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**GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE No. 2**

**Monday 13 September 2010**

**Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio area**

**AGEING, DISABILITY SERVICES, VOLUNTEERING, YOUTH**

**The Committee met at 2.00 p.m.**

**MEMBERS**

The Hon. R. M. Parker (Chair)

The Hon. A. Catanzariti  
The Hon. I. Cohen  
The Hon. C. J. S. Lynn

The Hon. S. Moselmane  
Reverend the Hon. G. K. M. Moyes  
The Hon. C. M. Robertson (Deputy Chair)

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**PRESENT**

**The Hon. P. T. Primrose**, *Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Volunteering, and Minister for Youth*

**Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care**  
**Mr J. Moore**, *Chief Executive*

**Department of Human Services NSW**  
**Mr P. Gardiner**, *Deputy Director General*  
**Ms L. Murray**, *Deputy Director General*

**Communities NSW**  
**Ms C. Mills**, *Director General*

**Commission for Children and Young**  
**Ms M. Mitchell**, *Commissioner*

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**CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS**

**Corrections should be marked on a photocopy of the proof and forwarded to:**

**Budget Estimates secretariat  
Room 812  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000**

**DEPUTY CHAIR:** In the absence of the Chair, who is currently delayed, I declare this hearing for the inquiry into budget estimates 2010-11 open to the public. I welcome Minister Primrose and accompanying officials to this hearing. Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Ageing, Disability Services, Volunteering and Youth. Before we commence I will make some comments about procedural matters. In accordance with the Legislative Council guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings, only Committee members and witnesses may be filmed or recorded. People in the public gallery should not be the primary focus of any filming or photos. In reporting the proceedings of this Committee you must take responsibility for what you publish or what interpretation you place on anything that is said before the Committee. The guidelines for the broadcast of the proceedings are available on the table by the door. Any messages from attendees in the public gallery should be delivered through the Chamber and support staff or Committee clerks. Minister, I remind you and the officers accompanying you that you are free to pass notes and refer directly to your advisers while at the table. I remind everyone to please turn off their mobile phones or keep them on silent. If they are on silent, could you keep them well away from the microphones.

The Committee has agreed that the portfolios of Ageing, Disability Services, Volunteering and Youth be examined concurrently. The House has resolved that answers to questions on notice must be provided within 21 days or as otherwise determined by the Committee. The Committee has not varied the 21-day time frame for answers to questions on notice. Transcripts of this hearing will be available on the website from tomorrow morning. All witnesses from departments, statutory bodies or corporations will be sworn prior to giving evidence. Minister, I remind you that you do not need to be sworn as you have already sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament.

**MEGAN MITCHELL**, Commissioner, New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People,

**CAROL MILLS**, Director General, Communities NSW,

**JIM MOORE**, Chief Executive, Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care,

**PETER GARDINER**, Acting Deputy Director General, Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, and

**LAUREN MURRAY**, Deputy Director General, Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, affirmed and examined:

**CHAIR:** The Committee is not providing an opportunity for opening statements, but as much as possible we will stick to some time limits so that members have an opportunity to ask questions.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** My first question is addressed to the Minister with regard to disability services. How many reports of client abuse were made in the past 12 months to the Ethics and Professional Standards Unit?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am advised that the total number was 59.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Can you advise the Committee of the nature of the abuse reported?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** What I may do, with your agreement, is ask the chief executive to provide you with that more detailed information.

**Mr MOORE:** The categories we use to deal with client mistreatment are neglect, of which there were 10: physical, 29; sexual, 4; unauthorised restricted practice, 2; verbal-emotional, 13; and breach of policy procedure, 3. I might add that those are the matters reported, and that not in all of those cases did we find that the allegation of mistreatment was substantiated.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Could you advise how many of those reports were investigated?

**Mr MOORE:** Of those investigations, all were examined and five we took to the stage of a formal investigation.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Could you advise how many staff were dismissed and/or disciplined as a result of any of these investigations?

**Mr MOORE:** I would need to take that matter on notice; I am not able to directly cross-reference those particular allegations with dismissals. But I can advise you that a total of five staff were dismissed during 2009-10.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** How many incidents of fraud of clients' money were reported across the Ageing, Disability and Home Care networks in the past year?

**Mr MOORE:** Again, we had financial client theft allegations reported to us in a total of 20 in 2009-10.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Could you advise what the total dollar loss was to clients?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I stress, the Hon. Charlie Lynn, we are citing allegations.

**Mr MOORE:** A total of two of those allegations were taken through to the next stage of investigation. I do not have the total sum included in the allegations available to me. I can take that on notice.

**CHAIR:** How many incidents of fraud or mismanagement and misappropriation of household funds or goods have come to your attention or at least to the attention of your line managers in the past year?

**Mr MOORE:** The 20 I referred to were financial ones. If you extended also to client property there were 14 allegations, of which one was taken through to a formal investigation stage.

**CHAIR:** Of those incidents how many were sent for investigation to the Ethics and Professional Standards Unit in the past year for misappropriation of household funds, goods or clients' money?

**Mr MOORE:** They were the numbers that I was referring to, so a total of 34 allegations were made and reported through to the Ethics and Professional Standards Unit and they took through a total of three.

**CHAIR:** How many claims have been made against the department to WorkCover?

**Mr MOORE:** The total number of claims, again, I will need to take that on notice. We do not have the total number. I can tell you that in 2009-10 the claims incident rate decreased to 11.38 per 100 employees in that year. I can give you the total number on notice.

**CHAIR:** Could you tell us how many staff were on the unattached public servant list?

**Mr MOORE:** The number of staff that we have as excess employees is 16.

**CHAIR:** This could not be true. Did your department spend \$150,000 on stress balls and massage kits for employees?

**Mr MOORE:** The precise amount I would need to confirm. I would need to take on notice the specific amount spent on the two items you just listed.

**CHAIR:** Is it a stress ball park figure? Is it round about that figure?

**Mr MOORE:** It does not strike me as correct. It strikes me as maybe a descriptor of the total amount expended on the occupational health and safety week for last year, which included the production of a stress ball and the other thing you referred to, I think.

**CHAIR:** That money was for a week?

**Mr MOORE:** It was a whole series of promotions of occupational health and safety initiatives within our staffing. That is a very significant area of concern for us. The specific amount that was spent on stress balls I am literally not able to tell you here and now.

**CHAIR:** What about these pink hats with the writing "Enjoy making a difference"? How much money was spent on producing these pink hats?

**The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON:** That is a prop.

**CHAIR:** It is a prop, but it is something the department considered important. I want to know how much money was spent on the hats.

**Mr MOORE:** I do not recognise that object as an object produced by the department.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Madam Chair, can you tell us where it came from?

**CHAIR:** It came from someone who was disappointed that that money was not spent on front-line care. Do you know anything about the pink hat with "Enjoy making a difference"?

**Mr MOORE:** I do not recognise that at all, I am sorry. I am happy to make inquiries.

**CHAIR:** Could get back to us with where it was produced and handed out? It is some people's perception that it was handed out and funded by the department. I ask that you clarify that.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Further to the discussion about occupational health and safety, it may be worthwhile indicating that, as the chief executive officer has said, in a department of this nature occupational health and safety is something that is regarded as really important.

**CHAIR:** Absolutely, we all understand that. I was asking about the specific expenditure.

**The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON:** Madam Chair, I ask that you remove the prop from the table.

**CHAIR:** Certainly, I am happy to do that. There is no doubt that occupational health and safety is an important issue. What about staff sleeping on shifts? Do you have statistics on how many staff sleep on shifts?

**Mr MOORE:** Again, I would need to take the specific matter on notice. I am aware of some instances from prior financial years. None have been brought to my attention in relation to this financial year. But I will go away and check for you to see whether there are any specific allegations that have been made to that effect for 2009-10.

**CHAIR:** Minister, are staff ever asked to ignore criminal actions by clients?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Are staff ever asked to ignore criminal actions by clients?

**CHAIR:** Yes.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Maybe if you could specify an incident we can comment on it.

**CHAIR:** Information given to me is that a Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care employee was asked to ignore the criminal actions of a client who stole a bike, with an instruction to leave the stolen goods on the footpath by a manager of Accommodation and Respite.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I point out there are 13,444 staff in the department. Maybe on this particular one the chief executive could comment.

**Mr MOORE:** I am aware of an allegation that resembles that, which was in the newspapers probably six to eight months ago. It is certainly not true that staff are directed to ignore criminal actions. The matter is quite a complicated one in the sense of a variety of misunderstandings about what is the appropriate way to handle criminal or potentially criminal actions that a client may have committed. The particular example that was given is one where there is as much belief that the bike was a gift, and it is particularly complicated to unravel.

**CHAIR:** In order to clarify those sorts of things have you established a protocol or a procedure for reporting criminal events so that there is not confusion about it?

**Mr MOORE:** Absolutely. As a result of the lack of parity it became evident to me from that particular instance. We have got a revised policy in place that endeavours to make it clearer. There is a very difficult and complex set of challenges that we have for staff who are involved with clients, because we are dealing with clients who are in residential facilities that we operate but we also go into people's homes. So a particularly complex set of guidelines has to be given to staff to enable them to understand when they should put themselves in the reporting line to police about suspected criminal activity as opposed to report it to their managers and to leave it to their managers to resolve what is the appropriate action. We think we have improved the guidelines to staff but, as the Minister remarked earlier, we have a very large number of staff, about 13,000, that are potentially in a position to be aware of client criminal activity.

**CHAIR:** But the numbers do not stop you from providing that protocol and information. If they are the numbers you have got to work with you have to be able to do it.

**Mr MOORE:** It makes it more complicated in terms of being able to provide clear advice to people across a wide variety of circumstances.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Just to follow up, I am advised that in March 2010 the department issued a series of policies and procedures for staff under the heading "Suspected Illegal Activity by Accommodation and Respite Users—Procedures". A series of protocols are in place by the department.

**CHAIR:** As a result of that incident?

**Mr MOORE:** There were policies already in place. These were the revised, upgraded ones.

**CHAIR:** How many investigations have taken place into children's respite or accommodation services in New South Wales?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Could you give us some more information about what you are seeking? Investigations by whom and about what?

**CHAIR:** I guess your investigations, and there may in fact be an investigation currently. Perhaps parents have raised concerns about the mix of clients and staff in some of the children's respite services. That might be one example.

**Mr MOORE:** I do not have the data on me as to investigations into children's respite centres specifically as opposed to just more general investigations—broken down by children versus non-children, for example. But I can get you that data.

**CHAIR:** You would treat children's respite completely differently though, would you not?

**Mr MOORE:** In terms of the seriousness of an allegation, the fact that an allegation is made within a children's respite centre means it would be treated much more seriously. But all allegations, from our perspective, need to be treated very seriously because of the nature of the clientele that we have. They are very vulnerable clients and we need to have the families, members of the public and the clients themselves having complete trust in our quality of care and in the seriousness with which we treat any allegation.

**CHAIR:** I just wanted to ask you some questions about the request for supported accommodation and the register of requests for supported accommodation. How many people are in that register in New South Wales and in each region?

**Mr MOORE:** In terms of the register of unmet need that we hold within the department, we have a total of 723 people who are on the register who have indicated they are willing to take up a place immediately it is offered, and they are broken down by region as 198 in the Hunter region, 153 in Metro North, 146 in Metro South, 111 in Northern region, 69 in Southern region and 46 in Western region. In addition to those, 1,006 people have indicated that they anticipate a need for supported accommodation sometime in the future. Might I qualify that data by indicating that we are in the process of building a very accurate, consistent picture and we have a high degree of confidence for those people willing to take up a place immediately on offer, but we have yet to clarify previous regional-based records about the 1,006 number that I quoted.

**CHAIR:** How many of those would be currently residing in the care of their parents or the family home? Have you got that breakdown and others?

**Mr MOORE:** Again, I do not hold that breakdown here. We have supplied a very substantial amount of data along these lines to the upper House inquiry into Ageing, Disability and Home Care funding. But I am more than happy to create a data table for you that tries to show where those people are currently being cared for.

**CHAIR:** That would be useful if you could, thank you. Do you have any group home properties that are currently unoccupied that the department owns?

**Mr MOORE:** Yes, we do.

**CHAIR:** How many of them?

**Mr MOORE:** We currently have 12 properties that are vacant, having been completed for construction and waiting occupation. One of those has been vacant for 10 months because it is on a block of land where we are building a second building and it is not yet complete. To that end we only partially classified it as vacant pending occupation. A total of 11 properties are vacant, ranging from one month vacancy up to the 10 months I identified to you in those special circumstances. In addition, we have eight properties that are vacant pending sale.

**CHAIR:** There is apparently a PricewaterhouseCoopers report, which has some fairly accurate projections in terms of unmet need. Are you able to provide that report?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** That is a matter that is before Cabinet, so I cannot really comment on that at the moment.

**CHAIR:** But you are using that to inform the next five years of Stronger Together, are you not?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am using lots of things.

**CHAIR:** You are keeping it Cabinet-in-confidence. Do you not think that that is good information in that the chief executive was not able to give us clear information? If that were available then he would have access to that, would he not, and be able to tell me right now? If he had access to that he would be able to tell me the unmet needs and the projections; he would not have to take it on notice. You are not prepared to release it?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** You have said there was a document, I have advised you that the matter is before Cabinet. You have asked me whether it is useful information and am I using it and I have indicated yes.

**CHAIR:** How many years have you had that PricewaterhouseCoopers study? Have you had a few of those studies over the years?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I think in my many years in this portfolio I cannot comment. I will ask the chief executive to answer.

**Mr MOORE:** We began building the work with PricewaterhouseCoopers in the lead-up to the release of what is now referred to as Stronger Together. We began the work in 2005 and the program was announced by the Government in 2006. We are continuing to refine that in the lead-up to an announcement. The Minister and the Premier have indicated publicly that that will take place later this year. It is often referred to as Stronger Together II, which is a reference to the second phase of funding of this 10-year program in two five-year tranches. That material is part of the advice that is being prepared for Cabinet.

**The Hon. TONY CATANZARITI:** Can the cap be tabled as part of the evidence?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** As Minister for Volunteering I am pleased to advise that the cap is part of the workplace giving program. Ageing, Disability and Home Care staff use their own pay to make donations. The reason that we are unfamiliar with it is that it has nothing to do with the Ageing, Disability and Home Care budget. We would be very pleased if Committee members were to make a donation.

**CHAIR:** Thank you for clarifying that.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Does the department collect data through tendering or departmental review processes on the level of subcontracting used by non-government organisations or private service providers when awarding Ageing, Disability and Home Care service contracts and funding?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** No.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** When Ageing, Disability and Home Care is awarding contracts to non-government organisations and private service providers are the applicants required to have a minimum number of full-time, permanent, part-time or casual employees?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** No.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Is prior performance against existing contracts taken into consideration when granting or renewing regional and metropolitan service contracts?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** What relative weight is given to complaints lodged both with the provider themselves and Ageing, Disability and Home Care as a funding body?



**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Given that the question is about tenders, which I have nothing to do with beyond a policy level, I will ask the chief executive officer to respond.

