

**DADHC response to the NSW Legislative Council Social Issues
Inquiry into Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage**

12 ii) Disability services: Making it happen (November 2002)

In its response to this inquiry the Government acknowledged that Indigenous people with a disability require support that is delivered in a culturally appropriate manner. The response stated that:

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

Given that this Committee heard repeatedly about the lack of Aboriginal specific services for Aboriginal people with disability, how has this been done and what has been achieved to date.

There have been three recommendations made by two previous inquiries relating specifically to Aboriginal issues within DADHC. All recommendations have been implemented. The recommendations originated from the "Making It Happen" Report 2002 and the "Early Intervention into Learning Difficulties" Report 2003.

The recommendations were:

Recommendation 7 (Making It Happen 2002):

- that DADHC should develop a policy framework for Aboriginal service delivery.

The policy framework should outline specific strategies to address:

- the need for autonomous Aboriginal services;
- the mechanisms to support communities in their governance of services;
- potential mechanisms to achieve a better balance between accountability and flexibility;
- appropriate levels of funding for holistic and community-focused services.

Implementation:

This recommendation was implemented in full through DADHC's *Aboriginal Policy Framework* which was released in 2005. The Framework continues to be DADHC's key Aboriginal specific policy that provides guiding principles and strategies.

Recommendation 8 (Making It Happen 2002):

- that DADHC should undertake a survey of need within Aboriginal communities to determine the level of need for disability services.

Implementation:

Through the Home and Community Care program (HACC), DADHC identifies needs for specific services for Aboriginal communities through HACC planning rounds that inform the development of regional funding plans which, previously occurred annually and now occur on a triennial basis.

- In 2006, DADHC provided non-recurrent funding to the NSW Aboriginal Disability Network (ADN) to undertake a comprehensive report on the prevalence of disabilities within Aboriginal communities. The outcomes were to determine the need for Aboriginal specific disability services. DADHC recently received this report and is currently considering the recommendations. The DADHC Deputy Director General is scheduled to meet the Executive Officer of ADN.
- Funds have also been provided to the Indigenous Disability Advocacy Service (IDAS) to produce; a website and fact sheets on disabilities within Aboriginal communities and; a disability services directory for Aboriginal communities providing information to Aboriginal people with a disability about available services. This project is due for completion in 2008.

Recommendation 11 (Early Intervention into Learning Difficulties 2003):

- that the Government should enhance funding to improve access to children's services for children with a disability, including Aboriginal children.

Implementation:

DADHC provided over \$12 million per annum to children's services before the conception of the *Stronger Together* plan. Since *Stronger Together*, DADHC has allocated:

- Almost \$11 million over five years for the Extending Early Childhood Intervention Initiative, which aims to further develop and expand early intervention services for children with a disability aged 0-6 years.
- Non-recurrent funds of approximately \$3 million in the 2006/07 financial year for early childhood intervention services.
- Recurrent funding of \$8 million over four years announced in the 2007/2008 financial year. \$4 million will be used over four years to increase the quality of early childhood intervention services, and \$4 million will be used over four years to develop innovative models to expand the range of service options available to children with a disability and their families.
- \$2 million in 2008/09 to trial a new way of assisting families to support their child with a disability.

- All tenders were required to demonstrate their capacity to respond to the needs of Aboriginal families.
- In 2007/08, DADHC continued to incorporate the needs of Aboriginal people in planning processes. General and Aboriginal specific programs were developed and implemented under the HACC program to respond to the needs of Aboriginal communities.
- In Disability Services, DADHC has strengthened purchasing processes, particularly in family, children and post school program services, to require that tenders for new services, demonstrate their capacity to meet the needs of Aboriginal clients as part of a mainstream provision.
- The needs of Aboriginal people are addressed in *Stronger Together* as well as in *Better Together*, which is the whole of government plan on disability.
- *Stronger Together* focuses on improving Aboriginal access to mainstream community support and accommodation services, as well as enhancing specialist services.

A number of Aboriginal specialist services have been established in a range of new program areas, such as:

- the Aboriginal Intensive Family Support Program which will provide a short, intensive and flexible in-home service. By working in an intensive way with families at a risk of breakdown, the goal is to reduce the need to remove children from their home environment, to coordinate ongoing supports and to provide positive experiences for the child. This Program is currently being delivered in four areas, South West Sydney, Dubbo, Moree and in the Kempsey/greater Taree area;
 - the Leaving Care Program is also helping young people aged 18 and over with a disability to make a successful transition from the care of the Minister for Community Services. A number of organisations have been identified to provide Aboriginal-specific services to ensure that the most culturally appropriate assistance is provided to young people and their families during this adjustment period; and
 - the Coordination Program for Older Parent Carers that provides flexible and regular respite to parents over 45 years of age who care for Aboriginal adults with a disability
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- The Aboriginal Information Kit, *Shoulder to Shoulder* offers a culturally appropriate information booklet and DVD to assist Aboriginal families with a child or young person with a disability requiring services.
 - Aboriginal people are a priority group within the HACC program. The number of Aboriginal people receiving HACC services increased by 30 per cent in 2006/07.

