

stronger together



stronger together

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



New South Wales
Government

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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 specifically to 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.

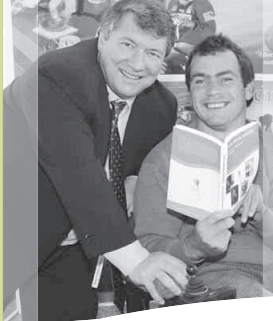
A smaller proportion of people with a disability and their families require specialised assistance. *Stronger Together* is our commitment to the specialised disability support system over the next 10 years.

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



*a comprehensive plan for people with
a disability, their families and carers*



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 Lemna 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 towards 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 Lemna 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 unwavering 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



*a long-term plan with a commitment
to creating a better future*

introduction ::



The need for change

Over 200,000 people with a severe or profound disability¹ aged up to 65 live in NSW. Most are cared for by their family and friends.

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.

Yet we know there are many people who need more help and, for some, much more help. We also know that some groups are barely using the services at all. There are also those who are getting help, but it's not the right kind of help.

We realise that demand for services will increase each year. More people with a disability are living in the community. All of us are living longer. We recognise that pressures on carers grow as they age and as families in Australia get smaller.

Our new disability support system will provide a better balance so that the available funds assist people before they reach a crisis.

It is clear that improving services is not just about more money, it must be about a change that delivers better value, better access and better results. The one-off quick fix is not sustainable; a planned approach provides increased predictability.

We need a more flexible and innovative system for people with a disability, their families and carers — a system that does not assume one size fits all and is not just more of the same.

We will not be able to meet everyone's wish, but we can provide them with greater predictability about the services available for their particular functional need. We can provide clear entry and exit points based on an assessment of a person's need.

People with a disability, families and carers have told us they want a range of choices with new ideas and different ways of doing things; not just bricks and mortar. We are committed to focusing on quality of life and outcomes.

Currently our main accommodation choices are group homes and large residential centres, neither of which is able to respond adequately in all cases to people's needs. These accommodation options must expand.

More importantly, we have not fully explored new and different ways of supporting people with a disability in the community and keeping families together.

Stronger Together will provide a way forward.

¹ These are Australian Bureau of Statistics data. It defines 'profound' as unable to perform a core activity or always needing assistance with a core activity and 'severe' as sometimes needing assistance with a core activity. Core activities are self care (such as bathing, eating and using the toilet), mobility and communication. All types of disability are included.

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.

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 in their own home with the support of 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 in their own 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

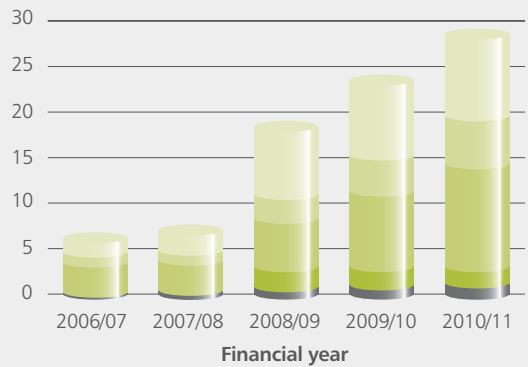
\$61 million in 2006/07 and \$242 million over five years

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'

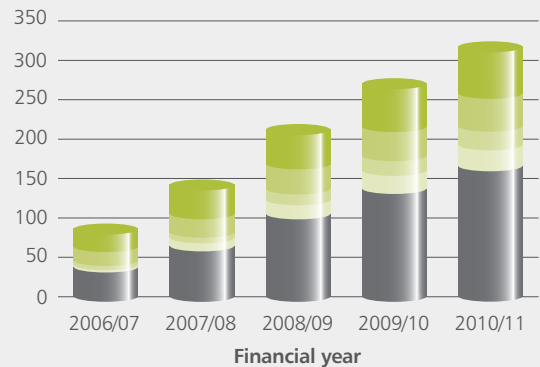
\$ million



- Peer/sibling support trials
- Innovative care trials
- Family support programs
- Therapy places
- Respite places

Investment in 'Count me in'