**Mr MOORE:** That would depend on the circumstances of the complaint and the particular contract or program. That would determine the weight given to a factor such as that.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** What role does National Disability Services Limited play in the Ageing, Disability and Home Care service contracting and tendering processes?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** A very important role.

**Mr MOORE:** It plays a role as the peak body representing non-government organisations working in the disability sector. Its primary function is to provide us with commentary on the effectiveness of our processes and tendering arrangements, and to tell us whether we have the right procurement policies in place. It is an avenue we use to consult with the non-government sector to ensure that policy settings for a particular tendering arrangement are appropriate and effective and that they are not too excessive, for example, in terms of red tape.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Is advice actively sought from National Disability Services Limited and non-government organisations or private sector applicants for these contracts, particularly in regional areas?

**Mr MOORE:** We would not be actively seeking National Disability Services advice on the awarding of a specific contract.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It is worthwhile stressing that I always seek and welcome National Disability Services advice on a range of matters, but not on specific contracts.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Minister, can you or your department disclose to the Committee the percentage of all Ageing, Disability and Home Care contracts awarded to or renewed with non-government agencies or private service providers that are known to be subcontracting all or part of their contracts?

**Mr MOORE:** We could endeavour to provide the best information we have on that, but I do not believe we would be well placed to provide much detail. We will endeavour to see what we can readily get out of our contract information system.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Is there an issue with Ageing, Disability and Home Care awarding contracts for flexible individual respite packages that are client-focused or person-centred given that its guidelines and policies place priority on the delivery of more service hours?

**Mr MOORE:** I am not sure I understand the question.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Perhaps you can give us an example. We are happy to provide information.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** To be honest, I do not know of an example, so I cannot help with that. The department's general principle means that the goals of the provision of respite packages clash with the guidelines and policies that call for the delivery of more service hours.

**Mr MOORE:** No such concerns have been raised with me that I recognise. Again, I am happy to make inquiries to see whether concerns have been expressed, perhaps to our regional staff.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** I will put the question more generally. Do all disability and ageing services provided by Ageing, Disability and Home Care have performance targets?

**Mr MOORE:** They certainly have requirements with regard to the production of what we call outputs for the number of people and places. There are some other performance targets in specific programs. The title of the Flexible Respite Program suggests that we encourage flexibility in terms of how people receive respite services. I can envisage that there will be times when providers find it very difficult to translate what they have done to deliver respite flexibly for a client into our output reporting processes. However, I do not see an inherent conflict between the two.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Are respite services consistent across the board? I know that with aged respite services the limit is 63 days each 12 months or calendar year.

**Mr MOORE:** There is no consistency across the board. Different respite programs are put into effect in different ways and different respite service levels are provided to different clients according to need and capacity, which varies substantially across the State.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Is there any obligation in the private aged care sector to provide respite services or is that left up to the business or institution?

**Mr MOORE:** We do not operate any aged care facilities. The Federal Department of Health and Ageing is the primary funder and policy setter for aged care facilities.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It may be worthwhile stressing that in terms of the first four years of Stronger Together, we have created 4,000 new respite places, including more than 1,000 provided in conjunction with the Australian Government, specifically targeting older carers. In addition, an estimated 2,000 older carers receive case management through support coordination services across the State. That is in addition to 718 flexible respite places for older carers transferred to New South Wales as a result of the Disability Assistance Package initiative.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Given that you say you have those performance targets, does Ageing, Disability and Home Care publicly report annual results against performance targets? Can you provide the Committee with performance targets for these services?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I will ask the chief executive officer to comment in more detail. However, I refer the Committee to the submission made to the Standing Committee on Social Issues. From page 68 onwards it specifically talks about the performance indicator framework and the evaluation process and it includes a number of tables that provide reasonably easily digestible information.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Does it also provide information about the percentage of Ageing, Disability and Home Care service recipients who are provided with self-directed funding packages and how that compares to previous years?

**Mr MOORE:** It does not provide that specific piece of data. The self-directed funding is by and large in relatively segmented parts of our operation. We do not have very extensive self-directed funding at this stage, in respite programs, for example. But we do not provide performance data around that specific issue. Our performance data that we do publish in our annual reports are also published in other national documents and are at the higher output level.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Can you perhaps provide on notice the comparison with previous financial years?

**Mr MOORE:** Certainly.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Minister, would you provide details on the achievements of Younger People in Residential Aged Care targets and how many young people have been moved out of aged care facilities in the 2009-10 financial year?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The Younger People in Residential Aged Care program is an initiative under the national disability agreement and is the New South Wales Government's response to concern about younger people living in or at risk of entering residential aged care. The Younger People in Residential Aged Care program is a joint five-year program with the Australian Government, with a total investment of \$81.2 million to 30 June next year. The New South Wales Government will contribute up to \$40.6 million to the program over five years. The Government is committed to delivering services to younger people with disabilities, their families and carers where possible. As you have indicated, priority objective one is to provide more appropriate accommodation and care options. Objective two is to prevent them from entering residential aged care, and priority three is to improve the lives of those who choose to remain in residential aged care.

Australian Government data as of May this year listed 312 people under 50 years of age permanently living in a residential aged care facility in New South Wales. That is an increase of five people from the

previous survey taken in January 2010 by the Australian Government. The New South Wales Government will provide 354 individual clients with more than 600 services throughout the term of the Younger People in Residential Aged Care program, including supported accommodation, individually planned support packages, equipment, home modification and case management. In addition, New South Wales has used Stronger Together growth funding, which was not allocated to that Younger People in Residential Aged Care program, to divert 92 younger people from entering residential aged care. I am happy to provide more information if you wish.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** Minister, you might remember a year ago the Treasury indicated a need to reduce expenditure in government departments by 26 per cent. At the time the expenditure by government departments in toto was \$90 million. That has now gone up to \$101 million, which is not exactly a 26 per cent decrease. How much has your department spent on advertising?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** While we are obtaining that I should point out that in the past five years we have had a \$1.3 billion increase in our budget under Stronger Together part one, and the Ageing, Disability and Home Care budget now lies at a smidgen under \$2.5 billion, which is a 9.1 per cent increase on what it was last time it was mentioned here. I will ask the chief executive to provide the details of the advertising.

**Mr MOORE:** I will give you the answer I have available to me but I would like to qualify it at the end, if I may. We spend \$407,000 on advertising for staff recruitment; \$87,000 on various events and \$3,000 on a strategic procurement tender. I qualify that in that I think of these data include some advertising costs that are embedded in particular program areas.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** Can you get back to me in writing on that, that would be fine. I ask the Minister again, about the interdepartmental committee on the reform of shared private residential services. What consultation has taken place with the shareholders in that and are you aware there are many small boarding houses that rent out rooms for up to \$600 a week with no 24-hour oversight?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I can talk about licensed boarding houses if that is what your question is relating to.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** They are not the only ones, of course. What about the stakeholders in the licensed ones?

**Mr MOORE:** We license about 33 boarding houses under the Youth and Community Services Act. Those relate specifically to where a person has, in their terms, a handicap and we do not, by definition, license ones that are unlicensed.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** Do you provide some checking on the oversight given in those places?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** In the licensed boarding houses?

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** Yes.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Absolutely.

**Mr MOORE:** Yes, we do.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** And I am happy to give you information. Boarding and lodging houses generally provide long-term furnished accommodation with shared facilities and a source of low-cost private rental accommodation for people on limited incomes. Under the Youth and Community Services Act 1973 Ageing, Disability and Home Care is responsible for the licensing and monitoring of boarding houses that accommodate two or more people with a disability who also require supervision and social habitation. These facilities are also known as licensed residential centres. The total capacity across New South Wales is about 721 beds at the moment.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** I have information—when you say it is low-cost—of \$600 per week for a room and no supervision. I will take that up with you, Minister, privately.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Of course I am happy to take up individual cases, but I am not aware of any, as there is very extensive supervision. I make a point of meeting with organisations ranging from the Council of Social Services of New South Wales through regularly to the official visitors and departmental officers. As you will appreciate, it is a particular interest and concern of mine, because we recently amended the regulation under the Youth and Community Services Act. I am very well aware of the extensive amount of supervision that takes place in relation to licensed boarding houses. But I am happy to take up the matter privately with you.

**Mr MOORE:** And we would readily investigate something if there was a concern about it.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Minister, what is the current level of employment of Aboriginal people in the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care as a percentage of that workforce? Perhaps you might like to take that figure on notice?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes. I am advised the rate is a little over 5 per cent. Although, I should point out that the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care is committed to improving Aboriginal employment outcomes. I have now confirmed the figure is a 5 per cent representation of Aboriginal employees across its workforce. The key initiative is the implementation of the Building Pride through Opportunities: Aboriginal Employment and Capabilities Framework Action Plan 2008-10.

**The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON:** Is that the target, 5 per cent, or is that where you are at?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** That is what they have achieved.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Looking across the board, have carers, people with disabilities, organisations and stakeholders indicated there is a high level of unmet need for disability services in New South Wales? Could you perhaps answer that in light of the number of Aboriginal people involved in that area and whether there is a proportionately higher level of unmet need in the Aboriginal community?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I will ask the chief executive officer to begin because whenever people talk about unmet need there is quite an extensive amount of information. I will again refer honourable members to the submission made by the department to the Standing on Social Issues, which has outlined a lot of this in great detail.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** If I could go over that question again. I am asking with these various stakeholders, organisations, people with disabilities, carers, et cetera, if that unmet need is indicated. Is there proof of complaints to your department or any information you have as to that unmet need, both with the general community or general communities involved with disabilities and also Aboriginal communities—I understand it is hard question—in terms of referrals, complaints or issues?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I accept the question is genuine but I refer you—and we will talk about it now—to pages 35 and 36 of that document, which actually lists some statistics in great detail. Madam Chair, would you like us to answer that?

**CHAIR:** It is Government members' time. It is their choice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** We are happy to come back to it.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Minister, you made reference to Stronger Together. Could you please outline how the New South Wales Government is supporting an early intervention approach for children with a disability and their families through Stronger Together? Also, can you advise on the 10-year plan for Disability Services?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I thank the honourable member for his question and acknowledge that early intervention is an important issue for all families with children with a disability living in New South Wales, an issue that this Government considers a priority and continues to work hard to support. Our direction for disability services in New South Wales, outlined in Stronger Together, is towards a fairer, more accepting and more caring society. That is why we have invested \$1.3 billion of extra funding in the first five years of Stronger Together.

As part of our plan, the New South Wales Government is committed to taking an early intervention approach to supporting children with a disability or developmental delay and their families. We recognise that the supports we provide need to be implemented at the earliest possible point in a child's development to maximise their future potential and to encourage the exceptional abilities and contributions that all children with a disability will make to the future of this great State. The benefit of an early intervention approach can be measured not only in the impact it has on the future of a child with a disability, but also on the resilience of families to maintain their vital caring role and increase their participation in society over time.

And so I am pleased to be able to inform you that on Wednesday 25 August this year, the Premier announced an additional \$1 million funding for a three-tiered package, providing greater supports and awareness for children with a disability or developmental delay and their families in New South Wales. This announcement included: \$690,000 over three years for Lifestart, a not-for-profit organisation that provides early childhood intervention services for children with a disability and their families, with this funding forming part of the broader \$18 million Early Childhood Intervention investment that I previously outlined; an additional \$300,000 for an Autism Awareness documentary that will increase the understanding of autism among young people in our schools to create an accepting school community; and the Play for Kids project, which will raise awareness of the importance of play in the lives of children with a developmental delay or disability.

Only two days following this announcement, the member for Liverpool and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Paul Lynch, and I announced another \$2 million for a new Aboriginal Early Intervention project in Liverpool. This project will enhance the capacity of the early childhood sector to identify Aboriginal children with a disability or developmental delay early, allowing supports to be put in place earlier, and increasing awareness of disability within the Aboriginal communities in the far North Coast, south-west Sydney and northern metropolitan Sydney areas. It will provide greater understanding of disability in Aboriginal communities in these three areas, with the aim of developing pathways of support in the sector for early intervention approaches with Aboriginal children with a disability and their families.

It is worthwhile putting these announcements into context because we have invested substantially in early intervention services in recent years—including services for children and young people with autism. In 2007-08, \$8 million was allocated over four years for the Extended Early Childhood Intervention Initiative, which provided for an extension to the existing early childhood intervention services across New South Wales. In 2009-10, \$2 million was allocated for early childhood intervention, enhancing recurrent funding expenditure for EarlyStart program initiatives and supporting an additional 244 children and families across the State. In 2010-11, the Government will provide more than \$41 million to support children and young people with a disability, including children with autism, to have the best quality of life through targeted early intervention and support initiatives.

These include more than \$18 million for early childhood intervention services throughout New South Wales to support children with a disability, their families and carers to be more resilient and maintain access to mainstream services by providing therapy-based, educational and other development interventions; \$12 million for the Intensive Family Support Program, which provides intense early intervention to reduce instances of out-of-home care, as well as providing assistance to help families at risk of relinquishing care of their child. The Family Choices program provides two alternative care family-based services in rural New South Wales recognising the need for families to have options in caring arrangements for their child in unique circumstances; \$900,000 for support networks and information kits for parents, siblings and peers of children with a disability, \$4.8 million for the EarlyStart program initiatives providing: 20 full-time equivalent diagnosis support positions to support families at the time of their child's diagnosis or identification with a developmental delay; eight full-time equivalent Aboriginal targeted positions to be integrated within Aboriginal communities and support families through this often stressful time; and \$3 million to expand early childhood intervention services to enhance developmental milestones of children early by focusing on the importance of mainstream service provision in the development of a child with a disability. The Government recognises the importance of providing targeted supports for children with autism, their families and carers, both within mainstream services in the community as well as transitioning into school and supporting participation in the school environment.

For this reason, I am proud to stand here today and confirm that the New South Wales Government has invested more than \$22 million since 2006 to support initiatives specifically for children with autism and their families across New South Wales. The specific autism investment includes: an additional \$5.8 million for the Helping Troubled Kids Initiative announced in 2008, for the Case Management for Children with Autism and Challenging Behaviours who are at risk of suspension or expulsion from school and the Leisure Link program for young people during out-of-school hours and in holiday periods; an additional \$6.8 million, initially over

four years, for the Autism Early Years Demonstration Service providing 20 long day childcare places and 50 autism early childhood intervention places in mainstream childcare settings across western Sydney; and more than \$9 million, for autism early childhood intervention initiatives across New South Wales to support children with autism and their families in accessing specialist and mainstream supports. These investments are in recognition of the increasing prevalence of autism spectrum disorders in children and young people across New South Wales. The New South Wales Government will continue to support children and young people with a disability, their families and carers through the next five years of Stronger Together, ensuring that they can enjoy a quality of life that is enjoyed by all members of the New South Wales community. I am happy to elaborate if you wish.

**The Hon. TONY CATANZARITI:** Minister, can you update the Committee on the benefit that people with a disability, their families and carers will receive from changes made under the National Health and Hospitals Network Agreement?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I thank the Hon. Tony Catanzariti for his question. At the Council of Australian Governments meeting in April 2010 New South Wales agreed to a package of national health reforms that include establishing the Commonwealth as the level of government with responsibility for the full funding, policy, management and delivery of a national aged care system. These reforms include a clean split for age and disability services based on age 65 and age 50 for indigenous Australians.

