

The Hon Carmel Tebbutt MLC

Minister for Community Services
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Disability Services
Minister for Youth



19 AUG 2003

Hon Tony Kelly MLC
Minister for Rural Affairs
Minister for Local Government
Minister for Emergency Services
Minister Assisting the Minister for Natural Resources

Dear ^{Tony} Minister

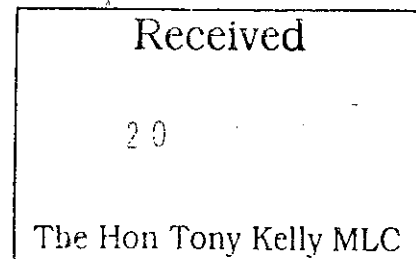
I enclose the Government's response to the Final Report on Disability Services, Making it Happen, prepared by the Standing Committee on Social Issues of the Legislative Council.

I would appreciate you arranging for the response to be tabled as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carmel Tebbutt".

The Hon Carmel Tebbutt MLC
Minister for Community Services
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Disability Services
Minister for Youth



Government Response

The Government welcomes *Making it Happen: Final Report on Disability Services* from the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues.

The Government is encouraged that the Report's recommendations are broadly in line with the key directions being pursued by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and that the Report acknowledges reforms that have already been introduced by the Department to improve services to people with a disability.

As reflected in the report, the period of the inquiry was one of substantial change and reform in disability services in the State. It was during this period that the Government established the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care to develop and deliver the Government's vision for achieving a society in NSW that welcomes and includes people with a disability.

The period of the Inquiry was also marked by record levels of new funding for support services. This has been seen most notably in the expansion of respite care services by \$35 million, funding of supported accommodation for people with priority need for assistance and substantial increases to funding of advocacy and early intervention services.

The Report highlights the importance of people with a disability gaining equitable access to the disability service system. The Government is taking particular steps to improve access for Indigenous people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and those living in rural and remote areas. In addition, the Government is extending services for people with a physical disability resulting from the Premiers Forum on Spinal Cord Injury and Conditions conducted in January. The Government will be expanding services and initiating research through additional funding of \$35.9 million over the next four years.

As acknowledged in the Report, however, responding to the needs of people with a disability who have complex support needs will require significant involvement from the Commonwealth Government.

The Report also focuses on the development of a better service system. The establishment of a regional structure by the Department of Ageing Disability and Home has been a major step taken by the Government to improve the administration of the disability service system since the report was tabled.

The new regional framework and stronger regional presence provides the basis for the establishment of a coordinated intake system to assist people with a disability and their families and carers obtain support services. It will be supported by the introduction of a new Client Information System with funding of \$11.3 million over the next two years.

The Government is also committed to improving early intervention and family support services and behaviour management programs through additional funding of \$7 million over four years.

Respite care services will also increase through the allocation of some \$1.6 million in 2003/04, rising to \$3.2 million in subsequent years.

Notwithstanding the development of the service system in recent years, the Report points to the unmet need for assistance and recognises the importance of increased Commonwealth funding to make further expansion of service capacity possible.

Further comments on the recommendations of the Report are set out below.

CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Recommendation 1

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should, in consultation with representative groups, establish Departmental targets for equitable service access by people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

- *Targets should be established for vacancy management, service growth within existing programs and in new programs*
- *Performance against the targets should be monitored reported upon in the Department's annual report, and*
- *An implementation plan should be developed that outlines the specific steps that will be taken to meet the targets*

Recommendation 2

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should adopt a culturally competent approach to disability services which includes:

- *The development of explicit NESB access strategies as an essential and ongoing component of all its programs and services*
- *A systematic approach to consultation with culturally diverse groups in order to inform policy and program development and implementation*
- *The implementation of mechanisms such as service guidelines, performance measurements and monitoring systems to ensure that funded service providers deliver culturally inclusive disability services.*

Recommendation 3

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should establish a cultural diversity working party comprising representatives of people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse communities to assist the Department with the development and implementation of policy and programs for people from diverse backgrounds.

Recommendation 4

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should undertake a comprehensive information and education campaign for culturally diverse communities to raise their awareness about and access to the range of services for people with disabilities, their families and carers.

Recommendation 5

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should routinely publish information in key community languages at the same time as it does so in English.

Recommendation 6

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should adequately resource the services it funds to undertake translations and utilise interpreting services.

The Government recognises that improvements can be achieved in supporting people with a disability from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

The Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care (DADHC) is developing an Action Plan to improve access to and the responsiveness of services for people with a disability from CALD backgrounds in conjunction with peak groups.

The development of the plan will be supported by a Unit that has been established within DADHC to oversee the development of policy and strategic initiatives and a more systematic approach to consultation with CALD communities.

