Government ensures community transport concerns are addressed, particularly the need to make the service more person-centred, as a priority through *Stronger Together 2*.

**Supported**

Transport services are currently provided through the HACC program. As an outcome of the National Health Reform Agreement (which has superseded the National Health and Hospitals Network Agreement), the aged care component of the HACC program will be transitioned to the Australian Government, in stages commencing 1 July 2011. The NSW government will assume responsibility for community care services for people under 65 (50 for Indigenous Australians).

A key feature of all community care services provided to people under 65/50 will be that all services, including community transport services, are aligned with the person-centred directions in the *Stronger Together 2*.

Both in the lead up to the transition of services to the Australian Government and in the operation of community transport services for younger people after that time, the Agency will work with Transport NSW to address issues raised in the report including availability of services, co-ordination with other programs and person-centred approaches to service delivery.

**Recommendation 41**

That the NSW Government investigate the implementation of a program of interest free loans for equipment and aids for ADHC service users and other people with disabilities.

**Supported**

Around 100 community based organisations in NSW offer interest free loans through the NSW Government funded No Interest Loan Schemes for low

income households to purchase essential household items, including equipment and aids.

The National Disability Strategy (NDS) includes a direction to support the development of assistive technologies and more access to aids and equipment for people with a disability, where a range of strategies to improve access will be considered. The Agency will consider this recommendation in the development of the NDS.

**Recommendation 42**

That the Minister for Disability Services maximise the devolution of Large Residential Centre through providing person-centred planning and support for every service user who is currently housed in these centres, and that:

- accommodation needs and preferences of individuals are the centre of decisions to relocate residents; and,
- all accommodation options offered to service users transitioning out of Large Residential Centres, complies with the NSW Disability Service Standards, *Disability Services Act 1993* and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

**Supported**

The Agency is committed to providing an appropriate level of care to all of its accommodation clients in accordance with the Agency's Client Support Policy Manual (Manual).

Under *Stronger Together 2*, the Agency has commenced the planning process for the redevelopment of the remaining Large Residential Centres (LRCs). The Agency has adopted a centre-by-centre approach in the planning process and recognises that the 'one size fits all' model does not meet the needs of all clients. As such, extensive consultation will occur with the families and carers of each client and other key stakeholders to ensure the accommodation needs and preferences of each client are met.

Planning for the redevelopment of LRCs will take place within the context of the Innovative Accommodation Framework which identifies 11 accommodation models. These models range from village-style accommodation, cluster housing, villas and group homes to flexible support packages and drop-in support, for those with lower support needs or who are more independent. Specialist supported living services which provide a standard of excellence in nursing care, clinical care and medication management will be offered to those clients with particularly complex needs.

All new accommodation models built from the redevelopment of LRCs will comply with the *NSW Disability Services Act, 1993*, Disability Service Standards and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

**Recommendation 43**

That the Minister for Disability Services ensures that service users who are transitioned out of Large Residential Centres are adequately supported during the transition period and while they settle into their new accommodation.

**Supported**

Under *Stronger Together 2*, the Agency has commenced the planning process for the redevelopment of the remaining LRCs.

The Agency has adopted a centre-by-centre approach in the planning process and recognises that the 'one size fits all' model does not meet the needs of all clients.

Planning for the transition of clients to new accommodation will commence up to 18 months prior to the redevelopment of the LRC. A consultative group, the Design and Transition Planning Team (DTPT) will be established for each LRC comprising a range of stakeholders, including family representatives.

Clients will be fully supported during and following the transition period with an individual transition plan being developed for each person.

**Recommendation 44**

That the NSW Government ensure that the current evaluation of ADHC funded Home Modification and Maintenance program includes consultation with stakeholders and includes a review of:

- funding levels and shortages
- waiting lists, including Occupational Therapist assessments
- potential non-compliance with the Home Building Act 1989, including the use of unlicensed builders
- options to streamline the application process for home modification services so that only one application is required from service users for assessment, quotation and home modification
- quality evaluation of services provided through the program
- options for home modification and maintenance service providers to provide waiting list information to ADHC, for example regarding unmet need
- review of all outstanding applications that have received an assessment and quotation but have not been completed.

That the evaluation and ADHC's response to the recommendation is published on ADHC's website once finalised.

**Supported**

The HACC Home Modification Service Type Review is currently in Stage 2 - the consumer and sector consultation stage. An issues paper has been developed and consultations are being conducted. The above issues are

addressed in the Terms of Reference for the review and have been included in the issues paper.

All relevant information from the report, including recommendations and responses to the recommendations will be made available.

**Recommendation 45**

That the Minister for Disability Services revises the NSW Disability Service Standards to include a new standard that requires culturally appropriate services to be delivered.

