

stronger together

stronger together

A new direction for disability services in NSW :: 2006–2016



New South Wales
Government



premier's foreword



The day I became Premier, I outlined my vision for the State of New South Wales and the services I wanted to improve.

One of the key policy areas I identified was disability services.

Stronger Together: A new direction for disability services 2006–2016 is a historic change in the way we provide support for people with a disability and includes a significant boost in funding: an additional billion dollars over five years.

Stronger Together has been informed by an intensive consultation process including people with a disability, their families, service providers, advocates, academics, peak bodies and the community generally. The Minister for Disability Services travelled the State over the past 16 months to ensure he had the full picture, to consider different approaches and canvass better ways to deliver disability services.

I would like to personally acknowledge the efforts of families in caring for their children and other family members with a disability. We want to work with them to make their lives easier.

Each year we spend over \$1.2 billion on services and initiatives to specifically assist people with a disability to access community services such as public transport, specialist health services, housing and education.

In recognition that many people with a disability have low incomes the Government also offers a range of concessions to make these services more affordable. These services and concessions assist the majority of people with a disability to live full lives in the community.

A smaller proportion of people with a disability and their families require specialised assistance. *Stronger Together* is our commitment to the specialised disability support system over the next 10 years.

Stronger Together delivers more support, more quickly for people with a disability, families and carers and details how we will deliver my commitment to better disability services in NSW.

The Honourable Morris Iemma
Premier of NSW

minister's foreword



Since becoming Minister I have met and listened to many people with a disability, parents and carers and heard a common message — our current approach helps many people, but is unsuitable for some and not flexible enough for others.

Stronger Together is a 10-year plan to provide greater assistance and long-term practical solutions for people with a disability and their families. The lemma Government has backed it with more than \$1 billion in new funding over its first five years.

Stronger Together details our commitment to making access to services fairer and more transparent, helping people to remain in their own home, linking services to need, creating more options for people living in specialist support services and ensuring that the system is sustainable. It makes clear what we can provide and what we can't, and renews the Government's commitment to offer people with a disability the support they need and opportunities for engagement with the community.

Stronger Together has particular regard to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people from other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Upfront, it must be said that even \$1 billion cannot solve every problem. I also acknowledge there are challenges outside the scope of this plan. We will continue to work with the Commonwealth Government to create a more effective *Home and Community Care Agreement* and a better planning basis for the *Commonwealth State and Territory Disability Agreement*. We will also work toward greater cooperation between Governments and the private sector to resolve issues with boarding houses.

Stronger Together begins with an immediate \$154 million in 2006/07. Over the next four years there will be steady, sustainable growth as we build our capacity and implement your feedback.

The lemma Government's initiative in providing lifetime care for all those catastrophically injured in motor accidents, regardless of fault, is another positive step. Not only will it assist people injured on the roads, it will allow us to focus Government assistance on other people with a disability.

Stronger Together would not exist without the Premier's strong support. He has been a powerful advocate for a comprehensive reappraisal of disability services and he understood the increased resources it would require. I am also grateful for the unswerving support of my Ministerial colleagues, in spite of the tough fiscal challenges the Government faces. The Commonwealth's allocation to other States of \$2.5 billion paid by NSW residents in GST each year makes funding critically important human services very difficult.

I believe that *Stronger Together* represents real progress in improving the quality of life of many people with a disability and their families. I wish to thank those families, advocates, providers, carers and peak council representatives, my parliamentary colleagues and most importantly the many courageous Australians with a disability, for their enormous patience in guiding me as Minister through the extensive consultations that have given life to this plan.

The Honourable John Della Bosca
Minister for Disability Services

our track record

We have increased the disability services budget by \$610 million or 125 per cent in the past nine years. We now spend \$1.1 billion on disability services.

Community support services

The New South Wales Government understands the importance of helping families and communities to support people with a disability at home. We now spend \$420 million per year on a range of community support services such as respite, therapy, equipment, personal care, community access, day programs and case management. These funds help 29,000 people with a disability continue to stay with their families.

