

1. How many Aboriginal people in DADHC programmes have a disability?

With the exception of programs for the well aged (Seniors Card and Seniors Week) all programs funded and delivered by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care are available to people who have a disability or those who are caring for someone with a disability.

In 2006/07, 3.4 % (7,200) of people receiving Home and Community Care (HACC) services, and 5% (1,550) of people receiving Disability (CSTDA) services in NSW were Aboriginal.

Of those 1,550 Aboriginal people who received Disability (CSTDA) services in 2006/07, 1416 (91%) were younger than 45. Of those 7,200 Aboriginal people who received HACC services in 2006/07, 1402 (19%) were younger than 45.

2. Does DADHC provide governance training for Aboriginal non-government organisations?

In late 2006 and early 2007, DADHC delivered a series of 'good practice' workshop/s related to HACC Service Standards - Privacy, Confidentiality and Access to Personal Information; Advocacy and Complaints Handling. The workshops were designed to support providers understand their obligations and requirements to meet these service standards. One specific workshop was delivered to Aboriginal providers through the HACC Gathering.

DADHC has engaged a consultant to identify the needs of Aboriginal service providers in supporting the implementation of the Integrated Monitoring Framework. A preliminary draft report is with the Department to review how we can improving the quality on-site review process being undertaken by regional staff with Aboriginal service providers. This work has identified issues related to governance of these providers.

During 2007 DADHC commenced work in customising a resource manual to assist voluntary boards of non-government organisations (NGOs), the reference group sought input from the HACC Aboriginal Gathering. The final resource manual is scheduled for delivery in June 2008, with a learning strategy to support the implementation to occur later in 2008. The learning and development needs of Aboriginal service providers will be addressed as a specific priority area for this strategy.

3. Does DADHC provide submission writing training for Aboriginal non-government organisations?

The first round of training to assist non government organisations with preparing tender applications for DADHC funding commenced in September 2007. The training was delivered by Bruce Callaghan and Associates on behalf of DADHC. The invitation list was tailored to give priority to those organisations likely to be tendering for DADHC funded services in the near future including Aboriginal organisations.

DADHC is now planning the second round of training and Aboriginal organisations will again be invited to attend.

4. If yes to 2 and 3 above then how often and how many participants in the past year?

The 'good practice' workshop/s related to HACC Service Standards - Privacy, Confidentiality and Access to Personal Information; Advocacy and Complaints Handling was delivered to a targeted group of ten representatives of Aboriginal service providers. As well, a number of Aboriginal service providers attended one of seventeen regional based training programs. (Data was not collected on the cultural background of attendees in this program).

The learning and development strategy will occur over at least a period of two years, with delivery customised to meet regional and specific target group needs including Aboriginal providers.

Two Aboriginal organisations attended the first round of tender training. DADHC will be collecting improved data on the participation rates of Aboriginal organisations in the next round of training pending the introduction of more specifically tailored training for Aboriginal organisations.

5. How many recommendations made by previous inquiries, including previous social issues inquiries, have been implemented within your department? What were those recommendations and how did you implement them?

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, DADHC identifies needs for specific services for Aboriginal communities through planning rounds for the development of regional funding plans, previously on an annual basis, now occurring on a triennial basis.

In 2006, DADHC provided non-recurrent funding to the NSW Aboriginal Disability Network to undertake a comprehensive report on the prevalence of disabilities within Aboriginal communities, with outcomes being that of determining the need for Aboriginal specific disability services. This report is due to be presented to DADHC in April 2008.

Funds have also been provided to the Indigenous Disability Advocacy Service (IDAS) to produce a website and fact sheets on disabilities within Aboriginal communities, as well as a disability services directory for Aboriginal communities – providing information to Aboriginal people with a disability regarding available services. This project will be completed by July 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 2006/2007 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 for the 2008/2009 financial year to trial a new way of assisting families to support their child with a disability.
- All tenderers were required to demonstrate their capacity to respond to the needs of Aboriginal families.