The Government also acknowledges that people from CALD backgrounds require information about the disability service system and that service providers need to take account of the language and cultural backgrounds of their clients.

DADHC is currently reviewing advocacy and information services to ensure that people with a disability have better access to information and advocacy services and is ensuring that the views of people from CALD communities are being canvassed. In addition, DADHC is developing a new website that will include information on the Department, services, events and general information about disability in key community languages and in interactive formats.

DADHC also requires all organisations submitting proposals for funding to include provision in budgets for translation and interpreter services and is establishing mechanisms to measure the usage of translation and interpreters services through its data collection processes.

These initiatives will build on the recent funding of a state-wide service to undertake cultural awareness training and individual advocacy to facilitate access to services in rural and remote locations.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

Recommendation 7

In consultation with representatives of the Aboriginal community, the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should develop a policy framework for Aboriginal service delivery. The policy framework should outline specific strategies to address:

- *the need for autonomous Aboriginal disability services*
- *the mechanisms that can be put in place to support communities in their governance of services, for example training for boards of management as well as workers who will work in partnership with them*
- *potential mechanisms to achieve a better balance between accountability and flexibility, and*
- *appropriate levels of funding for holistic and community-focused services.*

Recommendation 8

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should undertake a survey of need within Aboriginal communities to determine the level of need for disability services.

An equally strong commitment is being applied to improving accessibility of services and supports for Aboriginal communities. In this regard:

- *A state-wide Aboriginal Service Region is being created to incorporate and build on the existing Aboriginal Home Care network that currently has 29 service outlets and employs over 300 Aboriginal staff, all of whom report through Aboriginal management. The expansion of these arrangements will improve the reach and delivery of support to Aboriginal communities, and*
- *An Aboriginal Policy Unit has been established with its key priority the development of an Aboriginal Policy Framework.*

The Government acknowledges that Indigenous people with a disability require support that is delivered in a culturally appropriate manner.

The Government is committed to the establishment of a state-wide Indigenous service delivery network within DADHC that builds on the success of the Home Care Service, the largest provider of services to Aboriginal people with a disability and older people in the state.

DADHC has also recently established an Aboriginal Unit whose priority will be to develop an Aboriginal Policy Framework for the delivery of services to older Indigenous people, Indigenous people with a disability and their carers.

In addition, the Government is supporting the establishment of an Indigenous disability advocacy and information service in conjunction with the Commonwealth.

Using its network of Aboriginal services and staff the Department will engage with Aboriginal people to develop the mix and spread of services required to meet local needs.

RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS

Recommendation 9

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should, in consultation with the Department of Transport, develop a rural transport strategy to improve the availability of community transport for people with disability in rural and remote areas. The strategy should include:

- *A process for identifying demand for community transport at a regional level,*
- *Population-based funding benchmarks for the provision of community transport.*

Recommendation 10

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and NSW Health should develop a comprehensive rural and regional therapy strategy to improve the availability and effectiveness of therapy services in regional areas. The strategy should:

- *Ensure that policy and eligibility criteria for access to therapy is consistent across DADHC Regions and Area Health Services and that services gaps are eliminated*
- *Provide specific funding to cover therapist travel time*
- *Examine ways to maximise the use of available therapist time and skills through greater use of consultancy models of therapy and recruitment of local therapy assistants*
- *Address the need for incentive measures to attract therapists to live and work in non-metropolitan areas.*

Recommendation 11

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should develop a rural and remote area service delivery strategy to enhance the level of support available to people with disability and their carers in rural and remote communities. The strategy should be developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including people with disability, indigenous groups and regional advocacy organisations. The strategy should:

- *Ensure that planning and resource allocation for rural and remote services takes sufficient account of the costs of service provision in those areas*
- *Clarify the role of government and non-government services in providing services in rural and remote areas, and the level of support provided to non-government services in these areas*
- *Examine ways to promote innovation and flexible service delivery in rural and remote areas.*

The implementation of DADHC's regional structure will significantly improve the delivery of disability services in rural and remote areas.

In relation to transport difficulties facing people in rural areas, the Government is developing a Rural and Regional Transport Strategy through the Rural and Regional Passenger Transport Group. A draft Strategy, *Connecting the Country*, articulates an approach to coordinating passenger transport and the development of Resource Kits with information on public transport services available in 470 towns across rural and regional NSW.

DADHC is also working with NSW Health and the Department of Education and Training to develop integrated therapy services for children and young people with a disability, including substantial investment in integrating services across non-government providers. In addition, DADHC is delivering therapy services in rural and regional areas with assistance from the Early Childhood Intervention Co-ordination Program, a collaborative arrangement with NSW Health, the Department of Education and Training, and Early Intervention Service Providers.

The Government is also committed to improving access to specialist and mainstream services for people with a disability living in rural and remote areas through the expansion of

the Local Support Co-ordination program. This program assists individuals and families to identify their needs and manage their support, drawing on local services and resources.

PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITY

Recommendation 12

The level of subsidy provided under the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme should be increased by 5 percent per year over a period of five years until it reaches a level of 75 percent.

Recommendation 13

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should immediately review the process for allocation of attendant care packages in order to remove delays and ensure that existing packages are allocated as soon as possible.

Recommendation 14

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should, in consultation with relevant user groups and workforce representatives, undertake a review of personal care funding and services to identify ways to improve their accessibility, efficiency and flexibility. The review should specifically examine ways to ensure that adequate safeguards for people with disability and workers are retained within a more flexible support structure.

Recommendation 15

The Government should provide adequate funding for personal care, aids and appliances and therapy services, using population-based formulas that estimate need.

Recommendation 16

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and NSW Health should develop joint models of support for people with complex care needs which comply with the Disability Services Act 1993, and which are delivered through the disability service system.

The Government announced a substantial increase in funding for services to support for people with a physical disability earlier this year. The Government conducted the highly successful Premier's Forum on Spinal Cord Injury and Conditions in January this year and announced additional funding of \$35.9 million over the next four years to fund research and support for people with a physical disability. This commitment includes funding for an additional 100 places in the Attendant Care Program.

DADHC has also established a Working Group to advise on service models and arrangements that provide reliable and flexible support for people with a physical disability.

The Government also provides more than \$35 million through the Home and Community Care and Disability Services programs for the delivery of personal care services. A further \$16.5 million is available for the provision of aids and equipment under the Program of Aids for Disabled People (PADP) administered by NSW Health and \$17 million for the provision of therapy and early intervention services to people with a disability, including an additional \$1.6 million recently allocated for therapy service co-ordination across NSW.

In relation to the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme, the NSW Government supports nearly 1.3 million trips each year. Consideration is being given to investing in new technology to improve the administration of the scheme.

To improve accessible transport, the government will continue to implement the Accessible Transport Action Plan over the next four years to establish 24 Easy Access railway stations, 400 more accessible buses and a further 400 accessible taxis. In addition, the Government will tighten eligibility for disabled parking permits to improve access to car parking under the Mobility Parking Scheme, in consultation with disability support organisations.

The Government has also announced that it will be developing accommodation options within the scope of relevant legislation to meet the needs of people with a disability with high support needs.

AGEING AND DISABILITY INTERFACES

Recommendation 17

The New South Wales and Commonwealth Governments should collaborate to develop an agreed process and funding arrangement to address the inappropriate placement of younger people with disability in nursing homes. As a first step, they should develop and pilot joint funding models for priority groups of current residents.

Recommendation 18

The Commonwealth Government should allow people with disability to become eligible for Commonwealth ageing programs from age 55.

Recommendation 19

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Government, should develop a plan of action to address the diverse needs of people with disability who are ageing. This should be based on principles of flexibility and collaboration between the aged care and disability sectors and include the establishment of jointly funded models of support.

The Government accepts that residential aged care facilities are not suitable places where young people should be living. However, the medical and support needs of these young people are very complex, and better models of care need to be developed to meet their requirements.

The Government is working towards the development of a CSTDA Bilateral Agreement that will focus on young people with a disability living in residential aged care facilities and older people with a long-term disability that are unable to gain access to aged care facilities.

In relation to people with a disability who are ageing, DADHC is implementing the Commonwealth Aged Care Innovative and Flexible Places Pool 2002/2003 to assist older people with a long-term disability who require aged care services and live in State-funded group homes and large residential centres. DADHC has also established a working group with key service providers to develop strategies to meet the accommodation and other needs of people with a disability who are ageing.

The Government supports people with a disability having equitable access to appropriate aged care services as they grow older and will continue to seek Commonwealth support for this approach.

PEOPLE WITH ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY

Recommendation 20

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should acknowledge people with acquired brain injury as part of the target group for the Disability Services Program.

Recommendation 21

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, in collaboration with the Motor Accident Authority, Workcover, NSW Health and Treasury, should develop a funding and policy framework for strategically addressing the needs of people with brain injury across New South Wales, in order to improve their access to the range of disability and mainstream support services, and to brain-injury specific services. In particular, this framework should consider:

- *Living skills and behaviour/social skills development services*
- *Accommodation, respite, case management, meaningful day activities, education and employment supports*

People with an acquired brain injury are specifically included in the target group for disability services administered by DADHC, and a number of specialist services for people with an acquired brain injury are currently funded.

NSW Health also provides significant support to people with an acquired brain injury through the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program (BIRP).

DADHC is working with the Motor Accident Authority to explore flexible responses across the mainstream and specialist health and disability sectors to support people with a spinal cord injury and people with an acquired brain injury, their families and carers.