This includes a transfer to the Australian Government of the resources for aged care services from the Home and Community Care program. In other words, whereas the State was previously responsible for Home and Community Care services to frail older people, the Commonwealth will take over this function. The other side of the coin is that the State Government will take over responsibility for disability services to those under 65 years of age, including funding, for example, for people under 65 years that may be in nursing homes. Whilst this has been an understated aspect of the reforms, I believe it is one of the most significant and important reforms that have been achieved by the Council of Australian Governments.

It has been achieved because of a strong cooperative working relationship between State and Federal governments. It means that going forward the Federal Government will control the levers that prevent early entry into aged care facilities for people over 65 years. The Home and Community Care system is critical to ensuring that people are able to live in their own homes as long as possible. We want to prevent premature entry into residential aged care because we know it is what people want. It is also important to recognise that it is a far more cost-effective way of delivering aged care services. In that respect it is one of the unique areas of government policy where the moral imperative to enable people to live in their own homes as long as possible actually lines up with the economic imperative.

What this reform does is to provide incentive for the Federal Government to invest in Home and Community Care services. At the end of the day we will then see the economic benefit of that investment, with comparatively lower costs in the nursing homes sector. From the State Government's point of view it also provides an important incentive. As many of you would know, the State has administration of the Younger People in Residential Aged Care program, which we discussed earlier and which aims to move younger people out of nursing homes when they want to move, and also to avoid premature entry. By making the State Government responsible for the cost of keeping a young person in a nursing home, these reforms provide incentives that we need to further invest in the Younger People in Residential Aged Care program and support young people to move out of residential aged care into more age-appropriate accommodation. I strongly believe when we look back in 10 to 20 years time, when we are really in the midst of dealing with the financial ramifications of an ageing population, we will consider these reforms to be one of the more significant that have been achieved by the Council of Australian Governments.

I also want to address some concerns because I know that whilst people generally agree with the principles I have outlined, that a more streamlined system makes more sense and will lead to better outcomes for clients, there is also concern about the implementation. I am mindful that there are some concerns that the community contributions and social capital, which are integral to the community care system in New South Wales, may be lost or undervalued in the transfer. Let me assure everyone that this is also my key concern, my department's key concern, and, I believe, the Federal Government's key concern. It is important that everyone understands the commitment that this Government is giving that it will make sure that clients and service providers will not be disadvantaged by these changes. The Government remains committed to the 600 organisations funded under the Home and Community Care program in New South Wales; many of these are small, long established community organisations with a great track record of serving their local communities.

New South Wales will insist that the Australian Government provides the appropriate transition provisions for these organisations, and continues to fully utilise their services.

The New South Wales Government is also committed to keeping stakeholders informed as further details of the transition arrangements become known. The timeline is as follows: the current Home and Community Care agreement between the Commonwealth and New South Wales will cease on 30 June next year, but New South Wales will retain current funding arrangements with providers until at least 30 June 2012; this includes existing service delivery requirements and conditions. The implementation of the new arrangements for basic community care, maintenance and support services will be very carefully managed to ensure continuity of care for clients. The Government will work with the Commonwealth to develop new funding arrangements to come into effect from 1 July 2011, with a smooth transfer to Commonwealth operational responsibility for Home and Community Care services from 1 July 2012. The Commonwealth has committed to not substantially alter service delivery mechanisms before 1 July 2015.

To ensure the breadth of issues is canvassed, the Aged and Community Services Association has been asked to assist to ensure all stakeholders are informed and involved in future discussions on change. The association will work closely with all appropriate industry bodies to ensure that the concerns and issues of social support services are heard and considered in the planning and implementation of the transition. Interested parties can access the Ageing, Disability and Home Care website to participate in the forums and discussions to be hosted by the Aged and Community Services Association around the transition. In the meantime, it is business as usual for the delivery of Home and Community Care services to frail older people, people with a disability and their carers in New South Wales.

We had another boost in the Keneally Government's June budget with an extra \$48.1 million for Home and Community Care services, which will take the current New South Wales Home and Community Care services spend to a record \$585.8 million. This will support the great work done by social service providers in their local communities ensuring that clients and their carers receive quality and timely services to enable them to remain independent at home and in their local communities. Such challenges will only be met through a strong partnership with the community sector. The Keneally Government is determined to implement the Council of Australian Governments' reforms to ensure that there are real improvements to people with a disability, their families and carers across New South Wales.

**The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON:** Can the Minister outline what the New South Wales Government is doing to support people with dementia, their families and carers?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** That is a very important question because Dementia Awareness Week begins on Thursday. By the end of 2012 it is estimated that people with dementia in New South Wales will number 88,000, and by 2030 that number is expected to more than double to 188,000. This creates an enormous challenge for the New South Wales community. Dementia is a disease that causes a progressive decline in a person's functioning. Symptoms include impairments in memory, social skills and the ability to relate to the environment and the people around you. The New South Wales Government is committed to supporting people with dementia, their families and carers. This support occurs in a number of ways.

First, Ageing, Disability and Home Care and NSW Health have worked closely to implement the New South Wales Dementia Action Plan 2007 to 2009. The plan has set out the New South Wales Government's strategic direction for supporting people with dementia, their carers and families. The plan works to create community awareness to ensure that funding is targeted to the right types of support, and that people with dementia and their families are able to easily access information and support services. This will shortly be superseded by the NSW Dementia Services Framework 2010 to 2015. A draft of the framework has been developed through the ongoing partnership between Ageing, Disability and Home Care and NSW Health, and comments from the community are currently being sought.

The framework builds on the initiatives of the action plan and aims to continue to improve the care experience for people with dementia, including those with early onset dementia and their carers. The development of the framework has been informed by extensive expert input and consultation, and completion is anticipated by late 2010. An implementation plan will follow the release of the framework. In addition to this work, in recognition that they face additional barriers in accessing services, people with dementia are identified as a special needs group within the Home and Community Care program. The Home and Community Care program provides a comprehensive range of community support services for older people, people with a

disability and their carers. The program also provides dementia-specific services such as dementia monitoring, dementia counselling, advisory services and dementia day care.

A key New South Wales initiative under the Home and Community Care program is the provision of \$27 million for the construction of 16 purpose-built dementia day care centres across New South Wales. Dementia day care centres provide structured group activities for people with dementia in a day care centre setting. Such services provide valuable social support for people with dementia, and the programs also provide emotional support and respite to their carers. Since June 2009, eight centres have been completed, and a further two centres are due to be completed by the end of September 2010. The remaining centres will open progressively this financial year and shortly thereafter. While most people with dementia are frail aged, the New South Wales Government also recognises the need to support a growing number of younger people with dementia.

Alzheimer's Australia estimates that about 5 per cent of all people with dementia are under 65 years of age and are therefore classified as having younger onset dementia. There are about 5,000 people in New South Wales in this group. People with younger onset dementia are often physically active and many have been working full time when the symptoms of dementia first appear. I had the pleasure recently to visit the Ella Centre in Haberfield where its Mosaic Project was unveiled. This mosaic was designed using the ideas and thoughts of members of the Younger Onset Dementia Social Support Group. During this visit I was also able to announce \$1.36 million in funding to the Ella Centre for a purpose-built dementia day care centre, which will include a sensory garden and easy access for people with a disability. When completed, the new dementia day care centre will complement the existing work of the Ella Centre and provide valuable services for people with dementia, including those with younger onset dementia.

In July this year Premier Keneally and I announced that Alzheimer's Australia NSW will receive \$250,000 in Home and Community Care funding for a two-year research project specifically aimed at improving services and outcomes for people with early onset dementia. This funding is in addition to the existing funding of more than \$1 million that is provided to Alzheimer's Australia NSW for a range of support services for people with dementia and their carers. These services include a dementia resource service, a number of dementia advisory services, and a Dementia Training Carer Education Coordinator.

The diagnosis of dementia is very challenging for individuals and their families and it is critical that all people who need support, especially those from Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, receive information, advice and assistance in a timely and supportive manner. The New South Wales Government has recognised the importance of this and has provided a further grant of \$360,000 to Alzheimer's Australia NSW. This grant will provide funding for a Home and Community Care pilot program in Sydney's south-west specifically aimed at addressing the needs of people with dementia and their families and carers who are from Aboriginal or culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

**CHAIR:** Earlier we spoke about allegations regarding client abuse referred to the Ethics and Professional Standards Unit. Could you tell me how many allegations were made generally? It is my understanding that they are only referred to the Ethics and Professional Standards Unit if they are going to be investigated. Is that correct, and if so how many cases were referred otherwise?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I will ask the chief executive to respond to that.

**Mr MOORE:** Allegations are not always referred to the Ethics and Professional Standards Unit, the central unit. Allegations of the kind we are referring to will always be expected to be referred to the Ethics and Professional Standards Unit, and they are expected to be referred to the unit on the mere making of the allegation, irrespective of whether there is thought to be any substance to them. I would think that would be a decent account of the serious allegations we were talking about in terms of client abuse.

**CHAIR:** Would you be able to give us further details regarding those that are not referred to the Ethics and Professional Standards Unit?

**Mr MOORE:** I am certainly happy to see what data I can get. It becomes very difficult to get an accurate account if it has not been referred to the Ethics and Professional Standards Unit.

**CHAIR:** Could you also tell us the number of reported overdoses or misuses of prescribed medications in 2009-10 amongst those in your care?



**Mr MOORE:** I would be happy to take that on notice; I am not in a position to give it directly here.

**CHAIR:** When you are providing that information, could you also let us know how many of those cases involved a mistake by a support worker?

**Mr MOORE:** Absolutely.

**CHAIR:** Minister, you would be aware that new staffing structures for community-based accommodation respite services are taking place in two phases. I wonder why that is being done in two phases.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** We are pondering what the reference to two phases refers to. But I am happy to try to provide some information, because there have been a number of major management reforms underway in and affecting the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care. These reforms include the formation of the Department of Human Services, including Ageing, Disability and Home Care; the redevelopment of the large residential centres; the implementation of structural reforms associated with the new community living award through improved support structures and group homes, respite centres and in-house support; and the realignment of central office functions. Finally, the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care opened day care program centres to the non-government sector. I can provide additional information on that.

**CHAIR:** Could you also provide the cost of those restructures in terms of wages to the department and what involvement the Public Service Association had in those negotiations?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes, we are happy to take that on notice, and I am happy to give you details on each of those specifically now, if you wish.

**CHAIR:** No, that is fine. In terms of residential support workers level 3, who are currently paid about \$72,165 a year, is it correct that they have been appointed as team leader positions with a salary of \$82,077 a year, without an interview or reference check?

**Mr MOORE:** The process by which we are making the translation from the existing structure to the new one will include consistency with public sector guidelines—there is no exemption from the guidelines—processes that enable us to translate staff from one classification scale to another. It is quite a technical matter, and I would be happy to supply to you with a table that shows how it was all done.

**CHAIR:** By way of clarification, they go from one position to another and get an extra \$10,000 a year under this without an interview, and without your being necessarily sure that they have the experience to undertake those positions?

**Mr MOORE:** It is more complicated than that, in terms of how the process is operating. Now I understand your reference to "two phases" earlier. It is the process by which existing staff translate across. Where those staff are permanent staff, they are done consistent with public service guidelines. We then have phases where long-term temporary staff are considered, and then we will be seeking to fill any vacancies that arise at the end of that process. If you would like, I could provide you with a written explanation of the various steps—in many ways we would say there are four steps to the filling, not two—and show you how each one of those steps is done consistent with public sector guidelines, which are set not by us but by the Premier's department.

**CHAIR:** My information is that if in phase one only one person expressed an interest in a position, they were simply given that position without having to go for an interview.

**Mr MOORE:** Those positions are considered to be sufficiently closely aligned for that to happen.

**CHAIR:** How many residential support workers, grade 3 network managers and managers of accommodation respite previously under investigation for inappropriate behaviour, including sexual, physical, emotional and verbal abuse, have been allocated with new positions in the impending restructure without reference checks?

**Mr MOORE:** Again I need to take that on notice. I am not aware of any specific instance of that, and those sorts of circumstances would seem to me to be not ones that would be accepted, should the allegations prove to be warranted. I would not tolerate anyone being in those circumstances if the allegations had been substantiated.

**CHAIR:** You are confident, Minister, that people doing this restructure from one position to another without going through some of these normal requirements is adequate?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am advised by the chief executive officer that he has met all the requirements as established by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. If you are asking for details of those, I am very happy, as the chief executive has indicated, to provide them. If you have any particular concerns relating to any individual, maybe it is appropriate that you talk with the chief executive office directly.

**CHAIR:** Those who are provided care, their families and other interested people would want to know that the staff caring for these vulnerable people in our society are awarded positions on the basis of merit rather than just sliding across from one position to another. The assurance we want is that everyone is recruited on that basis.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Given that suggestion, I will ask the chief executive to provide whatever additional information he can.

**The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON:** Including the process of performance appraisal.

**Mr MOORE:** I am happy to provide you with some more information in response as best I can to the concerns you are raising. The concerns are the same that we would have. We do not want the families who have members of their family in our care to be in any way concerned. Our approach in relation to this transition to a new structure, which puts much greater supervision on a day-to-day basis inside the team working with the family members, is one that is entirely consistent with public service guidelines. We would not want to be acting outside those or have anyone concerned that that was the case.

**CHAIR:** Would you give us the number of young people with a disability who have been assisted to move to community-based supported accommodation since the Young People in Residential Aged Care Program began?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** By 2012, 121 people would have been provided with supported accommodation through the program, including 70 moving out of residential aged care. As of 20 June 2010, 26 people have been moved into alternative supported accommodation since 2009. An additional 22 clients currently are undergoing transition into new funded accommodation places. The transition process for these clients is expected to be completed within the next six months. Over the next 12 months an additional 73 people will move into supported accommodation. Of these, 70 people will move out of residential aged care into supported accommodation places and three people will be provided a new supported accommodation place by diverting them from entry into residential aged care facilities. These new places will exceed New South Wales targets for the five-year program.

**CHAIR:** Why was a 21-year-old refused assistance from Ageing, Disability and Home Care so that he remained blocking a rehabilitation bed in Port Kembla Hospital for another six months while the hospital attempted to work with Ageing, Disability and Home Care to find accommodation? Having failed in this attempt, he ended up being basically dumped in an aged care facility.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** One of my concerns is that you have clearly identified a particular client. I am advised there are a number of matters relating to the situation that probably are inappropriate to talk about in this public setting. I am more than happy to come back to you privately and talk about it in due course, if that is appropriate. I am happy to talk about general issues, but when we are talking about an individual in an area there may be matters that we need to divulge that are inappropriate to do so.

**CHAIR:** Yes. If this person is 21, one would assume he would qualify for funding under the Young People in Residential Aged Care Program. Could you also tell us why he was not eligible?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** If it is appropriate, I am happy to come back and talk to you individually about it rather than provide public information. I will ask the chief executive to say what he can in relation to this matter generally.

