



# Fairness For People With Disabilities And Their Carers

February 2011



## Supporting those most in need

As a civilisation, we are judged by the way we treat our less fortunate members. One test of a good government is how well it responds to the needs of people with a disability. And by that test, New South Wales leads the nation.

I take enormous pride in the policies and achievements made through *Stronger Together* – our 10 year strategy to transform disability services in NSW. The second stage of *Stronger Together* will see a record \$2 billion invested to grow the State's disability services for the second five year phase (2011-2016).

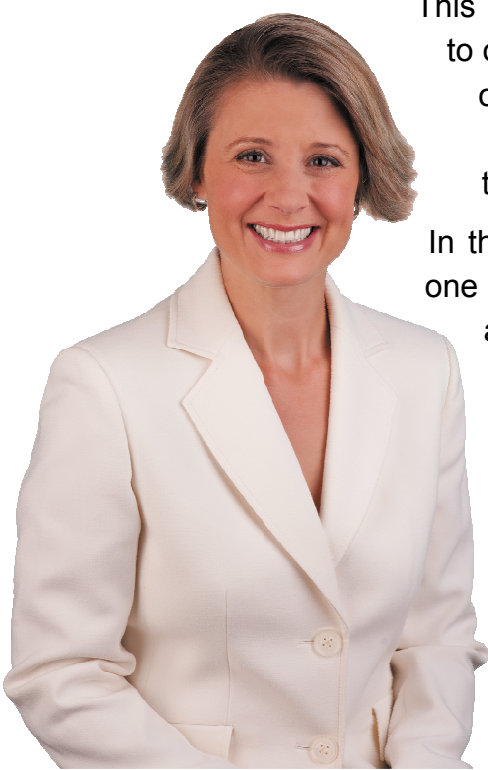
This is the largest increase in funding for disability services in our history and the most significant investment made by a State government in Australia. By the final year of *Stronger Together* we will have contributed more than \$5 billion in additional funding to the sector.

But supporting people with a disability is about more than just services. Other challenges include accessibility, the high cost of living, and a higher rate of unemployment than the rest of the community.

I know just how important these issues are because the cause is one close to my own heart. Family experience, together with my time spent working in the community sector and later as Minister for Disability Services has made me keenly aware of the needs of people with a disability, and determined that my Government will do all it can to help.

This plan addresses these important issues, bringing greater fairness to our society. We all benefit from these reforms because they make our society a more decent and inclusive place to live. They will enable people to participate in their community and, importantly, to show how much people with a disability have to contribute.

In the years to come I want my Government to be remembered as one that did the most to meet the needs of people with a disability and enable them to participate to their fullest potential in a caring community.



*Kristina Lennox*

## What this policy means for you

People in NSW will have access to more than 47,000 new disability service places over the next five years.

That means we will double the size of the existing disability services system making it much easier for families to access critical services like respite, therapy and supported accommodation.

Key outcomes from 2011-2016 include:

- 6000 new jobs for people with transition to work programs and payroll tax exemptions for employers of people with disabilities.
- Flexible, individualised funding to enable all people to determine how money is spent on them and their family.
- 1750 new supported accommodation places, 4500 new flexible respite places and 9380 therapy and early intervention places by 2016.
- Funding to enable each large residential centre to be replaced with modern homes for residents by 2017/18;

In addition, \$30 million of funding has been allocated to address cost of living pressures for people with a disability and their families by expanding the Aids and Equipment Program (also known as PADP).

## ACTION:

### Jobs for people with disabilities

- 6000 jobs for people with a disability
- \$23 million for training programs
- Payroll tax exemptions for businesses that employ people with a disability

### Reducing the cost of living for people with disabilities

- \$4m to remove \$100 co-payment under the Aids and Equipment Program for full pensioners and introduce a \$5000 cap on co-contributions to the program.
- \$12 million new funding for the Aids and Equipment Program to support another 2000 people in need
- \$2 million for free specialised fire alarms for people who are profoundly deaf
- \$12 million to enhance Home Oxygen Program

### **Flexible and individualised funding for families**

- Individualised funding introduced immediately to give families flexibility and control over the support they receive
- \$141.2 million for information services and other support
- Support for the \$17 million Industry Development Fund to support the disability sector to adjust to the new system

### **Double the number of services available across the system**

- \$2 billion for 47,000 new places to double the size of the disability service system

### **More supported accommodation**

- 1750 new supported accommodation places
- Introduce the Supported Living Fund

### **Early intervention and therapy to give kids the best possible start**

- 9380 new early intervention and therapy places to give people with a disability the best possible start in life.