- A substantial amount of the HACC service expansion funding for 2007/08 was for Aboriginal community transport services.
- DADHC continues to explore innovative models of tailored service delivery to better meet the needs of Aboriginal communities.
- For example, DADHC and the NSW Ministry of Transport are currently working together to establish an independent community controlled Aboriginal community transport service in the area of South West Sydney. Once established, it is hoped that this will serve as a model for service provision across the Region.
- Additionally in 2007/08, the Department funded the Community Transport Organisation to support the NSW Aboriginal Transport Network.

The NSW Aboriginal Transport Network provides:

- support and information to Aboriginal Transport Workers employed in Community Transport Projects (CTP) and to relevant government departments through the Community Transport Organisation; and
- tailored training over the next two years to network members including:
 - submission writing
 - staff management
 - governance
 - conflict resolution and negotiation
 - policy and procedure development
 - data collection and analysis
 - HACC, CTP and Health funding usage/policy
 - budgeting
- The largest HACC service provider to Aboriginal people is Aboriginal Home Care. In 2007/08, Aboriginal Home Care provided services from eight branches and 23 service outlets throughout NSW, to the value of approximately \$9 million.
- Services provided by Aboriginal Home Care to Aboriginal communities include:
 - domestic assistance
 - personal care
 - respite care
 - social support
 - case management services
 - food services
 - minor home and garden maintenance
 - transport and intensive in-home support during times of crisis.
- The implementation of the Home Care Aboriginal Assessment Framework continues to make improvements to the access of support services for the frail aged and young people with a disability in indigenous communities. Face-to-face

assessments are being conducted in the client's own home by trained Aboriginal assessors.

- DADHC continues to improve its capacity to work with Aboriginal communities in interagency partnerships, through the Aboriginal policy framework and the Aboriginal consultation strategy, maintaining and strengthening the representation of Aboriginal people on key advisory bodies and regular consultation with the NSW Home and Community Care Aboriginal Gathering Committee (convened by a Home and Community Care funded position within the NSW Council of Social Service).
- DADHC continues to work with National Disability Services to develop and pilot practical resources to assist disability services to improve access for Aboriginal people. As a result, a consultative committee of key Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal disability non-government organisations and DADHC has been formed to support the project. Two pilots are currently underway. One in the DADHC Metro South Region and the other in parts of the Southern Region including the Local Government Areas of Wollongong, Kiama, Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla and Bega Valley Shire.
- DADHC has funded People With Disability NSW to auspice the NSW Aboriginal Disability Network to assist in identifying key issues and challenges facing Aboriginal people with a disability.
- DADHC supported a number of learning and development initiatives in 2007/08, to increase the skills of Aboriginal services in relation to governance. These included; the delivery of a 'good practice' workshop relating to the HACC Service Standards; specifically tailored training on writing tender applications for DADHC funding and; the adaptation of the resource manual *It's Your Business* to assist voluntary boards of funded organisations in relation to governance. *It's Your Business* is due for release later in 2008.
- At the February 2008 Standing Committee on Social Issues inquiry into Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage in NSW, DADHC made a commitment to increase Aboriginal employment from 3.8% to 5% by 2012.

DADHC has developed a number of innovative projects specifically targeted to attract, retain and develop Aboriginal staff.

These include:

- the Home Care, Aboriginal Traineeship Program. This program is an Aboriginal specific traineeship in community care which incorporates part-time employment, training and access to driver training and licensing;
- Aboriginal Traineeship – '*Making it our Business*'. A NSW Government initiative to encourage a greater number of Aboriginal people into the public sector workforce. Increasing Aboriginal employment allows for a better understanding of cultural values and a greater capacity to deliver programs and services specifically designed for Aboriginal people. This encourages support and respect for Aboriginal values and people and is an important part

of the planning process for the delivery of services throughout the community;
and

- Fourteen Aboriginal traineeships in Certificate 3 Residential Support Workers were completed in February 2008 in the Southern Region. Ninety new Residential Support Worker traineeships are targeted for each DADHC Region in 2008/09 which will result in 90 new positions.

In August 2008, DADHC hosted the Statewide Aboriginal Conference. Through the Conference, DADHC recognised the important contribution made by Aboriginal staff and provided an invaluable networking opportunity for Aboriginal staff to meet and share information and best practice experiences. The Conference focused on three main areas; service delivery, professional development and the implementation of sustainable ongoing support mechanisms in the DADHC Regions.