**Mr MOORE:** In terms of your concern about the person being eligible under the Young People in Residential Aged Care Program, that is not a general eligibility program for anybody and everybody. It was a program set up jointly funded by the Commonwealth.

**CHAIR:** It is not based on age?

**Mr MOORE:** The target was to get the younger people, particularly people under 50, out of nursing homes. But it did not come with sufficient resources to enable every single person under 50 who wished to leave to leave. That is an ongoing discussion between us and the Commonwealth about how to ensure the Commonwealth retains its funding responsibilities in this space. That is the point the Minister was making in answer to an earlier question about the changes in funding arrangements coming out of the Hospital and Health Reform Agreement opening up the possibility of some better negotiations with the Commonwealth to ensure that they do not effectively shift their funding responsibility for people who need nursing-type care onto the State Government without any formal compensation whatsoever to the State Government.

**CHAIR:** You referred to 26 people moving into residential aged care. Can you tell us how many have been forced into nursing homes as a result of a lack of availability of State Government-funded supported accommodation?

**Mr MOORE:** We are not in a position to answer such questions. We do not have data from the Commonwealth that would allow us to identify that level of detail. All we are aware of from the survey data the Commonwealth gives us is that the number of people aged under 50 in nursing homes or residential aged care facilities has increased by five over the past year.

**CHAIR:** Has increased?

**Mr MOORE:** The total number of people has increased by five.

**CHAIR:** You must know the figure for the other years.

**Mr MOORE:** In the previous year I think it went down. It has been in the low 300s for several years. I am happy to give you what data we have here by year on the under 50s.

**CHAIR:** Can you tell us the number of under 50s currently living in aged care facilities? How many did you say that was?

**Mr MOORE:** As at May 2010 the Australian Government data told us that there were 312 people under 50 years of age living permanently in a residential aged care facility in New South Wales. This is an increase of five people from the previous survey, which was January 2010, by the Australian Government. Those facilities are not operated by the State Government. They are Australian Government owned and operated or funded services. They control the data and provide us with limited—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It is also important to remember that on the statistics we have about 49 per cent of those people who would be eligible under this scheme actually indicated a desire to remain in the residential aged care facility.

**CHAIR:** You say it is not age based. Are people between 55 and 65 years able to access these care packages?

**Mr MOORE:** The care packages that we are talking about have all been fully allocated. It was a program of five years. We surveyed all the available people and we have filled up the available funding. It is not a general standing program that is available for people to automatically seek assistance from. We do try to help people, but it is not a general eligibility program.

**CHAIR:** Do you have strategies in place to make sure that that age group does not get admitted early into aged care?

**Mr MOORE:** We have. The most significant strategy that we have is the Attendant Care Program and its complement within the Home Care Service, which is called the High Need Pool. It has programs that can provide quite intensive in-home support for people who are able to continue to direct their own care by and large. That is a significant contributor to helping us divert people from going into nursing homes and, in some instances, has enabled people to leave and return to the community—but very few instances, I would admit. I do not want to mislead you there.

**CHAIR:** Are you going to announce the next five-year funding arrangement for Stronger Together by the end of this calendar year?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The Premier indicated at the consultation we had with the key stakeholders about a month ago, and we put out a press release, that that is what we would be doing.

**CHAIR:** Is the requested figure to Treasury by the department \$2.6 billion?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** This is a matter for Cabinet. I am not prepared to discuss it.

**CHAIR:** Is the Treasurer making it difficult for you in terms of the funding?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** What I am really pleased about is that when I became Minister I was able to go around 13 community consultations and I met people all around New South Wales who have a variety of different disabilities. I spoke to their carers and I spoke to service organisations and, as a consequence of hosting those in Chatswood, Drummoyne, Gymea, Narellan, Parramatta, Bathurst, Dubbo, Lismore, Newcastle, Tamworth, Wollongong, Queanbeyan and Wagga Wagga, I saw about 300 people. That really enabled me to come to terms, looking at people, with how this portfolio is very much about people.

**CHAIR:** So you are asking for double the money then?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** What I am seeking to do with everyone involved in this is to express in the best possible way to everyone the needs of those people. At the Premier's roundtable on 23 August we released a report to people looking at the results of those consultations and noting, for instance, that increased funding was a recurring theme amongst clients, but also there was a whole range of other things that they were seeking such as a cultural change to move from a simple service delivery function to one that engaged with the person with a disability—a whole range of things came up there and that is what is informing our Cabinet process at the moment.

*[Short adjournment]*

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** I would like to ask Mr Moore some very simple questions about one of my favourite areas of work, home modification and maintenance. Is the number of completed jobs increasing in comparison over a period of previous years? I had the idea the Government might like to phase out this area of work.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The home modification service is funded under Home and Community Care to provide structural changes to the homes of frail older people and younger people with a disability and their carers so that they can continue to live and move safely around their home. That is, by the way, of direct relevance to the Younger People in Residential Aged Care program we were talking about earlier. In 2009 the Home and Community Care program allocated a total of \$20.9 million to the program, including \$4.1 million additional non-recurrent funding to help reduce the backlog of requests.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** Was that an increase over previous years?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** That means an estimated 15,000 clients received services. Home modification services, as you would be well aware, includes the fitting of rails and ramps, renovations to kitchens and bathrooms and the installation of other safety and mobility aids. Home modifications also refer to any work on the fabric of a dwelling or yard which changes it to make it safer, more accessible or easier to use. Home modifications are generally designed with the assistance of an occupational therapist to ensure the design is customised to best address client needs. There are three levels I will detail because it is important when I give

you the statistics: Level one for work costing up to \$7,500, level two for work costing from \$5,000 up to \$25,000 and level three for work costing more than \$25,000.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** My main concern is that this work is continuing to develop or is it being curtailed?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** No. The expenditure for the budget 2010-11, the recurrent funding was \$18.3 million.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** In comparison to previous years?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The recurrent funding was \$14.8 million in 2008-09, in 2009-10 \$16.8 million and in 2010-11 \$18.3 million.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** I understand there would also be a similar increase in the number of clients serviced. I am happy with that.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** In 2008-09 more than 14,600 clients received home modifications.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** Can I follow that up with another issue concerning respite care in disability services, that is, the overnight centres for respite care where a person—often a young person—is able to go into overnight care? I noticed that in a report the Auditor-General raised some concerns about your department's management and, in particular, the management of overnight respite care. Do you have performance targets in that area? Have they been met? Have you got the software into place now which will handle bookings efficiently?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Are there any other questions? I will ask the chief executive to comment on that.

**Mr MOORE:** The Auditor-General's performance audit into our overnight respite effectively asked us to speed up the introduction of the booking system—

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** That is right, new software.

**Mr MOORE:** That is right, and that we are doing, but it is not yet in place. It is expected to be in place in 2011 and that will enable us to more effectively allocate and manage the respite capacity that we operate, and we will be working with the non-government organisation sector to get a better integration with them in due course as well, but—

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** I will just comment, Mr Moore, that the homeless persons sector of non-government organisations has used this system for at least 15 years and every hotel in Sydney has software enabling it to book in advance. Why is it taking so long for the department to get this software?

**Mr MOORE:** The software that we are developing not only deals with the relatively simple matter of the allocation of beds and lining a person up with a particular bed, but it also needs to deal with the determination of people's needs, the holding of information about particular people's needs and the allocation of priorities around different sorts of people, different sorts of needs, and it is the prioritisation process that is where we are different from a hotel system. It is not that everyone turns up and, if there is a vacancy, they get it. We have to allocate across a whole variety of requests and we are in the process of doing that in conjunction with a policy setting within respite, which is trying to make sure that those people, where centre-based respite will have the most impact in terms of enabling them to continue to provide care, get greater degrees of certainty and greater blocks of care and that we then have a cascading ranking which will enable, as you effectively move down the scale, people to plug the gaps in between.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** You would be fairly confident that, if both of us are here next year at this time, I will get an answer to the question saying it is now operating well?

**Mr MOORE:** You will certainly get an answer and, short of there being—as IT system rollouts can always have—some unforeseen complication, we are confident.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** There was a Federal Government inquiry into hearing health in Australia and the committee recommended that public counters in all government service shopfronts be accessible to people with a hearing impairment through the provision of hearing loop technology. What role does the New South Wales Government have in participating in a project like this? What processes will the New South Wales Government adopt that would ensure that all State government agencies and all local government comply with these recommendations?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am advised that that would be a matter for each agency.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Your department would not have an overarching role or be able to give some support to that type of initiative at a State level?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I will refer that to the chief executive.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** I am just wondering if there is a role for your department to encourage on some level, be it official or otherwise, looking at that as a worthwhile project across New South Wales?

**Mr MOORE:** We encourage, through our disability action plan process, all agencies to adopt appropriate strategies for enabling access to services, and that is an expectation that each agency will develop its disability action plan, which is appropriate for its particular operations. We have not, as a matter of course, been the agency that has pursued every single New South Wales government agency to adopt particular strategies and we do not have teams within the agency that get heavily involved in those sorts of strategies. It is for other agencies to pursue as they can and are able to.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Do you give in principle support?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The in-principle support is that we will seek to work through all of the appropriate avenues in the best interests of people with disabilities. I always make clear is that everyone is responsible for people with disabilities; that is, all agencies at all levels of government. It cannot be the responsibility of one particular agency. I would not like this to be seen as the responsibility of only one agency. The New South Wales Health Ministerial Standing Committee on Hearing, which was established in 2004, sets strategic directions for hearing services in this State, including the development of a hearing health network and a focus on early intervention, including improvement of infant screening and hearing.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** I will probably leave it at that; it is indicative. Has the Government undertaken to address issues or has it already implemented strategies to address the issues identified during the December 2009 "What's Up West?" Youth Action and Policy Association [YAPA] of New South Wales Western Sydney Youth Conference report?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The YAPA report?

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Yes, looking at western Sydney. One of the issues identified was that many more same-sex attracted youth experience physical and verbal abuse and violence than their heterosexual peers. Has any action been taken in that regard?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am happy to take that question on notice. I receive advice on YAPA's activities and I have been to its functions. We are developing a new youth policy framework for young people age 12 to 25 years. That has been organised and managed through Communities New South Wales. The strategy will deliver the best possible opportunities for young people for work, study, sport and recreation, and actively involve them in community life. The strategy is being developed in partnership with young people, families, youth organisations such as YAPA, service providers and a range of government agencies. The Youth Advisory Council has a lead role in consultations with young people on youth issues and will be actively involved. We are happy to provide more information.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** I am sure you are mindful of the extra pressure on same-sex-attracted youth, gay youth. Is there anything in the report that focuses on the extra intensity of the issues faced by young people with those potential sexual orientations in their local community, school community and peer groups?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The aim of this report is to take account of the needs of young people who are in a variety of acknowledged disadvantaged or special needs situations. That includes the group to which you have referred. It also includes, for instance, young people in rural and regional New South Wales.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** And the whole lot combined?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Has any action been taken to address these issues? Is there anything specific you can pinpoint?

**Ms MILLS:** As part of the development of the strategy we are reviewing the existing policy by working with each agency that has responsibilities in that area. Obviously that includes the areas to which you have referred—that is, the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Justice and Attorney General, and the Department of Human Services—to ascertain what goals have been achieved under the existing plan. The new plan, which will be developed over the balance of 2010, will address any remaining issues in terms of commitments of the type to which you referred.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Minister, are you aware that access to public transport remains very difficult for young people given that even with concessions fares are sometimes prohibitive? Is any action being taken in that regard?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It would be probably best to address that issue to the Minister for Transport.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Is it not an issue for the Youth portfolio as a specific area?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It is the responsibility of the Minister for Transport with regard to specific transport matters and the Minister for Health with regard to specific health matters. If you are asking detailed questions about concerns that young people may have about the operation of the Department of Transport and what should happen, I cannot talk about the responsibilities of the Minister for Transport.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Have you or has your department made representations to either Transport Minister in the past year about concessions for young people on aged-based rates of pay and job seekers in particular?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I have not, but I cannot speak for the department.

**Ms MILLS:** Not on a formal basis, but obviously issues relating to access are part of the current discussions.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** One of the groups that I am very pleased to work with is the Youth Advisory Council. It is one of the ministerial councils that have been established. It involves young people aged between 12 and 25 who self-nominate for membership. They set their own work priorities and deal with a number of youth issues. For example, most recently they have been examining the impact of driver licence requirements in New South Wales and their impact on young people and a number of other issues relating to transport. However, I have not received its most recent report on that matter.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Have you played any role in working to find ways to improve access to housing? It was identified as a 2010-11 priority in the 2010-14 Youth Action Plan.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am advised that the department had input into the homelessness strategy developed by the Department of Housing, which is the appropriate way to proceed.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** How many young people have utilised the services provided by the South West Sydney Youth Hub? This program was touted in the 2010-14 Youth Action Plan as a learning opportunity. Has any assessment of its effectiveness been undertaken to date?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I will take that question on notice.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** If not, can you indicate on notice when the department intends to conduct such an assessment?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** We fund a range of programs. As the member is aware, agencies also receive funding from local government, the Commonwealth Government and private agencies. If you wish to ask these questions, I am happy to take them on notice.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** I will perhaps put some questions on notice. Is there anything you would like to add?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** No. I am happy to talk about youth projects and Better Futures and arrangements for those, but they are under review at the moment.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** In relation to volunteering, does the State under any circumstances or at any time provide insurance for volunteers operating under local government?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am advised the answer is no. If you are talking about agencies such as the Rural Fire Service, the State Emergency Service and a whole range of others, I point out that there were about 1.67 million volunteers at the last census in New South Wales. It would be appropriate to seek the advice of the Minister for Emergency Services on the specific details of how those agencies work.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** I will get that opportunity, but I will ask further questions in the next round.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Minister, can you outline the New South Wales Government's strategy in relation to volunteering?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I thank the honourable member for his question. As I indicated a few moments ago, the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that there are around 1.7 million formal volunteers in New South Wales who give more than 241 million hours of voluntary work to the New South Wales community. I am always inspired by the invaluable contribution that our volunteers make to the social fabric of our State, representing the backbone of many sporting, cultural, artistic, environmental and community organisations. I do not think anyone should pretend that volunteers get the recognition, or more importantly the support, they deserve. The fact is we need to do it better across Australia.

That issue is recognised in the New South Wales Government's State Plan, which sets a target of increasing the proportion of the total community involved in volunteering by 10 per cent by 2016. My strong view is that we need to attract more people to volunteering from groups that are underrepresented across the community. Not only that, we need to understand how to retain those volunteers, which is perhaps an even harder challenge, but we are well on the way. I read an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* just last week that referred to a report by the British-based Charities Aid Foundation. The report suggested that Australia ranks equal first with New Zealand as a nation of givers.

Some 38 per cent of Australians had donated their time in the month prior to the publishing of the survey, so we are working from a pretty good base. The New South Wales numbers I cited a moment ago are what we call formal volunteers—that is, people who give their time through recognised agencies and organisations and who acknowledge that fact when it comes time for the census. The part we struggle to quantify is the level of informal volunteering—those people who help out wherever they can, often within their local communities, but who often do not even realise they are volunteering and so do not put their hand up at the time of the census.