A two year Transition Rehabilitation Pilot Project with funding of \$2 million will be established in 2003/04 to assist people who have sustained major injury to move from acute care and rehabilitation into the community. The Project will focus initially on people with spinal cord injury and people with an acquired brain injury in the second year.

DADHC is also continuing to work with NSW Health and the Motor Accident Authority to develop models of support that address the needs of people with more complex needs.

PROGRESS IN PRIORITY AREAS

Recommendation 22

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should, in consultation with stakeholders, identify those recommendations of the Committee's earlier reports, The Group Homes Proposal and A Matter of Priority, that remain relevant and progress their implementation.

Recommendations from *The Group Homes Proposal* and *A Matter of Priority* Reports have largely been addressed through the completion of the Group Homes Project and the commencement of the devolution program in 2000.

Those recommendations that were supported and are still in the process of implementation continue to be monitored by DADHC.

Unmet need

Recommendation 23

Taking into account existing information about unmet demand for accommodation and respite services, the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should fund additional respite services.

Recommendation 24

Following the introduction of new Minimum Data Set collection procedures, the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should undertake a survey of the supply and demand for respite services in New South Wales to measure the effect of recent reforms and to provide a basis for planning for service growth. The survey should:

- *Be undertaken on a regional basis*
- *Determine whether there is an appropriate balance between flexible and centre-based respite services*
- *Examine the extent to which respite services meet the needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with physical disability and people with acquired brain injury*

The Government accepts that the disability service system is facing growing demand. In response, substantial additional funding has been provided in recent years.

Nearly \$61 million was expended on respite care services in 2002/03, representing an increase of about \$40 million since 1996/97, or more than 180%. As a result, assistance can

be delivered to more than 600 people on any given day. The Government has also improved the flexibility of respite care by developing better in home support options.

Support for respite services has been further enhanced in the 2003/04 State budget. An additional \$1.6 million has been allocated for 2003/04, rising to \$3.2 million in subsequent years to continue to build the capacity of respite care services.

Assessing the impact of these new services has been incomplete due to the reliance on nationally agreed data collections that are based on a one-day census to measure service use. However, the recent implementation of new data collections that provide a continuous measurement of service supply and usage will address this concern. Once implemented the new statistical collection will not only provide data on capacity and usage, but on trends and the extent to which differing population groups are accessing support.

Devolution

Recommendation 25

The devolution project should be managed on a centre by centre basis and provide residents of each centre with the opportunity to remain with a single service provider. Where appropriate, existing services should be funded to support residents in the community, provided that:

- *Residents who do not wish to remain with their current service provider are able to move to another service provider*
- *Flexibility within the system is maintained so that people have the opportunity to change their support arrangements following their initial move into community living*

Recommendation 26

As a matter of urgency, residential care workers should be employed to work alongside nursing staff in large Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care residential centres.

Recommendation 27

The next stage of the devolution project should commence immediately. Identification of services to be included in the second round of devolution should be based on consultation and include those services that are strategically placed to move forward rapidly on the devolution project.

Recommendation 28

A devolution unit should be established within the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care to manage the devolution process. Resources and staffing for this unit should be sufficient to ensure that all large residential centres for people with disability are able to complete their transition into community-based services that conform to the Disability Services Act 1993 before 2010.

Recommendation 29

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should establish a structured consultation framework to support the devolution process. Key elements of the framework should include:

- *A State Devolution Reference Group to provide strategic support to the devolution process*
- *A Local Reference Group for each centre to support devolution at a service level*

Recommendation 30

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should establish a process to enable residents of large residential centres that are not currently engaged in the devolution project to move into community-based accommodation as soon as possible.

- *Where necessary, funding of large centres should be quarantined to ensure their viability*
- *All residents of large residential centres, and their families or advocates, should be advised that they have the opportunity to register an interest in moving to community-based accommodation*

The Government is continuing to improve the management of the devolution of residents of institutions to the community to meet our commitment to close all large residential centres. The first stage of the transition into the community of people living in large residential institutions will be completed by 2004 by which time more than 400 residents will have relocated.

DADHC is working with the residents and their families, advocates, guardians and staff of the fifteen large residential centres included in stage one of devolution to plan future living arrangements. Arrangements for more than half of the people included in the Stage 1 devolution have been made since the program began in 2000, with more than a third already relocated to accommodation in the community.

Consistent with the Report's recommendation, DADHC has adopted a project management approach to the relocation of residents, which involves centre-by-centre closures for those facilities included in Stage 1. This work is being managed within DADHC's Regional structure so as to ensure that the focus of the Department's activity is on residents and their families.

Decisions about service providers and locations are being made with a focus on the needs of individuals and as part of the consultation with residents, parents and others on the devolution program generally. This includes consideration of flexible and innovative models of support for people participating in the devolution process, particularly those with high medical support needs where collaborative work with NSW Health is essential to build up appropriate service models of support.