Specialist accommodation services

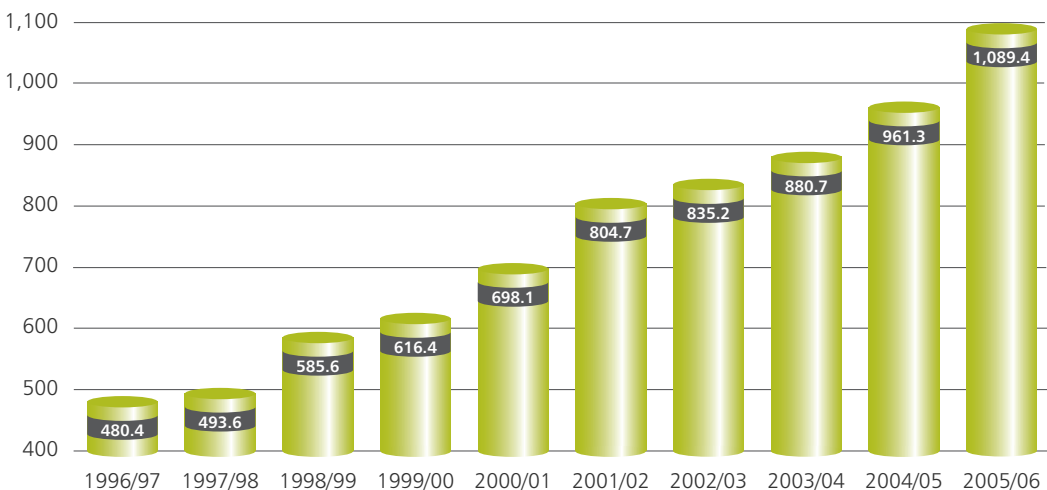
Funding for accommodation support services has doubled since 1996. We now allocate \$670 million to assist more than 5,000 people.

In the last five years, more than 1,000 people with a disability have received new group home accommodation.

In addition, a further 600 people received other types of intensive in-home support.

Disability expenditure 1996/97 to 2005/06 (est)

\$ million



our way ahead

Stronger Together will increase assistance and options for people with a disability to live at home. It will also increase the range of specialist accommodation services.

Our services will comply with the *NSW Disability Services Act 1993* and will respond to the diverse needs and cultures of people with a disability and their families.





Fair and more transparent access

Currently there are many different entry points where someone can access the disability system based on their disability or their need. We know this has led to inequities. *Stronger Together* will have fair and transparent access. Eligibility will be clear. There will be standardised assessment of a person's functional need and the needs of, and support arrangements provided by, families and carers.

This approach is the key to making access to our services predictable. People with a disability and their families will have greater clarity about the levels of support they can expect and when these services will be available.

Historically, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have faced needless barriers in obtaining access to services. We will improve access to our services by developing more culturally appropriate services so that all people, irrespective of their background, have fair access based on functional need.

We will look at ways to improve services and options for people with a disability, their families and carers in rural and remote NSW. We will introduce new service choices and better use technology to assist them to access services.

Helping people to remain in their own home

Our current system has largely offered services that people have had to 'fit' into. *Stronger Together* will deliver services in a way that recognises that people with a disability have diverse physical, social, psychological and cultural needs that can be met in different ways.

Families and carers are central to our disability support system. The vast majority of people with a disability are cared for at home with the support of their family and friends. *Stronger Together* will recognise and complement the assistance already provided, strengthening it rather than replacing it.

Linking services to need

Services will be linked to need and packaged to enable people to continue to live at home. Case managers will help them achieve this goal by enabling access to a range of services. We will emphasise early assistance.

There will be clearer entry and exit points for services and these will be based on assessment of need. There will also be regular reviews of people's needs. We will emphasise that services must continue to remain appropriate over time; people's needs change and so must the services they receive.



More options for people living in specialist support services

For most people currently living in specialist accommodation arrangements there are two options: group homes and large residential centres. While these have helped many people they have not been flexible enough to help others.

Stronger Together will provide a wider range of specialist accommodation options for people with a disability who cannot be supported practically or cost effectively in their own home.

Where specialist accommodation is required, a range of different dwellings will be available to meet individual needs, locations and changing circumstances. The support provided will be consistent with contemporary accommodation and care standards and will comply with the *NSW Disability Services Act 1993*.

People with a disability in specialist support arrangements will be assisted to transfer to less intensive supports, including community support. They will be able to return if this does not meet their needs.

A sustainable support system

The disability support system must be sustainable. Government alone cannot provide all the services. Helping and making opportunities for people with a disability is a shared responsibility.

We must also have a skilled workforce together with quality service providers. We will allocate resources to where there is need, based on sound evidence. We will locate specialist accommodation services in areas where there is ongoing demand, affordable services and a suitable workforce. Fair fees will be applied to our services.

We will clearly describe the services we want to buy. We will monitor them to make sure that we are getting what we paid for and that they meet quality standards.

The community and private sectors will continue to play a crucial role in the delivery of our services. They are key partners in delivering our services and are essential as a source of innovation, and ensuring a variety of providers and ways in which services are delivered.

Where we will place our effort

We won't be able to change the system overnight; it will take time.

We will achieve change through three areas of effort:

- > **Strengthening families** — enabling children with a disability to grow up in a family and participate in the community
- > **Count me in...promoting community inclusion** — supporting adults with a disability to live in and be part of the community; and
- > **Improving the system's capacity and accountability** — fairer and clearer ways to access services, greater accountability and more opportunities for innovation.