One of the most important things we can do to help with our objectives is to develop a clear strategy and the volunteering unit in Communities NSW is working busily to produce exactly that. There are five broad action and policy areas to influence both the demand and supply of volunteering. They are: making it easier to volunteer; attracting, training and retaining volunteers; diversifying the volunteer workforce; promoting the value of volunteering; and supporting regional volunteering. We are doing these things in a number of ways.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** And then appreciating them.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Being appreciated, as Reverend Moyes suggests, is very important. That is why a lot of our activities involve showing that volunteers are appreciated. For example, in 2007 the



New South Wales Government announced the introduction of the New South Wales Premier's Student Volunteering Awards program to encourage high school students in years 9 and 10 to volunteer, and committed approximately \$8 million in funding. Following a successful pilot in 20 schools in 2009, the New South Wales Department of Education and Training has this year launched the New South Wales Premier's Student Volunteering Awards program, which is open to all government schools with students enrolled in years 9 and/or 10. The awards program is non-mandatory but encourages years 9 and 10 students to undertake a minimum of 20 hours of school and community volunteering during those two years of enrolment. Students become eligible for certificates of acknowledgement when they reach the milestones of 20, 40, 60 and 80 hours of volunteering.

Government funding for this program has aided, for example, a small team at the Department of Education and Training's Curriculum Directorate to develop resources, including promotional materials and an information and resource website, the appointment of part-time regional coordinators for each of the 10 education regions, grants to schools to assist designated school coordinators, release time to attend professional learning workshops to implement and manage the program, and the development of an online software application to manage student volunteering data. As Minister for Youth I have a strong interest in the participation of young people and understand there is a strong link between youth participation and volunteering and, just as importantly, between young people volunteering and how they will do in school as well as socially.

Many students are volunteers within the school environment, from participating in student councils through to high school students coaching younger kids in a range of school sports. It is important for young people to have the opportunity to volunteer in these and other activities. The bottom line—getting kids out there and volunteering—is a win-win. It is good for the community and it is good for the kids' development. That is why we put funding in to make sure students have the opportunity to participate in volunteering activities as part of their curriculum.

The Government has also been working to expand emergency service volunteering, with a focus on diversifying the volunteering base. In support of the State Emergency Service volunteers, the SES Volunteer Association [SESVA] was established in early 2010. Modelled on the Rural Fire Service Volunteer Association, the SESVA gives volunteers a voice in the operation of their SES branches, encouraging greater participation and input from the most significant sector of the State Emergency Service's workforce. We have also seen the growth of both the State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Service cadet programs, which are also operated through the New South Wales Government school system. In 2009 both the RFS and SES cadet programs culminated with the Cadet of the Year Award process being implemented, with the first presentations occurring in March 2010. In 2010-11 the volunteering unit continues to monitor the progress of both of these programs.

The Young People in Emergency Services Forum was held last month to build on initiatives such as the RFS and SES cadet programs. The forum focused on recruiting and training young people as volunteers in emergency service organisations by developing and utilising existing community, local and peer-to-peer networks. The forum was organised in partnership with Emergency Management NSW. Another encouraging activity is the partnership between the SES and the Adult and Community Education Unit of the New South Wales Department of Education and Training to increase the number of Aboriginal people volunteering in the SES. We want more indigenous people participating in volunteering because, as with young people, there is a double pay-off here. Not only are Aboriginal people terrific volunteers, but volunteering opens up possibilities for employment. We all know the issues surrounding Aboriginal unemployment and the need to close the gap.

The partnership between the SES and the Adult and Community Education Unit has enabled the SES to extend a program piloted in Moree in 2007 to a range of other communities. In 2008-09 training was conducted in Taree, Wagga Wagga, Cabbage Tree Island, Toomala, Boggabilla, Nowra, Shoalhaven, Lismore, Cowra, Condobolin, Lake Cargelligo and Malabugilmah. In 2009 the program was also extended to reach culturally and linguistically diverse communities, another target group, with training conducted in Hurstville, Armidale, Tamworth and Newcastle.

To date the program has achieved a retention rate of more than 87 per cent amongst Aboriginal participants and 80 per cent amongst participants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. That is an extraordinary success rate by anyone's measure. At a more basic level, through Communities NSW, we are looking at practical ways to let people know about volunteering—things like improving our website so it can direct people to the right activities and right locations that they are interested in. Another opportunity is using superannuation funds to help us reach retirees and let them know about volunteering opportunities. I have always believed that opening up the lines of communication with basic initiatives like this is important.

The Government, any government, is not particularly good at communicating what it is doing and trying to deal with the real world, but through the activities of Communities New South Wales we are working on that. Getting the message across about the various activities we are involved with through volunteers is a particularly effective way of ensuring the local community understands the enormous range of activities, the enormous amounts of inspirational projects and programs that are occurring within the New South Wales Government at the moment. These are practical strategies. They are all aimed at our target of increasing the proportion of the total community involved in volunteering by 20 per cent by 2016.

**The Hon. TONY CATANZARITI:** Minister, what is the New South Wales Government doing to support community organisations to achieve this volunteering strategy?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Apart from the community engagement and diversification strategies, the New South Wales Government, as I have indicated, is in planning to expand the pool of volunteers across the community. There is some important behind-the-scenes work being done too. The New South Wales Government has acknowledged the need to relieve the administrative burden on volunteer organisations in order to support them in recruitment and retention of volunteers. This is a tougher issue, in my opinion, and there is more grey than black and white. How do we protect the vulnerable while not overburdening community organisations with regulation? Through the Council of Australian Governments, State and Federal governments have been examining the issue of regulation and working to identify mechanisms to simplify regulatory and reporting requirements where appropriate.

The national standard chart of accounts, which was approved by the Council of Australian Governments in April 2010, is an important step in the right direction. The chart of accounts standardises the way the Government funders, at both state and federal levels, seek basic financial information from the not-for-profit sector. This allows the not-for-profit organisations to report in a consistent format, reducing the amount of time and effort required to produce financial reporting, particularly for those organisations that operate across State borders. Previously multistate organisations may have been required to provide varying financial reporting for each of the jurisdictions in which they operate. This is no longer the case in relation to basic reporting, reducing a significant administrative burden and catering for the diverse reporting requirements of different government funders. At a State level, these issues are also being examined.

Recent changes to the Associations Incorporation Act focused on streamlining registration and reporting processes and processes for incorporated associations, and these represent an early gain from this process. Such steps are small but significant and can mean a big difference to small- to medium-sized community organisations in particular. Considerable change has been foreshadowed by my colleague Linda Burney, the coordinating Minister for human services, with the release of the non-government organisation red tape production report. Short-term actions recommended by the report include: reduce information required from non-government organisations in tendering processes where information has already been collected by agencies through a tendering or monitoring processes; develop and apply standard questions across all agencies for non-government organisation tenders on capability, management and financial viability; introduce word limits on tenders; introduce e-tendering, which is optional, and ensure information requested in tenders does not compromise the e-process; standardise insurance requirements in funding agreements; introduce common thresholds for audit requirements and consolidated audits supported by a project-based income and expenditure statements and harmonise those thresholds with the Associations Incorporation Act; accept audited statements from all professional accounting or auditing bodies that meet Australian auditing standards; and introduce a standard chart of accounts for funding agencies, reflecting the outcome of the Council of Australian Governments on 7 December last year.

These recommendations were developed by the Department of Premier and Cabinet in consultation with non-government organisations and peak bodies and will have a significant impact on streamlining tendering processes. Collectively, these changes and processes demonstrate quite strongly that the Government is cognisant of the issue and we are doing our utmost to address it. The New South Wales Government has also assisted organisations with a better understanding of compliance issues and obligations. For example, Fair Trading has developed a range of information sheets to assist with a range of issues relevant to recent changes. These are available at the Fair Trading website.

In 2009 the volunteering unit launched the New South Wales Government volunteering web portal, which is [www.volunteering.nsw.gov.au](http://www.volunteering.nsw.gov.au), to help volunteers and small- to medium-sized organisations to better navigate volunteering opportunities across government. The site also contains the guide to volunteering, which is specifically targeted at small- to medium-sized organisations and is aimed at assisting them with a range of

issues relevant to these organisation, including compliance matters. The Charities Branch of Communities New South Wales is also revising its comprehensive best practices guidelines to assist fundraising charitable organisations with navigating regulations impacted on by recent reforms. A range of other information and resources are also available at the communitybuilders website.

What I have found in my time as Minister for Volunteering is that this is an area in which we struggled only a few years ago, but I am confident we are now making strides in the right direction and look forward to making further contributions to achieve the New South Wales Government's volunteering strategy.

**The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON:** I have two questions I will put on notice. Will the Minister explain what the New South Wales Government is doing to address the needs of our young people through the Better Futures Fund? Will the Minister update the Committee on the current status of the Commission for Children and Young People review, which is very important. But the question I am going to ask you now here is will the Minister tell us about the Companion Card and some of the reactions that you have seen to its introduction?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** This is an excellent initiative and I am very pleased with it. The New South Wales Government introduced the Companion Card to assist people with a disability who need a carer to better participate in the community. The program commenced on 1 March 2009. The Companion Card recognises that a carer is indispensable to a person with a significant and lifelong disability. The card is provided to people who always or usually require the assistance of a carer in their daily lives to access the community, with eligibility based on the needs of a person with a disability. The card is free and is not means tested.

It is estimated that it will be easier for about 25,000 people in New South Wales to improve access to the community, everyday services and events. In addition to public buses and trains, there has been strong support for the card from the private sector, particularly entertainment and sporting businesses, with over 1,950 businesses signing up as partners as at July this year. This means that a person with a disability and their carer will be able to catch the train into the city and also be able to enjoy the theatre or cinema for the price of a single figure. Many businesses have signed up as partners or affiliates to this initiative. Businesses that have recently come on board include the Cobar Museum Visitors Centre, the Nan Tien Buddhist temple in Unanderra, Lane Cove Council and Aquatic Centre and the North Ryde RSL community club. National Disability Services administers the scheme on the Government's behalf. As at March issue over 7,750 Companion Cards had been issued. In June this year Companion Card assessed and improved over 480 clients from residential facilities for people with a disability and over 100 cardholders from nursing homes. Ageing, Disability and Home Care has received positive feedback from the public about this program, as have I. One family recently advised:

Moneywise it's more affordable as we don't have to pay for the carer. It has expanded venues we access and we now look at the website to access different venues and events.

There has also been some much appreciated positive feedback from a broad spectrum across the sector. The National Convenor of the Carers Alliance, Nell Brown, commented in a local newspaper that she thought the scheme was "totally brilliant". She goes on to say:

When you are talking about two for one tickets the Companion Card reduces the cost and makes it viable to go out. It will make it more affordable for the poorest of the poor to access venues willing to give them a break.

**CHAIR:** I have a couple of questions in relation to the Disability Services portfolio. Minister, is it true that the home modification level three funding for 2009-10 was spent by December 2009 and, if so, can you tell us how many people were on a waiting list and how many people with a disability were delayed from being discharged from hospital because of that?

**Mr MOORE:** Some aspects of your question I would need to take on notice. We have previously answered questions on this by pointing out that we do not hold information on numbers of people who have made requests. There are some 90, I think it is, home modification organisations. We have had discussions with the provider of the level three, the highest level home modifications. Last year we gave them a four and a bit million dollar one-off injection, which we understood enabled them to meet the main pressures they were facing, but I am happy to go away and see what extra information we can get about that and bring it back for you.

**CHAIR:** And who was impacted. That would be great. How many families made the decision to relinquish responsibility of their loved one to the State Government due to being in a crisis situation—being unable to cope? If you could break it down into how many children and how many adults, that would be useful.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Clients who have been relinquished into out-of-home care in 2009-10—adults, 53; children, that is up to 16 years of age, 9; young people 16 and 17 years of age, 10. That gives us a total of 72. I will ask the chief executive to elaborate to clarify any of those figures.

**Mr MOORE:** Relinquishment does not refer just to crisis. It is any instance where the family has been unable to continue caring. "Crisis" is the most common, but it would also include unexpected death. We would have a breakdown of the full range of things.

**CHAIR:** Thank you. In terms of the department's expenditure, how much was spent statewide on staff over time and penalties in 2009-10 for Ageing Disability and Home Care-operated respite care facilities?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** We do not have that degree of disaggregation. We will take that question on notice.

**CHAIR:** Will you also take on notice the same details for Ageing Disability and Home Care-operated group home facilities?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** I note that in 2008-09 Ageing Disability and Home Care overpayments were approximately \$1,570,677. Were those overpayments redeemed?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I will ask the chief executive to answer that.

**Mr MOORE:** Where they were economically feasible to redeem and where we were able to contact the staff member, so in instances where staff members had left, it is much more difficult to redeem, but I am happy to get you the exact details of just where we are in the redemption process, the collection process, because we have the situation where it cuts both ways; there are also underpayments that we have for staff. I can get you the detail about where we are with correction of under and over payments.

**CHAIR:** You might want to include in the response the cumulative amount at that time was approximately \$3,165,000. When did the cumulative data on overpayment start?

**Mr MOORE:** We would always have had data on overpayments but some time during the 2007-08 period we moved to an upgraded new information technology system that enabled us to be much more effective at monitoring specific breakdowns of wages and people's entitlements. There were a number of teething problems with those that resulted in a number of overpayments, which we have subsequently been correcting, so I am happy to also give you an historical picture.

**CHAIR:** Thank you. Could you break that down into regions as well?

**Mr MOORE:** Most likely, yes.

**CHAIR:** How much did Ageing Disability and Home Care overpay non-government organisations during 2009-10?

**Mr MOORE:** I am not aware of any substantial overpayments. I am happy to check for you.

**CHAIR:** Could also tell us what steps you take to recoup those overpayments, if there are any?

**Mr MOORE:** Just let me clarify one matter with you. There is a distinction between an overpayment and where contractually a non-government organisation may, for a variety of reasons, not fully equip an expenditure. I would be dealing just with where there has been an overpayment.

**CHAIR:** In terms of flexible respite packages, the information I have is that 180 families on the North Shore had missed out on flexible respite packages, is that correct?

**Mr MOORE:** I am not aware of such number.

**CHAIR:** Do you have any idea of how many have missed out on those packages?

**Mr MOORE:** I am not sure of what this is a reference to, I am sorry.

**CHAIR:** I guess it is families who have had a package in the past, have been denied having a package and may have applied for a package and do not get accepted and given that package?

**Mr MOORE:** I can get you on notice, but we have to be precise about two things: one is people who have applied for and not received respite in the northern part of Sydney and those who may have held a respite package and are now no longer receiving that, I am aware of some instances where that has taken place. I am happy to get you a piece of data about both of those circumstances.

**CHAIR:** If you could. It would also be good if you could tell us how many families were unsuccessful in their application. Is that possible?

**Mr MOORE:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Is the value of those packages a different amount for different families?

**Mr MOORE:** There are different programs that may fall under the general banner of flexible respite; the general arrangement is that a dollar quantum is associated with each.

**CHAIR:** So is it a certain amount of dollars per person no matter where they live? There is not a differentiation between regions or anything like that?