**Supported**

The NSW standards will be modelled on the National Framework. The inclusion of culturally appropriate service delivery in the standards was identified as an important issue in the national and NSW consultations.

The update of the NSW Standards in Action will reflect the key issues in those consultations including greater reference to delivering services that are culturally appropriate across all the standards. It will include contemporary examples of culturally diverse best practice.

**Recommendation 46**

That the Minister for Disability Services conduct a review of complaint and grievance handling policy and procedures for disability service's in NSW and that the review:

- be conducted in consultation with relevant stakeholders including service users and carers
- provides ADHC complaint policy in a format that is accessible to all service users, including people who are deaf and visually impaired
- ensures ADHC complaint policy is easy to locate on the internet
- develops processes to ensure that complaints are addressed in a timely manner
- refers to the NSW Ombudsman Complaint Handling at Universities: Best Practice Guidelines when identifying how to improve complaint handling policies and processes
- identifies and addresses gaps in complaint handling between agencies such as ADHC and the NSW Ombudsman
- implements staff training and develops appropriate resources for funded organisations to improve understanding of complaint handling processes

That the review report and actions resulting from the review are published on ADHC's website.

**Supported**

The Agency undertook consultation with key internal and external stakeholders in the development of its most recent Complaints and Grievance Handling draft Policy. The revised draft Policy incorporates best practice components of the *Australian Standard: Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for Complaints Handling in Organisations (ISO 10002004)*, and the NSW

Ombudsman's Effective Complaint Handling Guidelines (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition December 2010).

The final draft will be referred to the NSW Ombudsman's Office once completed and it is anticipated that the final Policy will be released in 2011 pending consideration and approval. The release will incorporate communication, training and on-going feedback and evaluation strategies.

NSW Standards in Action is being updated by the Agency. This resource will guide and assist NGOs in implementing the NSW disability service standards.

The current version of Standards in Action was refreshed in February 2011 and now includes hyperlinks to key policies including the Agency's complaint policy.

The update of the Standards in Action will include sector training in collaboration with peak bodies and development of resources including best practice examples for handling complaints to ensure that people with a disability, their families and carers who make a complaint get a satisfactory outcome.

**Recommendation 47**

That the NSW Government establish an independent organisation to:

- monitor the quality of disability services provided and funded by ADHC
- handle complaints about the provision of services (for issues that are not within the responsibility of organisations such as the NSW Ombudsman)
- monitor compliance with the NSW' Disability Service Standards and the Disability Services Act 1993 through providing accreditation to organisations that provide disability services in accordance with the standards.

**Supported**

The Agency is working to develop a Quality Framework for Disability Services in NSW. This work aligns with the development of the National Quality Framework and its core features support the Directions for Industry Development report and the focus area of high performing organisations with quality improvement activities.

Management of complaints about NGOs is part of the Agency's Risk Identification Monitoring Guidelines that have been in place since June 2010. Complaints handling processes (including complaints regarding NGOs) will be reviewed as part of the development of the new person centred model for NSW and implementation of individualised funding arrangements.

**Recommendation 48**

That the NSW Government move funding for the administration of advocacy services to a Department that is independent of disability service provision.

**Supported**

*Stronger Together 2* includes a policy commitment to implementing new decision support resources for people with a disability and their family and carers, including information and advocacy supports. Policy directions for decision support will be the subject of a broad consultation process with people with a disability, families and carers and other stakeholders.

Transparency and accountability are key commitments of the NSW Government. The NSW Government wants people with a disability, their families, carers and the wider community to be confident that services are being delivered equitably and effectively.

A process will be established to enable advocacy providers to report to the Agency on issues they have encountered over the preceding 12 months. These reports will inform the Agency on the issues arising within the disability support system and will be made available to the NSW Ombudsman.

Consideration will also be given to the establishment of a Public Advocate for people with a disability.

Options for realigning and expanding advocacy will be developed based on feedback provided by people with a disability through the consultation strategies being implemented over the period June 2011 to June 2012.

**Recommendation 49**

That the Minister for Disability Services conduct a survey of all service users, carers and their families who receive services from ADHC and funded organisations every three years to improve ADHC's understanding of issues in the disability service system.

That the results of the survey and ADHC's response to the results are published within six months after completion of the survey.

**Supported**

The NSW Government has signalled its intention to be strongly focussed on improving client satisfaction. The NSW Government will consider broadening its client satisfaction survey to other service users as part of the NSW response to client satisfaction requirements being developed under the National Disability Agreement. The NSW Home Care Service currently conducts an independent biannual client satisfaction survey and publishes the results.