We will monitor our changes to the system carefully and check our progress. We will incorporate what we learn from the changes in our subsequent steps. You will be able to read our report card and provide feedback to the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

Stronger Together :: the first five years at a glance

Strengthening families

— enabling children and young people with a disability to grow up in a family and participate in the community

\$6 million in 2006/07 and \$83 million over five years

Highlights

- > Continuing increases in intensive, innovative and flexible support packages for children and young people and their families at \$31 million over five years. By the fifth year there will be an additional 1,800 places a year.
- > 200 new therapy places for children with a disability in 2006/07 at \$1.1 million. By the fifth year, the number of therapy places will be 960 a year.
- > 80 additional flexible respite places for children with a disability in 2006/07 at \$1.6 million. By 2010/11, there will be 450 new respite places for children and young people.

Count me in...promoting community inclusion

— supporting adults with a disability to live in and be part of the community

\$87 million in 2006/07 and \$1,013 million over five years

Highlights

- > Expansion of community participation programs for people with a disability from three days a week to four days and five days for people with very high support needs commencing in 2007. This will be at a cost of \$20 million in 2006/07 and \$235 million over five years. This will assist 1,990 people next year.
- > 180 new places for innovative supported accommodation options in 2006/07 at \$46 million. By 2010/11 there will be 990 places, with costs over the five years totalling \$514 million.
- > 130 places in day programs for adults with a disability in 2006/07 at \$2 million and 780 places over five years at \$33 million.
- > 70 intensive in-home support places in 2006/07 at \$5.3 million, with 320 places over five years at \$66 million.
- > Introduce flexible community support packages with 40 packages over five years at \$10 million.
- > Up to \$80 million over five years (with the Commonwealth Government contributing half) to prevent young people entering nursing homes, improve the circumstances of young people in nursing homes and develop alternative models of support for young people living in nursing homes.
- > 400 new therapy places for adults with a disability in 2006/07 at \$2.2 million. By 2010/11 there will be 1,920 new therapy places for adults.
- > 670 additional flexible respite places for adults with a disability in 2006/07 at \$5 million. By 2010/11 there will be 810 new respite places.

Improving the system's capacity and accountability

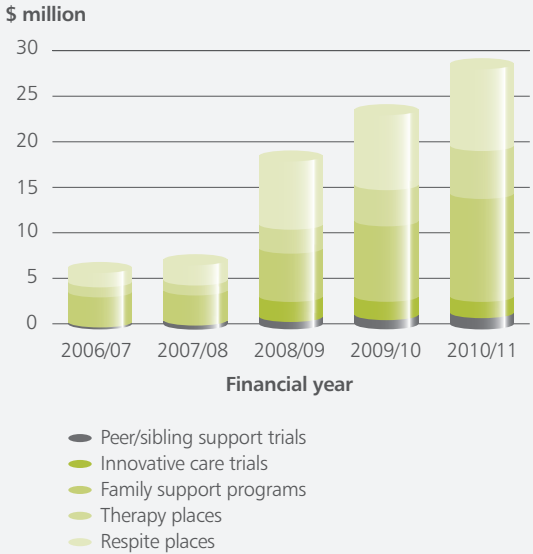
— fairer and clearer ways to access services with greater accountability and more opportunities for innovation

\$61 million in 2006/07 and \$242 million over five years

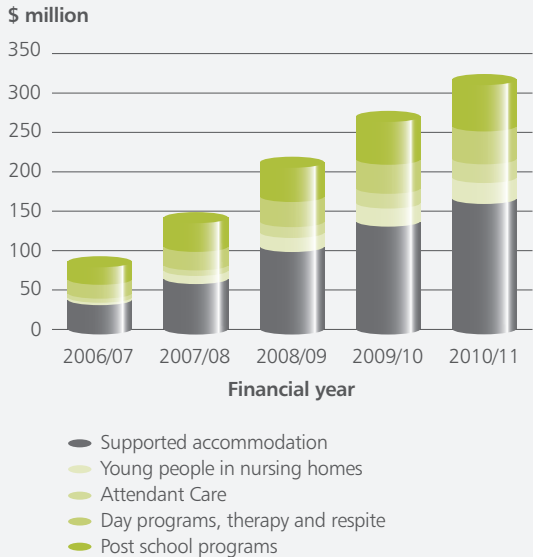
Highlights

- > Build research and development capacity with \$4.5 million over five years.
- > Develop specialist accommodation with \$23 million over five years (includes capital) — large residential centres will continue to close over time with some of the properties being redeveloped into contemporary village-style accommodation and support.
- > 100 new case managers at \$53 million over five years providing assistance to 4,000 people with a disability and their families per year.
- > Expand training for Government and non-government disability workers at \$15 million over five years.

Investment in 'Strengthening families'



Investment in 'Count Me In'



Stronger Together: A new direction for disability services in NSW 2006–2016 is available in full or summary in accessible formats from the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

Level 5, 83 Clarence Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Phone: (02) 8270 2000

TTY: (02) 8270 2167

Email: info@dadhc.nsw.gov.au

www.dadhc.nsw.gov.au