**Mr MOORE:** There are some degrees of flexibility in terms of how an individual respite provider and the department, at the local level, sort out how to make things practical on the ground. But the general policy setting within those necessary flexibilities is that there is a quantum set for a particular program like this and then the provider and the family work out how to do the best with it—or the caseworker, the provider and the family.

**CHAIR:** If a family has more than one member with a disability—for example, they may have two children with a disability—are they able to pull that amount of respite money or does it still have to stay with the individual?

**Mr MOORE:** I will have to check on that. That is not something that I have specifically dealt with personally. Will you allow me to check that for you?

**CHAIR:** Sure. In terms of managing those flexible respite care packages, if a family was unhappy with their respite care provider, are they able to transfer to another provider that they think would be more efficient?

**Mr MOORE:** In relation to the program I think you were referring to—

**CHAIR:** The flexible respite—

**Mr MOORE:** I suspect the answer to that is no, but that is not to say we could not make arrangements for a person in a particular set of circumstances. We run the flexible respite program by going to particular providers and providing them with the funding and working on the placement, sort of coordinating the placement of individuals with those particular providers. Where there are particular issues, that gives us the capacity to deal with an unhappy client, an unhappy family, but that would be working individually with the family not as a specific policy setting.

**CHAIR:** But you are happy to do that?

**Mr MOORE:** There seems to be little point in persevering with a provider-family arrangement if it is not working out. The whole point is to give them respite to get a good outcome for the family. We have got to

be mindful of not undermining a provider's capacity to provide service. Within those bounds that seems a pointless exercise; I am sure you would agree.

**CHAIR:** Earlier today in another portfolio we talked about Federal Government responsibilities. Can you tell us how the transfer of Home and Community Care to the Federal Government will be implemented?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I thought I answered that earlier in the day but I am happy to answer that question again.

**CHAIR:** No, if you have already answered it.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am happy to elucidate. We spent quite a period of time on it.

**CHAIR:** We really want to know if you are making sure there will be a smooth handover. Particularly with policies, procedures and funding structures, what are you putting in place to ensure that there will be consistent and equitable services for people who are under the age of 65? To give us a better idea, could you also tell us how many people under the age of 65 receive domestic services from Home and Community Care?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I can tell you that in 2008-09 the Home and Community Care program in New South Wales provided assistance to approximately 233,100 clients, with 80.4 per cent—or 185,300—aged 65 years or older.

**CHAIR:** So we assume the rest are under 65?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I will give you the short version but I am very happy, if you wish, to give you the long version.

**CHAIR:** I am sure you would be but perhaps in the Government members' time you could give the longer version. Just the short version will suffice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** This is a very complex and important area. You have asked me a number of questions about the Council of Australian Governments and aged care reforms. I answered earlier on—

**CHAIR:** Good, then I will read the *Hansard* for the answer.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It is nice to know that my answers are being considered.

**CHAIR:** What are the administration costs of the Home and Community Care programs for 2009-10?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am advised it is about \$6 million.

**CHAIR:** About?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes, it is set on a formula.

**CHAIR:** What is the State-Commonwealth breakdown for Home and Community Care programs in 2009-10 in terms of funding?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Were you after 2009-10 or 2010-11?

**CHAIR:** You can give us both numbers.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am happy to. In terms of Home and Community Care matched funding: in 2009-10 for the Australian Government it was \$351.23 million, and for New South Wales it was \$235.62 million; and in 2010-11 for the Australian Government it is \$374.25 million, and for New South Wales it is \$251.06 million.

**CHAIR:** Could you tell us what percentage of services will be provided by non-government organisations relative to the government sector by the end of the Stronger Together plan?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** We are talking about the Premier announcing Stronger Together towards the end of this calendar year. At that point we will be making that announcement to be included in the package.

**CHAIR:** I am not asking you to tell me the dollar figure; we have been there. I am asking you to tell me the percentage breakdown between non-government organisations and government provision. You are not able to tell me that either?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It is a matter for Cabinet. We will be making an announcement about Stronger Together II towards the end of this calendar year.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** I am not quite sure who answered this question; it might have been Ms Mills. I have noted in the report there were 2,000 unemployed youth to undertake prevocational training courses. In which geographic areas are those courses?

**Ms MILLS:** I will have to take that on notice.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** You do not cut across any other programs being run by other departments in those 2,000 unemployed youth doing prevocational training?

**Ms MILLS:** We work very closely with the Department of Education and Training and also with the Commonwealth—

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** TAFE?

**Ms MILLS:** Through TAFE, and also a significant number of pre-employment programs are funded through the Commonwealth Government. We ensure best value for money by targeting where it is most needed.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** You do not cover the same ground. You said you work closely?

**Ms MILLS:** We work very hard not to duplicate services in any area, yes.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** Why do you do them then if we have these other agencies in the same field?

**Ms MILLS:** We do not directly do them in the way that a TAFE does. We provide support through certain non-government organisations that provide similar programs. But effectively we leave the ground of prevocational training for young people to the Department of Education and Training.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** Minister, I want to ask you a question about volunteers, an area I know you enjoy.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** This week we celebrate the Sydney Olympics held 10 years ago. Given the thousands of people involved in the celebrations tomorrow, is your department involved in any way in helping those people celebrate?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** In terms of myself, I am certainly attending on Wednesday.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** With tens of thousands of people expected to gather, is the department doing anything?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** If we wish to come back to it, I can talk about some of the announcements I have already made in relation to travel and transport, which I announced this morning on radio. Perhaps I will ask Ms Mills to talk about the role that Communities NSW more broadly has had in relation to the Sydney Olympic Park Authority.

**Ms MILLS:** When you are asking about the department of Communities NSW, the Sydney Olympic Park Authority is the lead part of our agency supporting the celebrations for the Olympics tomorrow. As the Minister just said, a number of special initiatives have been put in place to assist volunteers to get there. But a large part of the program is being administered by the Australian Olympic Committee itself.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** Because that kind of volunteering is so significant, and has been in the past, what future major events in New South Wales are being planned for the use of large numbers of volunteers?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The issue remains that virtually no activities that occur—and I include children's support on the weekends—do not involve volunteers.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** That is a misunderstanding. I am not referring to where volunteers are engaged. What is the department doing to promote significant numbers of volunteers in major events?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I will ask Ms Mills to answer that question. But I stress that you do not organise activities on a large scale in New South Wales—

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** We did for the Olympics. We organised large-scale volunteer recruitment, deployment, training and appreciation for volunteers during the Olympics. I am asking what future major events will involve your department—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Reverend Moyes, my simple point to you is that you do not have large-scale events or activities in New South Wales that do not involve volunteers.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** I am aware of soccer mums and all the rest—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am sorry, but I go to a whole range of different activities around New South Wales—for instance, to the Royal Easter Show. People in New South Wales who plan large-scale activities always plan to involve large numbers of volunteers.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** Can I ask you a slightly different question? What major events are coming up in the next year or two in which your department is currently involved in planning the recruitment, deployment, training and appreciation of volunteers?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I will ask Ms Mills to answer that.

**Ms MILLS:** The issue of major events planning obviously rests with the Minister for Major Events, Minister Greene. So I cannot speak of any specific ones, other than those that are currently in train.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** He would have contacted you and said, "Look, I want to have 5,000 volunteers for the V8 Supercar racing at Homebush, and I want to have 1,000 volunteers to work as marshals in the Repco rally."

**Ms MILLS:** The way things are structured, generally the organising agency takes a lead role in understanding the type of volunteers that are needed, and we support them. The most recent large-scale volunteering project of the type we are speaking about was the World Masters Games, which were held in October last year.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** Yes, that is exactly what I mean, that kind of thing.

**Ms MILLS:** Obviously, our department, with a number of parts of the department, was actively involved in the organisation of the Games. But there was in that instance a specific statutory authority established within my department as part of the Games organising arrangements, and we supported that through a number of branches in the department. That included assisting them with administrative support, connecting to volunteer organisations, and very specifically connecting to sports organisations to get volunteers for the event. We also supported and funded research into the issues that attracted people to volunteer for that event: where they came from, what kind of training and support they got, whether they would be interested in continuing to volunteer for other events, and so on.



**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** To that end, do you keep a database?

**Ms MILLS:** We do, yes. I think one of the lessons we learned from the Olympics was that there was not at that time enough long-term planning around how to retain the interest of those volunteers. One of the things we have learned from the World Masters Games is to actually do that. One of the key aspects of the World Masters Games—which was fairly unique for a large-scale event in Sydney—was that it was very much based in western Sydney. So we had large numbers of volunteers from parts of Sydney that perhaps traditionally we have not been able to tap into as extensively, and we are now using that data as part of our volunteering strategy.

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** Are there any specific events in the next couple of years that you have in mind?

**Ms MILLS:** I cannot comment on any events of that scale, but the most immediate next event of that nature is the Golden Oldies rugby competition, which is being held at Centennial Park in the next month. The event will have over 5,000 participants and will have a large number of volunteers attached to it.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Minister, I refer to the South West Sydney Youth Hub issue we were discussing earlier. I am wondering how young people are provided with information about the services provided at the South West Sydney Youth Hub. I had trouble finding any web portal—and it may be just me. I am wondering how young people know about these types of services. Or are they only referred?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am not being facetious. Could you tell me where the South West Sydney Youth Hub is located?

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** I do not know where it is physically located. It is in south-west Sydney.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It is a big area. I am happy to take it on notice—

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** I am interested in how young people access these types of services, or whether they are referred by an organisation.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am happy to take the question on notice. I think in the last few months I have been to about five openings and activities run by different user groups that all call themselves "The Hub", including the most recent one, I think, at Tahmoor. I think the one at Narellan calls itself "The Hub", and there are others as well. So I am not being facetious; I just do not know which one we are talking about here.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** If you could take that on notice, that will be fine. Has the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care seen the survey results or information collected by Dr Carlo Caponecchia from the University of New South Wales, who has researched workplace bullying in that department?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** This was a study from the University of New South Wales done in August and September 2009? I am sorry, I did not understand your question.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** I am wondering if you have seen the survey results or information collected by that academic from the University of New South Wales. If so, would you or the department be able to table the research paper?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes, we have seen it. I can talk about the issue of workplace bullying and the consequences of the findings. In relation to your specific question, I will ask Mr Moore to speak. But I am happy to elaborate in relation to workplace bullying more generally, if you wish.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** I am interested in this particular report and whether it could be made available to the Committee.

**Mr MOORE:** I think that we are referring to the same report. We certainly anticipated and put ourselves forward to participate in a University of New South Wales [UNSW] study because we wished to have an independent study to help, particularly me, to understand the issues with respect to bullying within our

organisation. There are a number of serious reports that one receives about that. If you think through the nature of our workforce and how we are trying to work with people, it really is an intolerable situation for us to have. We need to have people very confident of being able to speak to their managers about matters that are often very difficult and we cannot afford that culture. So we wish to understand the extent of it. As to the particular UNSW study, whether it is the one you are referring to or not, I will see whether there is any issue that prevents me from making it available to the Committee. Unless some limitation has been placed on it by others, I have no qualms with airing that. It does not necessarily say that we are fantastic. Subsequent to that study we have been able to evolve a series of strategies to be put in place around this issue. Again, if you are caring for vulnerable people you have to have management which is in no way perceived as bullying. It does not matter whether it is real or not. You cannot afford to have perceived bullying and closing down of discussion among staff and supervisors of what is going on with clients. It is totally uncondusive to good care. For us it is a very serious matter.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Does the department have adequate staff numbers at the appropriate Australian Public Service [APS] grade to undertake core administrative as opposed to management tasks? Would it be possible to provide a breakdown of the APS grades of all ADHC staff over the last three financial years?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Again, I will ask the Chief Executive to answer. The question is very specific about the operations of the department.

**Mr MOORE:** I am more than happy to provide the type of data that you have asked for. As a general observation, we were not satisfied with the appropriate resourcing of the various levels, particularly within the group home network that we run. That is why in reference to an earlier question we identified a series of reforms that we are making within our group home system, which go live in the middle of next month. It is in part about trying to relieve some of the administrative burden on front-line supervisors, in particular, so that they can focus on quality of care issues and appropriate supervision of clients and staff. We believe that the set of changes will seriously address both real and perceived concerns by front-line managers about whether they have the appropriate levels of resource to do their jobs properly.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Could you tell me the terms of reference and reporting time frame for the interdepartmental committee on the reform of the shared private residential services sector?

**Ms MURRAY:** I would have to give you the terms of reference on notice. We can provide those. We are in the process now of finalising that report and we are looking to provide recommendations to Cabinet.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Other than it is at the point where you are finalising the report, can you discuss any progress the departmental committee on reform of the shared private residential services sector has made at this point?

**Ms MURRAY:** There are a number of agencies on that committee that are looking at the issues of the broader boarding house sector, both licensed and unlicensed facilities. We have had a look at issues to do with quality, sustainability of the sector and the roles and responsibilities of the different government agencies and how they can best be met. We also have been looking at streamlining some of the regulatory requirements and making sure that we have appropriate balance between regulation and quality assurance for those most vulnerable people who live in boarding houses, particularly licensed boarding houses.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Can you describe what consultation has taken place with stakeholders in this reform process? Who has been consulted?

**Ms MURRAY:** A number of reforms are happening within the boarding house sector at the moment. As the Minister mentioned earlier, the Act that governs boarding houses has been remade. During the process of that and the new regulation, consultation took place across the sector. As a result, some changes were made to increase quality assurance with respect to first aid certificates for people who provide care responsibilities within boarding houses. So there has been consultation in relation to the remaking of the regulation. The further reforms are still subject to Cabinet approval and a decision will be made at that time about the degree of consultation.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Reverend the Hon. Dr Gordon Moyes asked whether the budget allocation for the Home Modification and Maintenance Services [HMMS] program had increased. Can you provide a breakdown of the funding allocation across the levels one, two and three modification application classes?

**Ms MURRAY:** I can do that, yes. The recurrent funding in 2009-10 for levels one and two was \$15.1 million and for level three \$1.7 million. There was an additional non-recurrent funding of \$1.7 million for levels one and two and \$2.4 million for level three.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** How does that compare to the previous financial year?

**Ms MURRAY:** I think we answered this question earlier. It is an increase in each of the categories.

**Mr MOORE:** We only answered previously in terms of the global amount. In all cases it is up across all categories. What is yet to be resolved for 2010-11 is the allocation of any non-recurrent funds to the program. Recurrent funds across the board are up.

**Ms MURRAY:** We are aware of the fact that in relation to the Home Modification and Maintenance Services there have been concerns particularly around level three modifications. There is an evaluation currently underway to have a look at the way in which that is administered. We will make some changes to that. We are conscious of the fact that there have been some issues historically around that, which we are addressing.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** In making a submission to the Commonwealth Home and Community Care [HACC] program, what figure did ADHC put to the Commonwealth as a necessary contribution from the Commonwealth to ensure the viability of the HMMS?