A shortage of nurses is impacting on the delivery of health services across the health, disability and community care systems. The Government has taken a number of steps to address this situation, improving wages and conditions of nurses employed across the government sector and establishing the Nurses Re-connect program.

While DADHC supports increased representation of Residential Care Workers to perform personal care tasks and other program functions, this approach would need to be considered in the context of the care needs of residents living in these centres. DADHC is continuing to work with the NSW Nurses Association to explore opportunities that achieve an appropriate use of nursing staff to support residents of large residential centres.

DADHC will shortly be establishing a working group comprised of experts from across the sector and individuals with academic expertise to examine progress to date and inform future planning.

SYSTEMS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

Recommendation 31

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should establish a general intake and support coordination system for people with disability. The functions of the system should include:

- *Receipt of requests for support and assistance*
- *Assessment and prioritisation of requests*
- *Referral and information provision*
- *Support coordination*
- *Case management*
- *Vacancy management*

The general intake system should provide a point of contact with other human service systems such as health, education, community services and aged care.

Recommendation 32

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should develop a comprehensive communication strategy to ensure that the community is aware of the existence and the scope of the new general intake and support coordination system. This strategy should take into account the communication needs of people with disability including people from diverse cultural linguistic backgrounds and people in rural and remote areas.

Recommendation 33

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should establish an implementation group with representation from key stakeholders, and in particular people with disability, to assist with the design and implementation of the general intake and support coordination system.

Recommendation 34

Additional funding should be provided to the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care to support the implementation of a general intake and support coordination system. In particular resources are necessary to support:

- *The development of information and business systems to support the system*
- *Additional staffing to support the intake process and support coordination roles*
- *The formal separation of regional offices from the Department of Community Services*

Recommendation 35

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should ensure that clear and transparent policy and decision-making guidelines are developed to support the operation of the system and that an accessible system for review and appeal is established.

The Government is committed to improving pathways to services and that are managed in an equitable and sustainable manner.

The implementation of DADHC's Corporate and Regional Management Framework will allow the Department to work towards:

- Improving the responsiveness of mainstream services to the needs of people with a disability and their carers and developing innovative local supports that link families to services already available in their local communities;
- Introducing consistent intake and assessment processes across programs and regions, including improved vacancy management systems;
- Developing locally based strategies and plans to address current unmet need and expected increase in demand for services in the future; and
- Consulting people with a disability and their carers to assist the development and implementation of new systems and services.

The reforms are being supported by the introduction of a new Client Information System with funding of \$11.3 million over the next two years.

DIRECT SERVICE DELIVERY BY DADHC**Recommendation 36**

The Government should clarify its role as a direct provider of services to people with disability with reference to the following principles:

- *Existing clients of the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care services should be able to remain with the government provider if they choose to do so*
- *The government provider should not exclude people who would otherwise be within their target group but who do not have an intellectual disability*
- *The government provider should provide community-based support options for people with high or complex support needs, risky behaviours or offending behaviours*
- *The government provider should support people with disability who are unable to find alternative supports, including people in rural and remote areas who cannot access other services*
- *Guidelines for access to therapy, behavioural and other allied supports provided by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should be developed to ensure that access to these services is provided on an equitable basis to people with disability*

Recommendation 37

Specific steps should be taken to ensure that there is a clear structural separation between the general intake and support coordination and the service delivery operations of the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care. Consideration should be given to separating the management of clinical services, including therapy and behavioural intervention, from the supported accommodation and respite services provided by the Department

The creation of DADHC draws together the delivery of disability services by government and non-government providers under a single administration. This provides better opportunities to ensure that resources are equitably distributed.

In addition, the implementation of DADHC's regional management structure provides a strong impetus to developing service networks across government and non government service providers.

DADHC has also taken steps to ensure a separation between its direct service delivery and grant administration functions as part of its program of organisational reform and the implementation of its new Corporate and Regional Framework. Separate service streams are now in place for the following functions:

- *Accommodation and Respite* - responsible for the Government run accommodation and centre-based respite services.
- *Home Care* - responsible for the Government run provider of home and community care programs, being those provided by the Home Care Service of NSW.
- *Community Access* - responsible for integrated service access across all providers (government and non-government), facilitation of community participation solutions for individuals and early intervention and prevention strategies, including providing therapy, behavioural intervention and community support services.
- *Service Development and Planning* - responsible for monitoring quality and effectiveness of service providers (government and non-government) and building service capacity.