### **Replace all outdated large residential centres**

- Close all large residential centres by 2018 and replace them with modern homes with individualised care for residents.

### **Public accountability**

- Annual report to Parliament reconciling actual expenditure and increases in the number of places with the published plans for *Stronger Together*.
- Public release of the modelling data that underpins *Stronger Together* with annual updates that takes population changes and administrative data into account.



## Labor and Disability

Labor believes that increasing the quality of life of people with a disability relies fundamentally on greater inclusion of people with a disability and recognition of their capacity to contribute to society.

People with disabilities should be included as part of our community and given the same opportunities as everyone else – the opportunity to participate in the community, to be educated and contribute in the Australian workforce.

But it is not always a level playing field and people with disabilities face many challenges that others do not.

Cost of living pressures are greater for people with disabilities and carers than everyone else and the unemployment rate is significantly higher than the rest of the community.

We need to provide training programs that support people with intellectual disabilities to find jobs. At the same time we need to provide encouragement to businesses that employ people with disabilities.

## Our Challenges

Demand for specialist services is growing as a result of people with a disability living longer and their carers ageing.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimates that one in five people in NSW have a disability. The vast majority of these have a mild or moderate disability and go about their everyday lives with little or no additional support.

However, approximately 450,000 people have a severe or profound disability because it impacts on their ability to communicate, to care for themselves or to move about the community. This number is evenly split between people under 65 years and people 65 years and above. While most of these people live independently or with family, some require the assistance of Government to participate in education, work and community living.

The needs of people with a disability and their families are growing at the rate of approximately 10% per year due to:

- the population of people with a severe or profound disability is increasing (at a rate of approximately 2.6% per year) as a result of more people having disabilities and increasing life spans;
- the availability of informal care is decreasing (at a rate of at least 1.5% per year) as a result of demographic factors including more women working, fewer siblings in families and ageing carers; each percentage point reduction equates to five percentage points of formal care;

With the increasing longevity of people with a disability and the decreasing availability of informal and family carers, the numbers of people with a disability requiring specialist support will continue to increase rapidly into the future.

Notwithstanding the decline in the informal care sector, most people with a disability are able to live in their own home. Often the support of family, friends and the community is critical to enabling them to do so. We need to continue to grow the range of support available for families and carers.

At the acute end of the spectrum, more than 1,500 people have indicated a need for supported accommodation in the short and medium term. Since the inception of *Stronger Together*, 1,400 extra accommodation places have come on line and 1,750 more are planned in the second phase. Historically NSW has been reliant on the Group Home model, but we must continue broadening the models available to cater for different groups.

Just as importantly, people with a disability and their families are increasingly advocating for a system that offers choice, flexibility and places the person with a disability at the centre of decision-making. This direction in the provision of disability support is broadly referred to as a 'person centred' approach and is being followed by many jurisdictions in Australia, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Canada and the United States.

The current system is heavily reliant upon block funded services and allocating people to service vacancies rather than designing services around the individual needs of people. Broadening the availability of individualised funding arrangements will play a part in putting people in control; but the service system will also have to change dramatically to enable people to determine the application of their support resources, whether or not they are using an individualised funding arrangement.

Fundamental to the success of government priorities in disability services is a respectful, intelligent and real collaboration between the non-government (NGO) sector and NSW Government agencies. Key to this collaboration is recognising the values and strengths that each brings to the relationship.

And our capacity to meet all of the above challenges relies intrinsically on retaining and attracting more skilled workers to the sector.

