

Disability Services



Government of South Australia
Department for Communities
and Social Inclusion

Community and Home Support SA

The Provision of Disability Services in South Australia

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In December 2011 the State Government announced major reforms of disability services in South Australia, in response to the 'Strong Voices' report by the Social Inclusion Board. The Government has supported 17 of the 34 recommendations in the report, with the remainder to be considered in the Budget process. The new reforms focus on revamping the way people with disability receive support services, by providing personal budgets to everyone who receives six hours or more of disability services and giving people the option of receiving direct payments to manage their support needs. A range of other measures have been agreed, that support long term reform of the disability sector.

At the same time, the Government has recognised that further investment in disability supports will be required. There has already been significant investment in funding for disability services, in recognition of the extent of demand for disability services in South Australia. Since 2002, the South Australian Government has more than doubled government spending on disability from \$135.4 million in 2002–03 to \$286.4m in 2010-11.

For 2011-12, funding for disability services has again been increased. The 2011–12 State Budget contained \$56 million in additional funding for services to people with disability over the next four years.

This comprised:

- ▶ An extra \$37.5 million over four years in response to growth in demand for disability services. These funds will be used to provide a range of initiatives that invest in early intervention for children and adults, plus additional accommodation support, respite and day options services to prevent crises and improve responses to emergencies.
- ▶ An extra \$10.8 million over four years for disability equipment: This will fund approximately 600 items of complex equipment or major home modifications that would otherwise be wait-listed in 2011–12, as well as meet associated costs of clinical assessment, maintenance and program administration.
- ▶ An extra \$7.7 million over four years for Strathmont Centre Devolution – Stage 2. This will enable 32 of the remaining residents on the Strathmont campus to move to community accommodation.

This funding is on top of an additional \$70.9 million over four years which was committed in the 2010–11 State Budget. This was directed to assist South Australians requiring accommodation support, community support, community access and respite services throughout the State. Additional funding for election commitments was also allocated. This included, over the four years, \$13.8 million for disability equipment and \$4.2 million for children with autism.

In December 2009, a funding boost of \$31 million over four years was provided by the State Government specifically for families needing respite and in-home support.

These significant funding increases recognise that the number of people with disability who need assistance continues to grow. The requirement for disability services is increasing as the population ages, certain disabilities increase in prevalence and people with disability live longer. Increased demand also reflects changes in community expectations about how people with disabilities are best supported. These trends are being experienced in all States.

In the main, specialist disability services in South Australia are directed towards people with a profound or severe disability that manifests before the age of 65. The Australian Bureau of Statistics' *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2009* estimates that, in South Australia, there are 49,040 people aged 0 to 64 years who have a disability and who are profoundly or severely limited in their core activities (self-care, mobility and communication).

Projections indicate that, across Australia, this group will have increased by 23% from 2003 to 2030.¹

In South Australia, the number of people receiving disability services has grown significantly. Over the past six years, the number of individuals in South Australia receiving disability services² from either Disability Services or non-government organisations funded by government has increased by more than 6,700 (44.7%), from **15,081** in 2003–04 to **21,822** in 2010-11.

Whilst the number of people receiving assistance from disability services has increased, some still need, but are not able to access, assistance. This is referred to as 'unmet need'. Where a person is assessed as being eligible for disability services and has a need for a particular type of service that is not met, or only partially met, this is recorded by Disability Services as an unmet need for that service.

All State and Territory governments are reporting that unmet need for disability services in their jurisdictions is increasing. The National Disability Agreement, which came into effect on 1 January 2009, recognises that reducing unmet need is a key priority.

The National Disability Agreement contains a number of priority areas for the reform of disability services. One of these is to improve the measurement of unmet need, as currently there is no nationally consistent approach to the recording of unmet need data. South Australia is the only state to publish comprehensive unmet need data. Nationally, a reliable evidence base is needed in order for governments and the community to know whether people with disability are receiving the disability support services they require.