SUPPORTING NON-GOVERNMENT PROVIDERS

Recommendation 38

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should, in consultation with service users, advocates and representatives of non-government services, develop a new funding model for non-government services so as to:

- *Provide an equitable and consistent cost base for service delivery*
- *Support the autonomy of service users and their ability to exercise choice about their living arrangements*
- *Promote the long-term sustainability of non-government organisations*
- *Provide a basis for greater flexibility in the use of funding to support people with disability.*

The new funding model should identify the additional cost of service delivery in rural and remote areas so as to provide a basis for additional funding for these areas

Recommendation 39

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should undertake a review of existing funding to non-government service providers to ensure that all clients of non-government disability services are funded in a consistent manner

Recommendation 40

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should review the use of expressions of interest to purchase services and develop a new approach to service procurement

Recommendation 41

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, should prepare an industry development plan for non-government service providers. The plan should address:

- *The need for funding reform referred to in Recommendation 38*
- *The need for a new approach to procurement referred to in Recommendation 40*
- *Ways to support the infrastructure needs of smaller organisations and the need to maintain a mix of large, medium and small organisations within the sector*
- *Ways to support services in regional, rural and remote areas*

- *Strategies to address the needs of people who are under-represented within the service system, including people with physical disability and acquired brain injury and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities*
- *The role of the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care in supporting the non-government sector*
- *The relationship between the intake, support coordination and direct service delivery roles of the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and non-government service providers*

Recommendation 42

As part of the industry plan referred to in Recommendation 41, the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should develop an agreed strategy to address the training needs of non-government organisations. The strategy should ensure that:

- *Services have the capacity to provide ongoing training and development for staff as part of their core business*
- *Adequate training can be accessed in rural and remote areas*
- *Services are able to obtain appropriate management training*
- *Funding to support the costs of training is incorporated into the funding base of non-government providers*

The Government values the role that non government organisations play in delivering Government funded disability services. The Government's commitment was clearly demonstrated in its response to the salary increases to the Social and Community Services Award determined by the NSW Industrial Relations Commission in late 2001.

The Government worked with representatives of the non-government sector to develop a package of assistance totalling \$290 million over five years.

In addition, the Government is undertaking a number of initiatives that are directed to supporting non government service providers. These include:

- *Capacity Building for Non-Government Organisations* –to enhance the organisational capacities of non-profit, non-government organisations in NSW
- *The Grants Administration Review Project* – to streamline and simplify Government's funding and accountability relationship with non-Government organisations
- *The Better Service Delivery Project* – to provide a common information platform for human services agencies and their non-Government partners to share information and access services for their clients.

DADHC is also improving its approach to the allocation of funding to incorporate a combination of contemporary purchasing and grant administration arrangements.

In addition, DADHC is working with industry bodies such as ACROD and the Community Care Industry Council to advance issues of industry development. DADHC and its industry partners have developed working partnerships with the NSW Departments of Education and Training, and Community Services, and Health Industry Training Advisory Boards.

OTHER SYSTEMIC ISSUES

Monitoring and quality assurance

Recommendation 43

The new Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care service-monitoring system should be designed around the measurement of client outcomes and client satisfaction.

- *Performance indicators should be developed that reflect the Principles and Applications of Principles of the Disability Services Act 1993 and measure qualitative outcomes for individuals rather than narrowly conceived service outputs*
- *Monitoring processes should ensure that service user views and satisfaction are actively canvassed as part of routine service monitoring*

- *Monitoring processes should be consistent across government and non-government service providers*
- *Specific steps should be taken to ensure that there is a clear structural separation between the monitoring, service access and service delivery operations of DADHC*
- *To promote transparency, consideration should be given to whether some or all aspects of service monitoring should be undertaken by an external body as recommended by the Law Reform Commission*
- *Systems should be developed to ensure that information collected through monitoring activities is acted upon at an individual level and is also used systemically as part of the planning, policy and industry development responsibilities of the Department*
- *Resources for monitoring should be adequate and linked to the level of funding provided for direct service delivery*

Recommendation 44

Funding methodology for Community Visitors should be developed that links the number of visitable hours to the number of clients of visitable services. Remuneration for Community Visitors should automatically be adjusted to reflect wage increases for public sector employees.

Recommendation 45

Consideration should be given to either extending the coverage of the Community Visitor Scheme to respite, semi-independent living and other accommodation support services funded by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care or developing a similar client-focused monitoring scheme for these services.

The Government is committed to improving service standards and quality assurance across the disability service system. DADHC has developed an Integrated Monitoring System following a review of monitoring of disability services in 2001. The System provides a consistent framework within which the monitoring of services can be conducted, taking into account users views and the results of monitoring activities including by Community Visitors.

The System also improves the way in which information is collected, exchanged and combined to provide insight into performance. It is intended to stimulate a culture of improvement in the quality and performance of the service system.

The Integrated Monitoring System is being implemented through the regional structure of DADHC and is supported by a Standards and Quality Unit within the Central Office of the Department.