## Our Record

### LABOR

- From 2006-11, under Stronger Together, we delivered \$1.3 billion new funding for 29,000 additional disability service places.
- In December 2010, we announced a further \$2 billion to double the number of disability service places in NSW by 2016, including respite, supported accommodation and skills programs.
- Announced the roll out of flexible, individualised funding places.
- 6,450 young people have already been helped to get a job or participate in the community through improved post school programs.
- 1,500 of the above school leavers have successfully moved to employment as a result of our intensive skill based training programs.
- Over 1,000 people have moved into permanent specialist community accommodation.

### OPPOSITION

- Barry O'Farrell has not released a plan for disability services in NSW.
- Barry O'Farrell has indicated that disability services is one of the first things that may be cut in tough economic times.

**Labor:** In tough economic times Labor delivered \$1.3 billion in growth funding for disability services, providing an extra 29,000 new disability services places – 10,000 places more than was originally promised.

We have now announced a further \$2 billion of growth funding for the next 5 years which will double the size of the existing disability service system.

**Opposition:** Disability funding is under threat by the Coalition. Barry O'Farrell has already made it clear that disability services are going to be one of the first things to be cut in tough economic times. He said:

*"If you're the Minister for Community Services, if you're the Minister for Disabilities, it is important to understand that without economic growth.....the budget for your department will be constricted".*

- Sydney Morning Herald, 11 March 2010, *Think, revive and thrive: a state vision.*

## Jobs for People with a Disability

The unemployment rate among people with disabilities is unacceptably high, which is why the NSW State Plan aims to create 6000 new jobs for people with a disability.

The Keneally Government has already delivered more than 1500 new jobs for people with disabilities through targeted skill based training programs for school leavers.

But we need to do more.

That's why a re-elected Keneally Government will give payroll tax exemptions for employers of people with a disability.

Under *Stronger Together*, we will also deliver an extra \$280 million to expand our successful Transition to Work and Community Participation programs.

This policy is about closing the gap on unemployment between people with a disability and the rest of the community.

### ACTION:

- 6000 jobs for people with a disability
- \$23 million for training programs
- Payroll tax exemptions for businesses that employ people with a disability



## Reducing the Cost of Living

People with a disability, their families and carers face significantly higher costs of living than the rest of the community.

Whether this relates to the need to purchase equipment and technology or the loss of family income when carers need to remain home to care for a loved one, it is a challenge common to many families.

That's why a re-elected Keneally Government will provide \$16 million to enhance the Aids and Equipment Program so that 2000 more people can purchase equipment such as fitted wheelchairs, communication devices, hospital type beds and pressure mattresses.

The \$100 co-payment required under the program will be eliminated for full pensioners and a cap of \$5000 on co-contributions will be introduced.

For the first time, fire alarms for people who are profoundly deaf will be subsidised by the Government under this policy. Previously people who are deaf have had to pay around \$500 for specialised fire alarms.

And \$12 million will be provided to enhance the Home Oxygen Program.

### **ACTION:**

- \$4m to remove \$100 co-payment under the Aids and Equipment Program for full pensioners and introduce a \$5000 cap on co-contributions to the program.
- \$12m million new funding for the Aids and Equipment Program to support another 2000 people in need
- \$2 million for free specialised fire alarms for people who are profoundly deaf
- \$12 million to enhance Home Oxygen Program

## Flexible and Individualised Funding for Families

In July last year the Keneally Government held consultation around the State to hear from people with disabilities, their families, service providers and other non-government organisations.

Overwhelmingly, the message from the community was that people with a disability, their families and carers should be at the centre of decision-making about how the specialist disability system supports them, not just as the focus but as the key determinants of how available resources are used.

A re-elected Keneally Government will deliver flexible, individualised funding immediately, giving families the control they deserve.

We need to guide families down this new path and this means making sure families are equipped with the information and support to make good decisions and to direct their services.

For this reason Labor will spend \$141.2 million to help families plan for the future. This includes information and advocacy services, case management, service brokerage and support coordination.

And to help ensure that industry is ready for the changes to the system, the Keneally Government will support the \$17 million Industry Development Fund to assist service providers, identify challenges and prepare the sector for the future.