**Mr MOORE:** We do not make a submission in those terms. There is an agreed three-year funding envelope. That determines the total aggregate of funding that is available. There is a local planning process that builds up from each of our local planning areas, which is 16 areas across New South Wales, into an aggregate process for the distribution of resources—the growth resources, not the base resources—each year. That is always capped within the total quantum that the Commonwealth has made available for growth. We do not go in and say, "In addition, here is another thing we would like money for." The answer to that is, "You don't get any more money from the Commonwealth in relation to HACC."

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** I appreciate what you are saying. That was a classic answer, which is fine. In simplistic terms, can you describe the ratio between the Commonwealth funding and the State funding?

**Mr MOORE:** The Commonwealth sets the funding envelope for HACC. It puts its quantum down and the agreement for New South Wales is that we will match it 60-40. For every \$60 it puts on the table we will put \$40 on the table. The Commonwealth has a longstanding growth formula that is applied to its 60 per cent and we match that.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I have been subsequently advised that the South West Sydney Youth Hub is operated by Mission Australia. I am advised that there is no funding through the Youth portfolio. There may be funding from the Federal Government and possibly through Housing New South Wales, but certainly not through my office.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Minister, can you advise the Committee what the New South Wales Government is doing to implement a person-centred approach to disability services in New South Wales?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The New South Wales Government strongly endorses an objective shared within the disability sector that people with a disability have a right to be at the core of decision-making about their lives and the focus of all services, whether they are provided formally or informally. The Keneally Government believes that people with a disability should be front and centre in making their own life choices. It is something that I am personally very committed to. We are all seeking to change the way people with a disability organise their supports, from a specialist service system where they take up places that may be available to arrangements in which people receive truly individualised natural and creative supports enabling them to achieve meaningful goals based on their strengths and preferences.

During June and July this year I attended a series of 13 consultations across the State in both metropolitan and rural areas. Consultations were held in metropolitan areas such as Chatswood, Drummoyne, Gymea, Narellan and Parramatta; regional and rural area consultations were held at Bathurst, Dubbo, Lismore, Newcastle, Tamworth, Wollongong, Queanbeyan and Wagga Wagga. Over 300 people attended these consultations, including approximately 100 people with a disability, their families and carers, and 100 service providers, peak organisations, local and State government agencies, interested community members and elected representatives also attended. I would also like to acknowledge the members of Parliament who participated in the consultations, including the members for Bathurst, Drummoyne, Dubbo, Miranda, Camden, Wollondilly, Swansea, Newcastle, Wallsend, Charlestown, Parramatta, Monaro, Tamworth and Wollongong. The chief executive of ADHC and a representative of the Disability Council of New South Wales, the official advisory body of the Government on disability matters, also attended each meeting.

We received 420 written submissions, following the consultation paper, from people with a disability, their families and carers, as well as a broad-spectrum of service providers and advocates. As with the first stage of Stronger Together, stakeholder consultations will be critical in making sure we get the next five years right for people with a disability. One of the key messages to come out of that consultation process is that people want more choice and control over how the funding currently allocated to them is used. We have heard that message from the community and the New South Wales Government will, as part of the next five-year phase of Stronger Together, deliver personalised funding arrangements for people with a disability as part of our person-centred approach. I would like to acknowledge those people with a disability, their carers and families, who shared their stories with us during this intensive consultation period. I am grateful for their contributions and will ensure that their input is at the heart of the second phase of Stronger Together.

We have been trialling a range of more flexible programs over the past few years. There is a need now to move forward more quickly and with more clarity, but I want to highlight some of the things we have been doing, because these flexible programs are important in two senses. They are important because they have been fantastic for many families all across the State. But also they have given us a substantial body of evidence about the efficacy and common sense of person-centred planning, including the concept of individualised funding models. For example, since the beginning of last year the 761 people who use attendant care services have had the option of managing their own funds through the direct funded model, where funding for their services is transferred into their personal bank account.

People who receive direct funding have the option of undertaking employer responsibilities for their carers themselves or to contract this out to an organisation. They are also responsible for all legal, financial and accountability requirements. They can also save up service hours and use them for social activities that happen out of typical working hours and to take a carer with them on holidays or when they travel. While at this stage a relatively small number of people have chosen to take up this option—a trend that is consistent with international trends on the take-up of self-managed funding—the direct funded model is very suitable for service users who have the time and capacity to manage their funds directly. The Government appreciates that this option may not be for everyone, so other options are available.

People who wish to select the staff who provide their support can select the cooperative model or the traditional employer model, where services are managed by an organisation such as the Home Care Service, according to the individual's preference. Greater choice and flexibility has also been extended to the users of our post-school programs. In 2007 school leavers using the Community Participation program were given the opportunity to trial a self-managed model that enabled them and their families to design and implement a day program that greatly expanded the options that meet their needs for community engagement. Many participants in the pilot program have moved away from traditional centre-based activities to participate in activities such as sports coaching, dance tuition and volunteering in the community. The evaluation of the program found that participants were very satisfied.

Since the beginning of last year all school leavers who have been eligible to enter the Community Participation program have been able to choose the self-managed model, and numbers have grown from 40 to 124 and the number of outlets where the model is available has grown to 23. Other day program users are also trying out this model, including 90 people engaged in the new Life Choices day programs and six in the Active Ageing day programs. Families caring for children with a disability have greater flexibility through programs such as the Family Assistance Fund and Extended Family Support. The Family Assistance Fund enables families caring for a child with a disability to apply for up to \$2,000 in funding to purchase services and equipment that are not available from other programs or other funding sources. Almost 5,000 families have

accessed this program since June 2007. The most common use of this funding has been to buy household items, adaptive technology or equipment and activities that promote delay.

The Extended Family Support program provides up to \$50,000 in flexible funding to families who are at risk of relinquishing the care of a child with a disability aged under 18 years. Families can use the funding for a range of supports aimed at keeping children and young people with their families for as long as possible. Families have used this funding in many ways. Some have chosen to buy customised lifting equipment or undertake home modifications such as building safety fences so their children can have more access to the outdoors.

The Flexible Respite program is another program offering families more choice in the way they can take a break from their carer responsibilities through a combination of delivery options. They can use their own home, access a host family or engage peer support. Families can also access respite through recreational or cultural activities such as weekend breaks and camps. The Government is also piloting two other individualised programs that support people at different life stages. The my plan my choice: Early Start program targets preschool age children in Sydney's south-west local planning area and the my plan my choice: Older Carers program provides support for carers over 60, or over 45 years for Aboriginal carers, in northern New South Wales.

A participatory action research project will evaluate four Keneally Government funded programs with individualised support, including the two pilot programs I just mentioned. This project will gather information to enable us to develop more programs which expand choices for service users. Individual accommodation support packages are another important example of the new options the Government is developing to provide more individualised support. All of these programs are happening now in New South Wales. But I recognise the calls coming loud and clear from the community for us to move from flexible programs to a flexible system. That is, we need to go further, including the adoption of individualised funding. I want to make it clear that we are not at the point of deciding whether this is the right direction to go; that decision has already been made and we are now deciding how best to implement it.

It has been five years since the Government announced Stronger Together—our landmark 10-year disability plan. Over the past five years most in this sector recognise that a lot has been achieved. More than 20,000 people have been supported in areas of greatest need, such as early childhood intervention and family support through therapy, day programs, respite, attendant care and accommodation supports. In the first three years more than 2,200 extra therapy places for children and adults with a disability were rolled out, 520 new accommodation places were created, with a further 470 to come online by June 2012, and nearly 4,000 new respite places have been provided.

This year the New South Wales Government has increased the budget for all services provided by Ageing, Disability and Home Care to \$2.5 billion, which is an increase of 9.1 per cent over last year. Having built up the system, it is now time to make it more flexible and responsive to client needs and to give more control to people with a disability and their families in terms of what services are provided with and how they are provided.

We need to work through all sorts of challenges. For instance, people with a disability and their families will need more information about the services and supports available to them within the service system and in the community so that they can make informed choices about the services they use and supports they access. The pilot programs that the Keneally Government is conducting will inform us about the ways that information can be provided and how individuals and families can be supported to develop person-centred plans that enable them to set life goals based on their strengths and capacities.

The Government has provided \$600,000 to the Resourcing Families Project, which provides information and conducts seminars for families of children aged up to 18 years about using self-directed and self-managed funding. Our experience with individualised support options, which I described earlier, has shown us that one size does not fit all. Individuals and families will require a variety of delivery mechanisms to choose from so that they can meet their needs, including direct-funded approaches and using non-government organisations as intermediaries. Many will still choose traditional service models.

The move to person-centred programs will impact on the way that non-government service providers structure their workforce, train their staff and organise their physical environment and resources. To support the sector to change, the New South Wales Government has provided \$17 million to National Disability Services

Limited to establish an industry development fund that will help service providers to introduce more flexible and adaptive services that are responsive to individuals while focusing on prevention and early intervention. There are plenty of challenges, but I am confident that we will be able to work through them.

During the implementation of Stronger Together II we have the opportunity to build on what we have achieved for people with a disability so that they can exercise more choice and control over their lives. Supporting people to get a life, not just a service, appropriately expresses that objective. That is what the Kenneally Government is about and it is what Labor governments have always been committed to—that is, decent social services that improve people's lives—and we remain committed to achieving that goal.

**The Hon. TONY CATANZARITI:** Minister, can you elaborate on what the Government is doing through ADHC to improve the lives of indigenous people in New South Wales?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I acknowledge the dedicated Aboriginal people and organisations throughout New South Wales who are committed to working tirelessly for their community. On 27 August I had the great pleasure of joining my parliamentary colleague the Hon. Paul Lynch, who is the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and the staff and members of Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council to announce a \$2-million Aboriginal early-intervention project. This three-year project will develop the capacity of the early childhood sector to be more responsive to Aboriginal children with a disability or developmental delay and their families.

On the Wednesday prior to that, Premier Kenneally and I launched a \$1-million package for more early intervention services with a focus on providing extra assistance to young people with a developmental delay or disability before they enter school and to help them to build relationships once they are in school. It also included the production of a new documentary to be used in schools that will increase the understanding of autism among young people. The Aboriginal Early Intervention Project will have far-reaching benefits across New South Wales, especially for people on the far North Coast and in western Sydney, where the project will also be run.

Early intervention is critical in helping young people to get the best possible start in life and the best possible chance to achieve their dreams. It is no longer the case that disability must limit a young person's capacity to achieve his or her dreams. Of course there are challenges, but they can be overcome, and early intervention is critical to giving them a chance. Unfortunately, many families simply do not recognise a developmental delay in their child, which means that the challenges they face during childhood may not be addressed, such as difficulties at school or problems socialising. In other cases the problem may be identified, but of course we must also ensure that the services are then available and are culturally appropriate to meet the young person's needs and those of their family. We must plan for the future, but we must also provide better services now for families in western Sydney and across New South Wales.

Quite simply, this project will increase the number of Aboriginal families that are able to identify and address their child's developmental delay early. That will be achieved by the Government partnering with service providers already working in Aboriginal communities who will assist and support families by providing early assistance. Social support and speech pathology will give these kids a better start in life and a better chance of achieving their goals. This project will provide the opportunity to strengthen the early childhood sector and all the services that work in Aboriginal communities. It is only in partnership with Aboriginal communities and the non-government sector that we can get the results we need. Pathways that are necessary to support Aboriginal children early if they are identified with a disability or developmental delay will be rolled out so that we can increase the opportunities for each child to enjoy the best quality of life.

Establishing the Aboriginal Early Intervention Project was the result of a statewide Aboriginal community consultation process conducted last year by ADHC. One of the key findings was the limited early identification of Aboriginal children with a disability and the need for greater awareness of disability generally within Aboriginal communities. This initiative will raise awareness of disability and developmental delay and provide appropriate information to seek out the necessary supports for Aboriginal families if there are concerns. Specifically, the project aims to develop practical resources for each local Aboriginal community and the service providers in the three locations to raise awareness and understanding, to actively engage with all service providers and Aboriginal communities, to ensure that it is inclusive and dynamic and meets expectations, and to provide a long-term platform and knowledge base to show how business should be done in the early childhood arena in Aboriginal communities.

I am pleased to confirm that the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council will join with the Aboriginal Medical Service Western Sydney and the Canowindra Tweed Bryon Aged and Disabled Corporation to implement and facilitate the success of this project. These organisations will be supported by the New South Wales Government's efforts in south west Sydney in working with all services that come into contact with Aboriginal children and families as well as within the distinct Aboriginal communities in the region. The Aboriginal Medical Service Western Sydney will also take the lead role in working with the diverse providers and communities in north metropolitan Sydney. The Canowindra group, which is based in Tweed Heads, will lead the implementation of the project on the far North Coast.

The Keneally Government recognises the diversity within Aboriginal communities across the State and will seek to learn from the success of this project by acknowledging that unique responses may be required for each distinct Aboriginal community. I am sure that there will be beneficial insights and opportunities to use this information for future service delivery for Aboriginal children with a disability or developmental delay in families in New South Wales.

The New South Wales Government recognises that employment plays a significant role in a person having sufficient resources to participate fully in society, particularly the ability to access services. It also creates social and economic wellbeing. I am committed to increasing Aboriginal employment participation in the public sector and ADHC aims to achieve a minimum 5 per cent representation of Aboriginal employees across its workforce. This is not only about meeting an employment target; it is about improving the lives of Aboriginal people, their families and communities.

I am pleased to advise that this policy of expanding employment opportunities for Aboriginal people has paid dividends for four young Aboriginal men from the Hunter and Central Coast areas. These young Aboriginal men are working as apprentices with two contractors providing various building services for a new 100-bed village at Hamlyn Terrace that is being built for ADHC. These men have also worked on a new 20-bed cluster at nearby Wadalba. These two projects will replace the Peat Island Centre in the Hawkesbury. The men had originally been assigned traineeships under the building contract as part of the New South Wales Government's policy initiatives implementing the Aboriginal Participation in Construction Guidelines. Local Aboriginal housing providers assisted the contractor in the selection of the men to work on this project. The local Aboriginal community has been very supportive of them and maintains an ongoing mentoring role.

I have been advised that the building contractor, North Construction, has been so impressed with the commitment and skills that the trainees have demonstrated that they have now secured apprenticeships. Three of the men have apprenticeships as carpenters and one has an apprenticeship as an electrician. These apprenticeships have now opened up a career path for these young men, who are aged from 17 to 21, beyond these construction projects. Given the demand for building services, they can now look forward to a bright future.

**CHAIR:** Minister, the Government walked away from the 2010 time frame to close institutions. What is your plan now in relation to devolution, particularly in the light of the recent Ombudsman's report?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The New South Wales Government is pushing ahead with its plan to close large residential centres, some of which will be redeveloped to provide specialist support for people with complex needs. The New South Wales Ombudsman recently released his special report into people with disabilities and the closure of residential centres that examined the way services were planned and delivered to meet the individual needs of people living in Ageing, Disability and Home Care operated large residential centres. Ageing, Disability and Home Care participated in the review and supports its recommendations that, one, in providing advice to the Government regarding Stronger Together 2, Ageing, Disability and Home Care should make clear the need for detailed plans to deliver on the devolution commitment, adequate funding to meet this commitment and effective strategies to ensure there is meaningful consultation and partnership with people with disabilities, their families and other representatives in the devolution process.