The remuneration arrangements for Community Visitors are a matter for the Ombudsman to consider within the context of the integration of the former functions of the Community Services Commission with the Ombudsman's Office.

Whole of government commitment

Recommendation 46

The Government should review the NSW Disability Policy Framework as a means of achieving a whole of government approach to policy and service delivery for people with disability. In particular the review should consider:

- *The extent of progress in achieving the objectives outlined in the Framework*
- *Whether the Framework is effective in addressing service gaps for people with disability*
- *Whether the current reporting and accountability requirements of the framework are an appropriate means to achieve compliance with section 9 of the Disability Services Act 1993.*

Recommendation 47

In order to enhance the whole of government commitment to support people with disability, immediate consideration should be given to implementing Recommendations 13, 14 and 15 of the New South Wales Law Reform Commission, Report 91, Review of the Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW).

Recommendation 48

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should develop formal Memoranda of Understanding with all relevant departments, including NSW Health and the Department of Community Services, to clarify their responsibilities to support people with disability and ensure that there is a continuum of service across program boundaries.

The Government's *Disability Policy Framework* guides government agencies in making their services accessible to people with a disability. Some 111 agencies have prepared Disability Action Plans to improve the accessibility of their services.

The Government recognises, however, that in some cases more fundamental relationships are necessary to attract the support that may be necessary to achieve accessible services. To improve the whole of government response DADHC is developing partnerships with key agencies including NSW Health, and the Departments of Education and Training, Planning, Housing and Transport.

In addition, through the Human Services CEOs Cluster Group, key priority areas have been identified where agencies will work together to bring improved outcomes for people with a disability.

The Government's *Better Service Delivery Project* is also delivering a shared Information Technology platform for government and non-government human service providers to facilitate information exchange and referral of clients. The goal of this project is to ensure seamless service delivery for clients, allowing people to access the most appropriate supports to meet their needs regardless of the program or agency from which these services are sourced.

Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement

Recommendation 49

As part of the negotiation for the forthcoming Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement, the Government should:

- *Seek additional funding from the Commonwealth as a matter of urgency both to address unmet need and to accommodate cost increases in disability services*
- *Seek to develop an approach to funding under the CSTDA that links growth funding from the Commonwealth to identified unmet need*
- *Specifically seek additional funding for supported employment programs.*

Recommendation 50

In negotiating the forthcoming Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement, the Government should seek to ensure that the new agreement provides greater clarity about the respective roles of the States and the Commonwealth to fund specific programs and services and to fund increases in the cost of providing services.

The Government is committed to the development of a third Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement to provide an adequate and sustainable funding base for disability services in NSW.

The Commonwealth has offered to provide an additional \$125 million for all States and Territories over the next five years. During negotiations, the States and Territories have pressed for additional funds to be allocated by the Commonwealth.

The Government is, however, keen to finalise the Agreement to bring about certainty for people with a disability and service providers. In addition, the Government is seeking to secure bi-lateral agreements to improve support for:

- Young people with a disability in their transition to employment; and

- Young people with a disability living in residential aged care facilities and older people with a long-term disability.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND INDEPENDENCE

Recommendation 51

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should develop an appropriately resourced model of holistic support to provide planned and responsive support to children with disability and their families, which includes the following elements:

- *The development of care plans for children with disability within their family unit*
- *Support coordination that focuses on the needs of the whole family*
- *Access to appropriately resourced early intervention services*
- *Behaviour management support*
- *Planned access to additional support during key life transitions*
- *Provision of flexible short-term care for the children*

Recommendation 52

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and the Department of Community Services (DoCS) should jointly develop an agreed and consistent approach to the funding and support of children with disability in out-of-home care.

Recommendation 53

The Government should amend the Disability Services Act 1993 to include a part for children and young people with disability in accordance with recommendations 30, 31, 32, 34, and 35 of the New South Wales Law Reform Commission's review of the Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW).

Recommendation 54

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and NSW Health should complete the implementation of the Care for Carers Program. The outcomes of the Care for Carers Program should be evaluated to determine whether it is an effective program and whether it is sufficiently resourced.

Recommendation 55

The State and Commonwealth Governments should develop a joint and cooperative approach to meeting unmet need for meaningful daytime activity. This approach should be based on the following principles:

- *Growth funding from both the Commonwealth and the State will be required to address unmet need for meaningful daytime activity*
- *The primary emphasis should be on supporting people with disability to access employment*
- *People with a disability who are not able to access supported employment services should have guaranteed and continuing access to day programs*

Recommendation 56

Additional recurrent funding should be provided to the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care to ensure that the Disability Service Program has sufficient capacity to support people with lower needs.