**Recommendation 50**

That the Minister for Disability Services ensure that people with disability who reside in boarding houses receive person-centred planning and the services



provided to people who reside in boarding houses comply with the Disability Service Standards

**Supported**

The government already operates a number of programs to provide person-centred services for people with disability who reside in boarding houses. In 2010, regulation of the licensed boarding house sector was strengthened improving the safety and wellbeing of residents and provided greater clarity to operators about their responsibilities. In 2010-11 \$4.5 million was spent through the Boarding House Reform Program to support residents of licensed boarding houses. As these services are funded through the disability services program, the NSW Disability Service Standards apply to these activities.

Licensed Boarding Houses are licensed under the *Youth and Community Services Act 1973*. Ageing, Disability and Home Care cannot require licensed boarding house operators to comply with policies outside of the regulations and requirements set out in the *Youth and Community Services Act 1973* and the *Youth and Community Services Regulation 2010*.

The Agency has however provided guidance to licensed boarding house operators to assist them in meeting their obligations, and has a comprehensive suite of client support policies that apply to its funded services, including policies which cover, among other topics, health care, abuse and neglect, managing client risk, decision making, choice, behaviour management and restrictive practices.

There has been significant decline in the number of licensed boarding houses in recent years. The Government is considering how the boarding house sector can best be supported to continue as a viable accommodation model for people with a disability or mental illness. Proposals for reform of the sector are expected to be considered in early 2012. These proposals may include further legislative reform of the Boarding House sector.

**Recommendation 51**

That six months before the end of funding of the Workforce Recruitment Strategy, ADHC, with the assistance of stakeholders, review the strategy in consultation with stakeholders, with a view to extending it for a further two years.

**Supported**

In June 2010, an additional \$4.273 million was allocated to extend the Workforce Recruitment Project (WRPII) for 2 years effective September 2010. The 2010 allocation is for the provision of core infrastructure for 2 years and campaign activities for 1 year.

**Recommendation 52**

That ADHC convene a cross sector working party to develop a workforce retention strategy. This strategy should include, but not be limited, issues of:

- Career pathways
- Professional development
- Working conditions
- Appropriate remuneration levels

**Supported**

A stakeholder group representing employers and employee peak bodies was established by the Agency in 2010 to consider work needed in preparation for the final outcome of the Equal Remuneration Order.

**Recommendation 53**

That the Home Care Service of NSW undertake an evaluation of training levels of all care workers, which identifies training gaps and how these will be addressed.

**Supported**

The Home Care Service of NSW (Home Care) works with the Agency's regional learning and development teams to:

- identify training needs
- develop an annual budget and training plan
- source training from local providers where relevant
- disseminate information on training and run training programs; and
- record details of training completed.

All new care workers recruited into Home Care undertake induction training prior to commencing work with clients. Training is followed with on the job coaching, support and supervision during the probation period of three months.

Home Care accesses traineeships to enable training of some new and existing staff to certificate III or IV level.

Home Care will be targeting a more systematic approach to planning and implementing learning and development for care workers as part of its 2011-12 Business Plan in addition to providing needs based training as required.

**Recommendation 54**

ADHC coordinate and share training programs and opportunities with both their own staff and that of non-government service providers in each of their six regions.

**Supported**

The community services sector has a long history of collaboration through the sharing of resources. The Agency acknowledges the range of positive benefits regarding sharing training programs and opportunities with non-government service providers.

The Agency's regions do currently share training opportunities with non-government service providers on both a formal and informal basis. This has been particularly useful in rural and regional locations.

At a strategic level, consideration is given to non-government service providers in developing the Agency's training resources and programs. The Agency understands the importance of building leadership capacity across the sector. In 2010-11, the Agency sponsored three people from the non-government and community sector to participate in an innovative twelve month leadership development program.

Similarly, the Agency has sponsored four Aboriginal staff from the non-government sector to participate in the *Organisational Leadership Excellence for Aboriginal Leaders and Managers Program* facilitated by Tranby Aboriginal College.

The Agency will continue to build on these opportunities.

**Recommendation 55**

That the Minister for Disability Services investigate the cost of providing ageing and disability services in metropolitan and rural areas of NSW, with a view to increasing the funding allocation to ensure equity of service provision in rural areas, if required.

**Supported**

In recognition of variations in service delivery costs across the State the Agency has developed resource allocation formulae and processes which apply the principle of equity to ensure fair access to its services regardless of whether people live in rural or metropolitan areas.

In responding to different planning processes and requirements, the Agency has developed the HACC Resource Allocation Formula (HACC RAF) and the Disability Resource Allocation Business Rules. The main objective is to ensure that there are equitable funding allocations for services across Local Planning Areas (LPAs) and that people from different locations have equitable access to the Agency's services.