Two, until devolution occurs at the beginning of each year Ageing, Disability and Home Care should provide a report to his office on its actions relating to progress, closure of the remaining residential centres, and ensure that people with a disability living in residential centres, their families and other representatives have meaningful and direct involvement in the planning for the closure of those centres and progress the implementation of the action plans for metropolitan residences, Hunter residences and the Illawarra. The New South Wales Government made a number of announcements under Stronger Together regarding plans for more appropriate accommodation and support services for people living in large residential centres. Since the New

South Wales Government's announcement in 1998 to close large residential centres, 384 people have been relocated to community accommodation and 15 large residential centres have been closed and a further 121 clients will be relocated shortly as the current Peat Island and Lachlan sites close.

**CHAIR:** How much have you recommended to the Government about the cost of continuing with the devolution under Stronger Together 2?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am sure you will look forward to finding that out when we announce it.

**CHAIR:** You have made recommendations on all of those things?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I have indicated I am sure you will be able to read that as part of the announcements of Stronger Together 2, when it is announced by the Premier later in the year. I am happy to answer your question.

**CHAIR:** It is all hinging on Stronger Together 2 funding for the rest of that devolution package?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I sought to make it clear that Stronger Together is a 10-year program of improving disability services for people with disabilities in New South Wales.

**CHAIR:** That is true, so what is your timetable for the devolution?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I was answering the question.

**CHAIR:** It was going to be 2010. I am wondering what is your estimated time.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Would you like me to continue?

**CHAIR:** I would like you to answer that briefly. I have heard the bureaucratic answer; I would like you to answer that briefly. What is the timetable?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** This is a complex issue. It cannot be decided simply by a timetable.

**CHAIR:** The question was that you have abandoned the plan to have that complete by 2010. When, time wise, will that be completed? That is a reasonable thing to ask.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** That is a very reasonable thing to ask, and I can outline the achievements to date, which will give you an indication—

**CHAIR:** No, I just want to know when it is going to be complete. You must have an idea of that—five years, 10 years, 20 years?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am happy to answer the question if you will let me. But if you are saying what will be announced in Stronger Together 2—I think what you are seeking from me is an announcement in relation to what will be in Stronger Together 2 and I am not prepared to make that, because that is before Cabinet.

**CHAIR:** You are not prepared to tell us whether it is five years, 10 years or 20 years?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am indicating I am happy to talk about the process, which will give you all the details.

**CHAIR:** When will we know the answers to that then?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The announcement in relation to Stronger Together 2, which is the second five years of our 10-year program, will occur later this calendar year. The Premier will be making that announcement. But I make it very clear that the devolution process is occurring now.



**CHAIR:** Just to recap then, when I am trying to work out the years and what you are saying, your plan is to have them all closed by 2016. You have given a time limit for Stronger Together and how long it is going to take—that is what you are saying?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** No, I am not saying that at all. When I tried to raise this the other day I was being heckled by members of the Opposition in the upper House about devolution. What I am trying to say to you now is that there is a commitment by the Government to close large residential centres. It is an ongoing commitment and it is occurring now.

**CHAIR:** That is okay. I just asked whether that will be closed by 2016, and you said no.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** No, I do not wish to be verballed. What I am saying to you is that this is an ongoing process and I am very happy to talk you through the ongoing process that is occurring now and what it involves. But I have also indicated to you that with Stronger Together we are halfway through a 10-year program and we will be announcing the second half of the 10-year program in a couple of months. But I am very happy to give you much more detail to indicate to you the complexity of this matter and also to indicate to you that this is very much a work in progress.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Just to finish off on volunteers, Minister, my understanding is that the State average is about 17.1 per cent, the regional average is 21.8 per cent, and I think in the north, in my hometown of Byron, it is 26.7 per cent. The 45 to 64 year age group is the highest level in volunteering and in youth, the State average is about 6 per cent and in my area of the North Coast it is 7.5 per cent. Youth volunteering is at a very low level comparatively—understandably, they have other things to do like partying and things like that—but is there any type of internship or training for youth to encourage volunteering across the board—especially for youth? If you have answered it before, do not worry.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am very happy to answer it again. Essentially, in relation to volunteering, there is, for example, the school's program, which was a 2007 election commitment introducing a volunteering program for years 9 and 10 students. There was another commitment in 2007, which was the development and expansion of the secondary school cadet program in relation to New South Wales emergency services.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Sorry; if you have gone through it, do not waste time—my mistake. Can I perhaps put another perspective on those figures? In the regional areas in the north of the State, the level is higher. Is that just a higher level of altruism or does it reflect certain community problems where a higher level of volunteering is needed?

**The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON:** Can I just clarify that? Was that about Aboriginals?

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** No, this is in general. These are just figures I have from my home region in the north of New South Wales.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I will ask Ms Carol Mills to talk generally, but before doing so, I indicate that what we are talking about is the need for a whole-of-government approach to look at increasing the volunteer workforce generally. That includes things like making it easier to volunteer, attract and retain volunteers, diversify the volunteer workforce, promote the value of volunteering and support regional volunteering particularly. There is a whole range of things that we are talking about doing.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Why do you think that regional volunteering at all ages, including at the youth level, is higher in the far north of New South Wales?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I do not know.

**The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON:** It must be the climate.

**Ms MITCHELL:** They are happy.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I do not know, but I seek to bottle it and I think we should make it available.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** I am just concerned because I know there are street crews and a lot of issues. There is a tourist town in my area and there are many other issues, up on the Tweed as well, where there is a real need because of the many on-the-street issues. I do not know whether that has registered at a governmental level in terms of the need for volunteering and a lot of people giving up their time to keep kids safe on the street because of potential problems, which can happen everywhere, I know.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I have been to a number of meetings, as you would be aware, in northern New South Wales and I have been stunned again, like everywhere I go, at the sheer number and diversity of people involved in volunteering. For example, I recall one of the things in relation to visiting a rural fire service unit as Minister for Volunteering. I was talking with them about the volunteering, and the number of young people who were talking to me. The captain said to me that the cadetship program and what we are doing through schools was really good because it attracted young people. By the way, at least 40 per cent of those actually stay after they leave school. Also the teachers are now volunteering and the parents who drop the kids off are also interested and actually volunteering as well in those services. There is a whole breadth and range of things. Everywhere I go, I am amazed at the sheer numbers of those involved in volunteering and the activities. They enjoy it and it is really valuable.

**Ms MILLS:** If I could add one comment, the Minister mentioned earlier that we recently held a Youth Volunteers in Emergency Services two-day forum in Sydney.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** At Luna Park.

**Ms MILLS:** At Luna Park and it was very well represented, particularly by rural youth, perhaps because of the emergency services nature, the Rural Fire Service and the State Emergency Service. From that we made an undertaking to not only include the issues raised at the workshops about how to encourage young people to volunteer in what they regarded as current barriers into our youth strategy but also that I would write to each of the relevant directors general across government with issues that relate to their area to further encourage young people volunteering.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Do Ageing, Disability and Home Care operated attendant care services provide the same level of service as non-government or private service operators? Do Ageing, Disability and Home Care operated personal care support services provide out-of-hours back-up support services?

**Mr MOORE:** Yes, is the simple answer. Each person in an attendant care program is entitled to a certain number of hours and who delivers the service does not vary the amount of hours that they are able to provide. The Home Care Service of New South Wales has a reputation for being a provider of services in circumstances such as out of hours in ways that are often not available from other providers simply because it operates as a provider of last resort, so if no-one else will do the service in the terms that are sought, it will.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** For the home modification component, what percentage of the 2010-11 budget is already allocated?

**Mr MOORE:** Can we take that question on notice?

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Yes. Minister, would you advise on whether Ageing, Disability and Home Care when awarding or renewing contracts to non-government organisations and private service providers that provide community transport services has a policy to ensure that at least one of each community transport service that provides vehicles has wheelchair access? If not, why not?

**Mr MOORE:** I would have thought so, but let me check for you.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** You will take that on notice. How significant is inefficient, unreliable and ineffective software used by Ageing, Disability and Home Care to manage disability services in exacerbating unmet need and will the improvements made to software for respite care be utilised for management of other services?

**Mr MOORE:** The improvements to respite will give us a sense of how you may be able to use those systems for other arrangements but I do not think that we would accept the proposition that it is a software inadequacy that leads us to issues or problems with unmet need. I refer you to the significant discussion about

data issues in the submission to the upper House inquiry the Minister referenced earlier for our strong views about the issues with respect to unmet need and how you can identify it and manage it.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** How does New South Wales investment in respite care compare with other State jurisdictions? Could you provide the Committee with a per capita investment figure for each State?

**Mr MOORE:** I can absolutely provide that to the Committee. I do not have it on hand but I will provide it on notice. I think it is no secret that the Auditor-General identified that, inasmuch as you can rely on interstate comparisons—and it is very difficult to get an apples with apples comparison—New South Wales was significantly behind Victoria, behind the national average but that the Stronger Together investment to date was giving us a significant step up.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** In relation to the Auditor-General's report, will the Minister or the department outline how the department has directed growth funding to the areas that need it most and establish consistent criteria and implement a common approach for prioritising and allocating respite according to need?

**Mr MOORE:** We have introduced a new policy that goes to the issue of prioritisation. We are predominantly addressing the issue of inequity in allocation, particularly geographically, through the use of growth funds to direct those funds to the areas where per capita the average amount of respite service is less, with a view to being able to grow capacity more equitably over time. At the same time we do not allocate to areas of above per capita because we also recognise that there is growth in those areas as well. We are using a differential growth rate across geographical zones to head towards more equitable distribution over time, but it will take time.

**The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON:** I put this question on notice earlier but because we have not had a lot of information on youth. It would be useful for the Minister to give us this information. Can the Minister explain what the New South Wales Government is doing to address the needs of our young people through the Better Futures Fund?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The Keneally Government is committed to helping the young people of New South Wales reach their full potential. The Government supports young people with a range of policies and programs. To respond fully to your question, I will break my answer into two parts—first, the existing Better Futures Fund, which has been in operation since the Drug Summit in 2001 and, secondly, the new additional money added to the Better Futures pool, as announced as part of the Premier's Youth Package earlier this year. In relation to the existing Better Futures Fund, you may recall that the Better Futures Strategy was established in 2001 as a result of the New South Wales Drug Summit. The strategy was originally set up to focus on young people aged 12 to 24 who were using, or at risk of using, drugs. In 2003 the strategy decentralised and was managed within the Department of Community Services regions. At this time the target group also changed to 9- to 18-year-olds.

Following the Government's structural reforms to the public sector in mid 2009, responsibility for the Better Futures Strategy is now situated within Communities NSW. The 2009-10 Better Futures budget was \$3.9 million. In 2009, funding was allocated to 53 new projects across New South Wales. An additional 10 projects were still in operation from previous years. The projects are diverse and have been developed in response to local community need. I will cite a few examples: music events developed by the Regional Youth Support Services, which provided opportunities for young people on the Central Coast to develop skills in planning, promoting and staging live music events.

Regional Youth Support Services have just recently used some of their Better Futures funding to create a youth newspaper aimed at engaging young people on the Central Coast to write articles, submit artwork and become involved in the publishing and distribution of the paper through government schools across the region. In July I was fortunate enough to attend the launch and to meet some of the creative young people who contributed to the first edition of the newspaper.

On the mid North Coast, the mid North Coast Regional Council for Social Development has held consultations with almost 300 young people in all local government areas to identify priorities and ways to address them. The Eurobodalla Youth Transport project, auspiced by the Eurobodalla Shire Council, has provided safe transport home for young people from youth centres and youth cafes throughout the shire. Shire Wide Youth Services use Better Futures money to operate two youth centres, one in Miranda and one in Menai. As well as providing safe spaces for young people to congregate outside school hours, the centres also provide a

range of recreational activities as well as access to a recording studio, art workshops and counselling services. In addition, they offer outreach services to local young people who many not be comfortable coming to the centres on their own—a soft entry, if you like, to government-funded youth services that broadens the reach of programs like Better Futures.

But that is only a small selection. As you can see, the range of projects supported by the Better Futures Strategy reflects the diversity of the young people to whom they cater. It is essential however, that we ensure that these programs remain relevant to the issues faced by young people. As a result, after nearly 10 years in operation, my department is currently reviewing the Better Futures Strategy to ensure that it addresses current issues and priorities for children and young people. The review is considering current research, obtaining the views of service providers and key stakeholders, and is expected to be completed by the end of this month. The review will consider the recommendations contained in the "Keep Them Safe: A shared approach to child wellbeing" report, the joint parliamentary report of the Committee on Children and Young People, "Children and Young People Aged 9-14 Years in NSW: The Missing Middle"; and "The Way Forward: Supporting Young People in New South Wales". All projects operating in 2009-2010 have been extended until June 2011 to allow for the review to be completed and the recommendations to be considered in detail. I will announce those results later in the year.

The second part of my answer relates to the \$2 million boost to the Better Futures fund, announced by the Premier in June this year as part of the Premier's Youth Package. As part of the 2010-11 New South Wales budget, the Keneally Government is investing more than \$200 million to provide young people in New South Wales with the skills and opportunities they need to succeed. This package of new initiatives has been designed to help young people engage in programs that address the challenges that may be preventing them from participating fully in the community. With direct correlation to the Youth portfolio, the package includes: \$3.9 million on Independent Employment Advisers to work with students who have dropped out of the school system to re-engage them in learning and support them to get a job; \$5.5 million on Employment Ready training to support 2,000 young people, who are currently unemployed, secure a job, which includes apprenticeships and traineeships; and a \$2 million boost to the Better Futures Fund to support local community programs that engage young people and help to build social, communication and leadership skills for the future.

The \$2 million has been allocated as a welcome supplement to the Better Futures Fund, in addition to the \$3.9 million currently allocated to the strategy. This additional allocation is available for community programs that engage young people in sports and cultural development activities, and assist young people to develop social, communication and leadership skills that are often difficult to obtain for young people in transition to adulthood, particularly those in marginal or vulnerable positions. Funding available through this enhancement to the Better Futures Strategy is currently being advertised across New South Wales. Invitations have been extended across the State, encouraging applications. Community organisations and local government will be able to apply for up to \$50,000. This money can be used to upgrade facilities, equipment and resources, and/or to develop new programs, or to expand existing programs that encourage the engagement and participation of young people. Funding criteria and application guidelines, which outline details of the application process, can be found on the Communities New South Wales website. Applications must be made online and will remain open until Friday 24 September. The Keneally Government is committed to supporting our young people and I am encouraging all eligible organisations to apply.

**CHAIR:** That concludes our questions. Mr Moore, did you have something that you wanted to add?

**Mr MOORE:** May I just add a little bit more precision in response to a question you asked earlier about Home and Community Care administration? The agreement between the Commonwealth and the New South Wales Government is that we spent in the last year \$5.5 million on administration of the Home and Community Care Program. That is all that we are allowed to use out of the Home and Community Care Program for administration.

**CHAIR:** I note that quite a lot of questions have been taken on notice. They will be returnable within 21 days to the Committee. I thank everyone very much for attending today. The hearing is concluded.

**(The witnesses withdrew)**

**The Committee proceeded to deliberate.**