Recommendation 57

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should in consultation with the Department of Community Services, the Cabinet Office and other relevant agencies develop and fund a support strategy for parents with disability. The strategy should include the following elements:

- *The development and provision of training for Department of Community Services child protection caseworkers on ways to support parents with disability and their children*
- *Provision of additional funding to the Parent Access Program to enable it to operate on a full-time basis*
- *Development of service access guidelines to ensure that parents with disability receive priority access to Home Care services and support*
- *State-wide implementation of the Home Learning Program as a support model for parents with disability*
- *The establishment of a residential supported accommodation service to provide short, medium and long-term support for parents with disability*

The Government supports children and young people with disabilities in NSW, with funding of more than \$180 million allocated each year.

The framework for the delivery of this support has been strengthened by the release of a children and young people's policy – *'Living in the community - putting children first'* by the Government.

The policy sets the framework for ensuring that children and young people with disabilities are able to remain living as far as possible with their families through the provision of more appropriate services. It focuses on four key strategies:

- Giving children with a disability the best start in life possible by providing effective childhood intervention.
- Building the capacity of families to care for their child with a disability.
- Building the capacity of communities, disability and generic services to provide support.
- Improving the quality of information available to families and carers.

The Government recently supplemented the directions set out in the policy by introducing the Early Intervention and Family Disability Support program within DADHC.

In 2002, the Minister for Community Services also announced the establishment of a Ministerial Advisory Committee to provide advice on specific issues in community services. The Committee has already met on several occasions and its first task is to provide advice on progressing the proclamation of the remaining sections of the *NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*.

While the Government has announced that a number of Sections of the Act are to be proclaimed, further consultations are being undertaken with those affected, including people with a disability, prior to the Committee providing advice on those sections that relate to voluntary out of home care.

The Government also provides substantial funding for the *Care for Carers Program*. In the 1999 State Budget, the Carr Government committed \$12.9 million over four years for carer initiatives and has increased annual recurrent funding to the *NSW Care for Carers Program* to more than \$5 million from 2001/02.

The *Care for Carers Program* has assisted:

- carers across NSW by supporting an initial 25 demonstration projects that focussed on carer education and information. Following evaluation, an implementation plan has been developed for the roll out of longer term projects and services;
- young carers through projects conducted by Carers NSW such as camps, phone counselling and newsletters.
- carers of people with a mental illness through projects administered by the Centre for Mental Health and community organisations.

In addition, as indicated previously, the Government is seeking to establish a Bilateral Agreement with the Commonwealth Government under the third Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA) to develop a joint approach to assisting the transition of young people with a disability from school to work.

Through its existing programs DADHC funds a range of home and community care and flexible respite services that are available to support parents with a disability.

SUPPORTING INNOVATION AND RESEARCH

Recommendation 58

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should establish an innovation unit with quarantined funding to develop and pilot innovative support and funding models, including models that involve substantial self-management of funds, for people with disability.

- *The unit should be directly accountable to the Department's Executive*
- *Procedures should be established to ensure that the outcomes of evaluation are assessed, disseminated and where appropriate, incorporated into the operational policy and programs of the Department*
- *Details of projects that are funded and the outcomes of evaluation should be made public*
- *An Expert Advisory Panel on Innovation should be appointed to assist the Department in this regard.*

Recommendation 59

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should establish a clear and transparent research agenda to foster innovation, best practice and leadership within disability services. The research agenda should include:

- *A program of annual disability research grants*
- *An annual scholarship program to support further study by staff of government and non-government services.*

The NSW Government supports the establishment of an evidence base to inform the development of support and funding models for people with a disability and their carers.

A policy innovation focus has been established with DADHC to support the ongoing development of new service solutions and approaches. In addition, DADHC has established a Research and Development policy (including a program of research grants), and an Evaluation Toolbox for understanding the success and potential of new projects.

Planning

Recommendation 60

The Government should, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, develop a State Disability Plan for New South Wales. The Plan should identify the long-term vision for people with disability and identify the outcomes that both generic and specialist disability services should achieve for people with disability in New South Wales. The plan should also outline a process for achieving the complete implementation of the Disability Services Act 1993.

Recommendation 61

In consultation with people with disability and other relevant stakeholders, the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care should develop and publish a comprehensive forward plan for specialist disability services. The plan should address:

- *The type and mix of services that will be provided to support people with disability*
- *The level of demand for these services and the level of supply required to meet this demand*
- *Pathways for access to services and eligibility criteria for services*
- *Policy for service development and service provision*
- *What the role of the various participants in delivering these services should be, in particular what the respective roles of the government and non-government sectors should be*
- *Points at which disability services intersect with other service systems, such as health, education and aged care, and protocols to ensure that service gaps do not exist*
- *Workforce development for disability services*
- *How the system will be administered and funded*

The Government accepts that solid planning must underpin the further development of the disability services system in NSW.

The continued implementation of DADHC's Corporate and Regional Framework will ensure that the disability services system responds more equitably and effectively for people with a disability.