What has Disability Services done to respond to the nationwide increased requirement for disability services?

Disability Services has put in place a range of reforms to benefit clients and to ensure the most efficient and effective use of resources to maximise their use in responding to those on the waiting list:

► Supported Accommodation Strategy

As a result of the new measures contained in the 2006 *Supported Accommodation Strategy*, Disability Services has developed a single waiting list for accommodation and a single process for the notification of vacancies.

¹ *Australia's Welfare 2009*, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, p146...

² 'Disability services' refers to those specialist disability services provided or funded by the State Government under the National Disability Agreement (NDA), formerly the Commonwealth State and Territories Disability Agreement (CSTDA), excluding employment services which are provided by the Commonwealth Government. Data from the Disability Services National Minimum Data Set.

Disability Services has also established the Central Resource Allocation Unit, which identifies all available vacancies across the sector and allocates accommodation vacancies to those in greatest need. Prior to this, there were multiple waiting lists, multiple contact points and multiple criteria for accessing supported accommodation, and no single system for allocating accommodation to those in greatest need.

People on the urgent need waiting list for supported accommodation are reviewed regularly, assessed on the basis of their support needs and matched against suitable vacancies as they arise.

The South Australian Government is committed to increasing the availability of accommodation and support to enable people with disability to live in the community successfully. Previously, South Australia's Strategic Plan Target T6.10 committed the Government to doubling the number of people appropriately housed and supported in the community by 2014. In 2002–03 there were 665 group home places in the community; by June 2010 this number had increased to 1,035, a 56% increase in the number of group home places. This target was on track at the time of the review of the Plan.

The 2011 update of the Plan has revised this target to:

Increase the number of people with a disability in stable, supported community accommodation to 7, 000 by 2020.

This is measured from a baseline in 2003-04 of 3,280 people. For the year 2010-11 there were 4,860 people with a disability in stable, supported community accommodation.

The South Australian Government has committed funding to a number of supported accommodation projects that will boost the availability of supported accommodation for people with disability:

- **Bedford Homes for 100 Project:** This project will create homes in the community for South Australians with disability. A combined \$10.6 million is being committed equally by the State Government (through the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund) and the Bedford Foundation to fund the capital costs of the project. Potential tenants will be selected from both the Disability Services and Bedford waiting lists of people suitable for, and interested in, community-based living. The project's initial aim of 100 places has been revised to 75.

As at the end of October 2011, 31 of the 33 planned developments have been completed, providing an additional 66 places since the inception of the project. Of the remaining two properties providing nine places, one will be completed in mid 2012, with the final property still in the early planning stages.

- **Minda 105:** In June 2005, a capital grant of \$15.7 million was provided for the Minda 105 Project. In August 2010, Minda launched its strategic master plan for the Brighton site, building on the existing commitment under Minda Project 105. The master plan will see all existing accommodation facilities on campus demolished and all people currently residing on the Brighton campus offered the chance to live in the community or in new homes to be built on the Minda site.

As at the end of October 2011, 84 places have been created in line with the Minda 105 project and the subsequent master plan. In the coming year, a further 22 accommodation places will be created.

- **Julia Farr Housing Association:** \$21 million has been provided for community housing for people with disability. To date, \$15.1 million has been spent, with 32 buildings transferred to Julia Farr Housing Association. A further five buildings are under construction, five have received planning approval and are in design development and five are awaiting a planning decision. In total, there are 16 projects that will provide accommodation for a potential 77 tenants, with additional capacity for carers in some dwellings.
- **Harrow Trust:** A twelve-person facility developed by Harrow Trust began operating in November 2010. The facility has been supported by \$1.65 million from the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund.
- **Disability Housing Project (\$30.45 million):** Will deliver 61 new disability-accessible homes, providing 138 accommodation places. The State Government has combined the Supported Accommodation for People with Disability with Ageing Carers Program, comprising 20 homes and providing 47 new supported accommodation places and the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan. This comprises 41 dwellings and 91 new places. Tendering and construction will be ongoing through to completion in mid-2012³.