- 6. Since 1997, identify (by name and date of commencement) the programmes that have been implemented or continued by the Department to advance the health and/ or wellbeing of Aboriginal peoples in New South Wales. In respect for each such programme, identify the costs of each such programme for each financial year in which the programme operated.**

The Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care funds and provides a range of services targeted specifically for Aboriginal people. Long-term

historical budget information is difficult to extract given the machinery of government and organisational changes over this period.

The primary service provided by DADHC to Aboriginal people is the Aboriginal Home Care Service. The budget allocation for Aboriginal Home Care Branches increased from \$13.92 million in 05/06 to \$14.57 million in 06/07 and to \$15.31 million in 2007/08.

Non-government Aboriginal Home and Community Care Services

The Department funds a total of 43 Aboriginal specific services across New South Wales, representing expenditure of approximately \$20.4m in 2007/08.

These services provide a range of HACC and disability services. For example:

- **Aboriginal flexible respite – Western Region**
The service provided is respite options for families and carers of Aboriginal persons with a disability to enhance the quality of life and maintain these persons in the community setting.
- **Narrama Meals Service – Southern Region**
The service provides preparation and delivery of meals or other food items which contribute to the client's daily nutritional requirements.
- **Awabakal Community Participation – Hunter**
The Service provides community participation opportunities for younger people with a disability.
- **Gilgai Aboriginal Centre Inc – Metro North**
The service aims to build community and interagency relationships, provides a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated range of maintenance and support services Aged Day Care programs, transport services support access to community activities and a Family Support Program that provides planned, short-term time limited breaks for families and other unpaid carers of people with disabilities.

- 7. Since 1997, identify (by name and date of commencement) the programmes that have been terminated or completed by the Department to advance the health and/or wellbeing of Aboriginal peoples in New South Wales. In the case of each such programme terminated or completed, identify the reasons for each such termination or completion, and the date of such termination or completion.**

DADHC has not terminated any programs directed specifically to the needs of Aboriginal people. However if a service is evaluated as not meeting the need for which it was designed then funds may be redirected to a more appropriate service. For example, the Western Region set up a five bed Respite Home in Griffith, South Western NSW in 2000. This service was not well utilised, and in 2006 the Minister agreed to closing the house and redirecting the funds into a community based Aboriginal Flexible Respite Program. This service commenced operations in 2006/07 with 80 packages available annually across the region. There was no change in the funding level in this example.

8. What partnerships have been formed under the Better Together program?

a. Have they been successful?

Better Together was launched in March 2007 and a progress report was completed in December 2007.

Better Together focuses on strategies to improve interagency co-ordination and cost-effective use of existing resources. It details actions to be taken by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and the other eleven participating agencies, around eight priority areas for improvement.

Current partnerships established, through an interagency approach, have been successful to date, these interagencies include:

- An Accessible Transport Consultative Group established comprising representatives of peak disability groups, industry and key Government stakeholders to inform the preparation of the latest Transport Portfolio's Accessible Transport Action Plan.
- Development of an interagency agreement between NSW Health, DADHC, the Department of Community Services and the Department of Education and Training, to improve the co-ordination of therapy services for people with a disability. The Agreement will focus initially on the population groups for which early access to therapy services is most critical i.e. children aged 0 to 5 years and young people at key transition points.
- Establishment of the NSW Steering Committee for the Provision of Therapy Services in the Disability Sector. This committee, known as the Therapy Taskforce, will monitor and support the implementation of additional therapy places under *Stronger Together*.
- Development of an interagency framework for service provision for people with autism and their families and carers. This framework will focus on strengthening early detection, diagnosis and assessment services leading to clear intervention and support plans for individuals and their families. It will include specific strategies for early childhood intervention (Pre School aged); school transitions and adolescence; and post school programs and support services.
- Partnership formed with Department of Housing regarding the Disability Housing and Support Initiative (DHASI). The initiative is also part of *Stronger Together* and involves the establishment of 40 new DHASI places across the state over four years from 2006/2007 financial year, costing in total \$2.7 million. The first twenty places are currently in the process of being established. These places will be located in the Northern and Metropolitan South Regions. Tenders for service providers recently closed and the outcome is expected before the end of the financial year. Aboriginal people within the target group of people with intellectual disabilities and acquired brain injury will be eligible for this service.