### **ACTION:**

- Individualised funding introduced immediately to give families flexibility and control over the supports they receive
- \$141.2 million for information services and other supports
- Support for the \$17 million Industry Development Fund to support the disability sector to adjust to the new system

## Double the Number of Services Available Across the System

This plan gives people greater choice and flexibility about the services they receive and how they receive them.

But for there to be real choice for families, they must have a range of services from which to choose. We need to increase the capacity of the non-government sector to deliver a diverse range of flexible services to families.

That's why we're investing \$2 billion for an extra 47,000 service places, including:

- supported accommodation
- respite
- early intervention
- therapy
- community participation
- transition to work

### ACTION:

- \$2 billion to double the services we're providing

## More Supported Accommodation

Increasing demand for services is reflected in the fact that over 1500 people with a profound or severe disability have requested supported accommodation or intensive in-home support in the near future, many with ageing parent carers.

Since 2006, more than 1000 people have moved into permanent specialist community living places.

But there are still many people in need of supported accommodation.

That's why a re-elected Keneally Government will provide an extra 1750 new supported accommodation places.

We are broadening the models available and will establish a Supported Living Fund in the next few months – enabling people and their families to design the most appropriate community living model – one that responds to the needs and circumstances of the individual, strengthens independence and ability, and preserves family and community connections.

### **ACTION:**

- 1750 new supported accommodation places
- Introduce the Supported Living Fund

## Significantly Expand Respite Services

Flexible respite is provided to families to give them a much needed break from their caring role. Sometimes this is provided in the family home, other times it may be provided by a 'host family' or it may involve recreational or cultural activities, camps or weekend breaks.

This support is critical to ensuring families and carers are able to continue in their caring role.

With an ageing population one of the positive stories is that people with disabilities are living longer and healthier lives than ever before. But a consequence of this is that carers are continuing in their caring role well into their senior years.

A re-elected Keneally Government will provide an extra 4500 new flexible respite places to support families to continue in their caring role, with dedicated places to support older carers.

### **ACTION:**

- 4500 new flexible respite places



## Early Intervention and Therapy to Give Kids the Best Start

Finding out that your child has a disability or delay in development can be confronting and difficult.

Maximising a child's development and minimising the impact of their disability is critical to them reaching their potential and giving them the best possible start in life.

Research has proven that early intervention is a highly effective way to maximise the potential of children with a disability. The earlier interventions commence, the better the outcome. Thus, early detection is vital, along with outreach to families at that critical time – point of diagnosis.

We also need to intervene early during key transition points in a person's life which build strengths and enable increased independence.

That's why under *Stronger Together*, a re-elected Keneally Government will provide an extra 9380 new early intervention, therapy and behaviour support places.

### ACTION:

- 9380 new early intervention and therapy places to give people with a disability the best possible start in life.

## **Replace All Outdated Large Residential Centres**

Large residential centres have been home to thousands of people with a disability in NSW, but they have outlived their useful life.

People living in Large Residential Centre (LRC) are typically the most disadvantaged people in the community and require intensive round the clock supported accommodation, due to high levels of challenging behaviour, complex health care needs, or complex needs associated with the ageing process.

However, it is no longer accepted in our community that people with disabilities should live in an institutional setting.

We need more modern accommodation in the community which support people to live a fulfilling life and to be included in the broader community.

For the first time, funding is in the budget to close the old institution style centres and build new homes for residents.

### **ACTION:**

- Close all large residential centres by 2018

## Public Accountability

We need people with a disability, their families and the community to be confident that *Stronger Together* resources are being used equitably and effectively.

For the first time, the Government will be required to report to Parliament against the targets set out in *Stronger Together* in all disability program areas. This will provide a very public accounting of:

- how the *Stronger Together* resources have been applied
- what outcomes have been achieved
- what new research and data are showing about the effectiveness of initiatives.

This will allow the public to judge the success of the program for themselves.

As a further step in enhancing transparency, all modelling associated with *Stronger Together* will be publicly released so that the public can see how we have measured the success of programs such as early intervention.

## ACTION:

- Annual report to Parliament reconciling actual expenditure and increases in places with the published plans for *Stronger Together*.
- Public release of the modelling data that underpins *Stronger Together* with annual updates that take account of new population and administrative data.



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