As at December 2011, the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan has delivered 20 purpose-built dwellings for people with disability. 17 homes have been constructed in the suburbs of Salisbury North, Parkholme and Woodville Gardens, and three in Pt Augusta. A further four homes in Mt Gambier are expected to be completed in July.

Planning and design for dwellings under the Supported Accommodation for People with Disability with Ageing Carers Program has been completed, and construction of four dwellings in the metropolitan area is underway. In the coming financial year, 20 properties will be completed in the metropolitan area, Loxton, Minlaton and Yalata.

Overall, these projects represent a capital spending commitment of \$74.1 million and provide accommodation for 408 people.

Supported Residential Facility (SRF) Sector: In 2008–09, in response to industry concerns about the ongoing viability of the SRF sector, the South Australian Government injected additional recurrent funding of \$2.26 million for a supplementary board-and-care subsidy payment to proprietors on behalf of residents. This has resulted in improvements in the level of service and amenity in the sector. In addition, work has occurred in relation to the medium-to-longer-term reform agenda for the SRF sector, which addresses viability, quality and service standards. A report on the smaller SRFs was completed in 2011 which has shown a range of viabilities across this group of SRFs. The report was not released because, by its nature, it identified individual facilities.

³ A further 13 places will be identified shortly to meet an overall total of 55 places under the Supported Accommodation for People with Disability with Ageing Carers Program.

► **DCSI Equipment Program**

Improvements in equipment services for adults with disability have resulted from the creation of a single equipment program in by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI). This program services the equipment and home modification needs of clients of Disability Services, Domiciliary Care and Novita Children's Services (Novita).

Domiciliary Equipment Service (DES) manages the supply, maintenance and replacement of all equipment and home modifications for the equipment program. Assessment and prescription is undertaken within the specialist services of Disability Services, Domiciliary Care and Novita.

In September 2010, new arrangements that fully integrated children's needs into the equipment program became operational. DCSI continues to work closely with Novita to ensure these services are delivered effectively for children.

Stocks of a comprehensive range of standard, non-customised equipment continue to meet 91% of overall equipment needs for the program (81% adults, 66% children, 98% ageing) during July through December 2011. This has enabled refurbishment (reissue) levels to remain at 70% of all items supplied during the same time period.

The significant savings delivered have resulted in more equipment and home modifications being supplied to people with a disability. As at 31 December 2011, the equipment program is on track to exceed 2010-11 levels in equipment, home modifications and equipment modifications provided to people with a disability across all age groups for 2011-12.

For adults and children with a disability, equipment issued has grown from 1,941 items in 2006-07 to 5,869 items in 2010-11 with 3,777 items supplied as at 31 December 2011.

Equipment supply times (once a prescription is received at DES) averaged 4.8 days for stock items, 2.5 days for consumable items and 48.4 days for customised items across the program during July-December 2011.

As at 31 December 2011, repairs required have reduced from 2010-11 levels, due to the impact of better quality equipment, more proactive maintenance and working more closely with the people who have historically been heavy users of equipment. In conjunction with this reduction in repairs overall, the greater use of in-house resources has further contained costs, with savings being spent on more equipment.

These reforms have been complemented by funding growth. Since 2002, \$50.5 million has been spent on disability equipment. The further increase of \$2.6 million in the annual funding for the DCSI Equipment Program will take recurrent funding to over \$7.5 million for adults and children with disability by 2012-13.

► **Day Options**

Each year, approximately fifty people aged 15 to 20 years with intellectual disability or an autism spectrum disorder and moderate to very high support needs leave school. Due to the nature of their disability, further education or employment can be difficult to achieve. If eligible, these young people can enter a day option program, which aims to provide meaningful day activities that promote learning and skill development, and enable access, participation and integration in their local community.

In June 2011, there were 1,409 people with disability involved in day option programs in South Australia.