9. Has DADHC a program for the training and employment of Indigenous people to provide services such as the Home and Community Care program?

a. Are service providers working with Indigenous people provided with cultural awareness training?

- DADHC is developing a Learning and Development Framework to articulate and align current and future training initiatives within the HACC sector. Volunteers along with paid staff will be captured by the Framework. A recent survey of both HACC funded service providers and individual staff employed within the sector included questions in relation to the cultural background of staff and how this may impact on access to training and the attainment of qualifications. The recommendations of this project are currently being considered. The DADHC Equity Unit and Aboriginal Community Care Gathering are members on the project steering committee and are involved in the consultative process.
- DADHC is represented on the National HACC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group. The Reference Group provides ongoing advice to HACC Officials on matters of importance to Aboriginal people in order to achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal communities. The Reference Group has recently released a national strategy for the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal staff in the HACC workforce.

10. Can you elaborate on the role of the Aboriginal Access and Assessment Team referred to on page 21 of your submission?

- The Department established the Aboriginal Access and Assessment Team in May 2007 and the team became fully operational in July. The team's primary role is to conduct consistent and culturally responsive intake, referral and assessment for Aboriginal Home Care Services.
- Regionally based staff members in the team have a role in increasing the awareness within Aboriginal communities about the Home and Community Care service system.
- Success is already evident in raising awareness and improving the access of older Aboriginal people, and younger people with a disability and their carers to Aboriginal Home Care Services.
- Active client numbers in Aboriginal Home Care were increased from 1543 in August 2007 to 1714 by October, representing a growth of over 10%. Since the commencement of this team's operation in May last year (to end of January 08), the team has conducted over 600 assessments. Over 500 new eligible Aboriginal clients are receiving a service from Aboriginal Home Care.

c. Has the Department evaluated the Teams efficacy?

At this stage, the Assessment Team has not been formally evaluated.

- However, it is important to understand the policy context of assessment and access to HACC services. The issue of simplified access to community care is a priority on the agenda of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and is a focus of the National Community Care Review.
- The first site for the new simplified access system commenced in March 2008 in the Hunter Region. It will provide an intake and assessment service for all Home and Community Care Services. The evaluation and future role of the Aboriginal Assessment Team will need to be considered in the context of this broader initiative.

- 11. One of the terms of reference of this Inquiry requires the Committee to assess the implementation of previous Social Issues Committee recommendations. Can you provide details on how your Department has responded to these recommendations?**

See Q5

- 12. In the hearing, the Director-General was asked about Aboriginal participation in ATLAS, CP and TTW (see question 12 of the transcript).**

The Post School Options Program commenced in 1993 for school leavers and in 1998 it was superseded by the Adult Training, Learning and Support (ATLAS) Program.

Following post school program reforms the ATLAS Program was replaced by Community Participation and Transition to Work in 2005.

From the University of Wollongong Costing and Classification Study undertaken between August 2005 to February 2006, of a sample of 452 participants in Post School Options, Community Participation and Transition to Work (TTW), 7 people identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (1.55%)

Of the 973 2007 school leavers eligible to enter a DADHC Post School Program, 66 identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. 43 of these are eligible to enter a TTW service and 23 to enter a Community Participation service. To date 46 of these 66 have registered with a service provider.

Across the state there are 2 Aboriginal Community Participation service users attending one of the 5 designated Aboriginal specific outlets. The bulk of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people attend generic services.

- 13. In the hearing, the DG was asked “ Are you able to give us those figures on notice in terms of numbers as opposed to percentages?” regarding the Aboriginal Access and Assessment Team**

Active client numbers in Aboriginal Home Care were increased from 1,543 in August 2007 to 1,714 by October, representing a growth of over 10% increase of 171 clients. Since the commencement of this team's operation in May last year (to end of January 08), the team has conducted over 600 assessments. Over 500 new eligible Aboriginal clients are receiving a service from Aboriginal Home Care.