\$ million

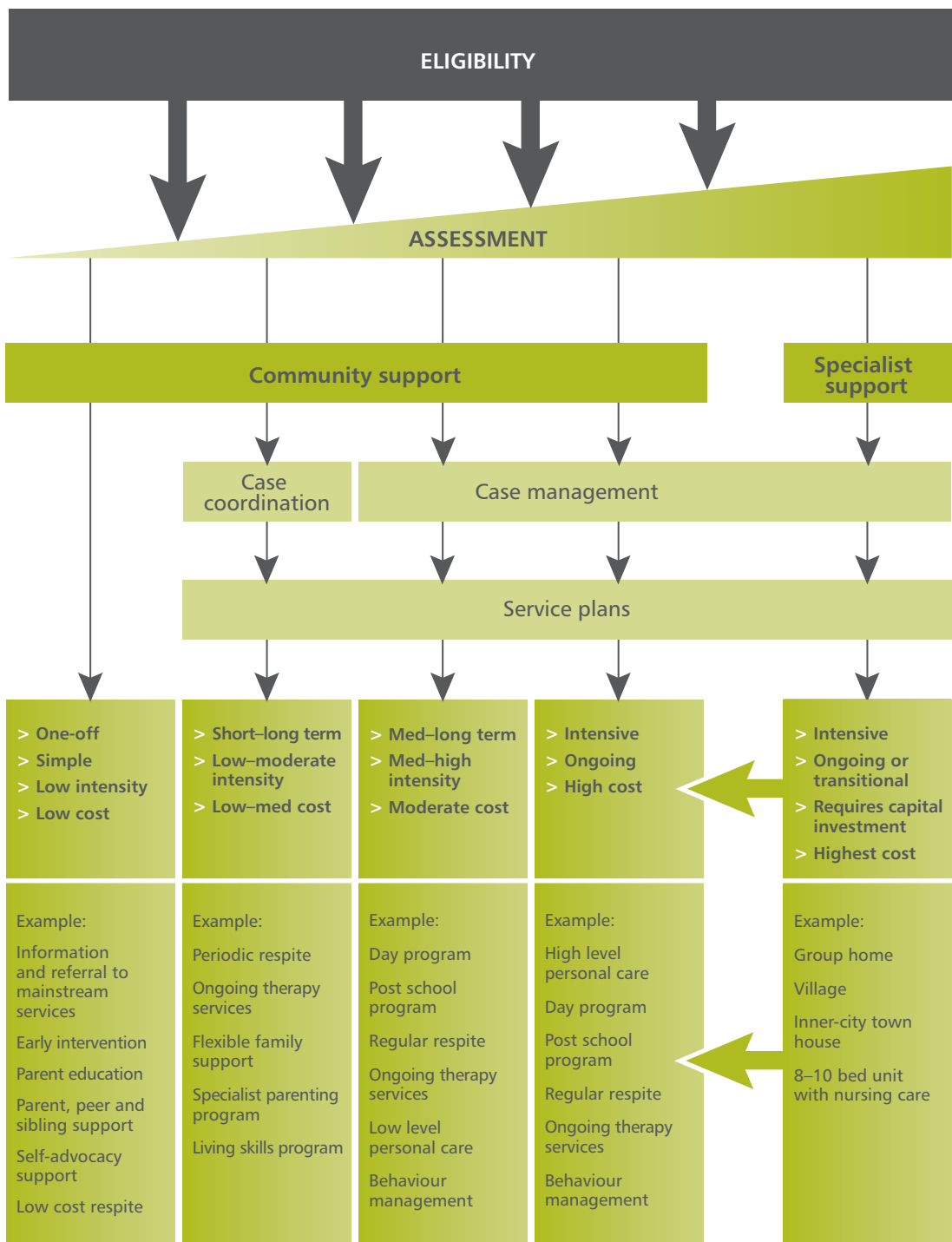


- Supported accommodation
- Young people in nursing homes
- Attendant Care
- Day programs, therapy and respite
- Post school programs



“ People with a disability, families and carers have told us they want a range of choices with new ideas and different ways of doing things...we are committed to focusing on quality of life and outcomes. ”

What will our new system be like?



↓ People must meet eligibility requirements to access the system. Assessment intensity is relative to the level of assistance required.

← People in specialist support will have the opportunity to transition to community support.



*a plan to keep families with
children with a disability together*

strengthening families ::



1

1. Strengthening families

Children and young people with a disability need the opportunity to grow up in a family. For families this is very rewarding but without extra assistance can sometimes prove difficult. Families should have the offer of a helping hand when they need it.

We are building a more flexible system with a strong focus on early intervention. We aim to deliver the assistance families need, and to do so in ways that are predictable.

Our assistance will incorporate the development, skills and potential of children and young people and build on the strengths of each family. We will emphasise support that helps to sustain a family and enables young people to mix with people their own age.

Our objective

Over the 10 years of *Stronger Together*, we will work to keep families with children with a disability together.

The transition points for a child with a disability are no different from other children's. If the transition is not smooth, problems emerge. For younger children with a disability this would mean having the right support before starting school, and for older children and young people it will mean help when they start and leave school. We know this will enable young people to have similar opportunities and experiences to their peers.

Our approach

Stronger Together focuses our efforts on three strategies:

- > expanding our capacity to respond more quickly and appropriately;
- > enhancing the support to parents and other carers and intervening earlier; and
- > structuring our services so they better support families.

What our service system will look like

Over the course of *Stronger Together*, our approach will enable our disability support system to deliver:

- > clear and early access to assistance for families;
- > information in a format and a language where families can find, read and obtain the assistance they need;
- > improved case management and services coordinated to link them to the person's need;
- > access to respite that is both flexible and responsive to the family's need and those of the child or young person with a disability;
- > therapy services that help children develop; and
- > specialist assistance for children and young people at their key transition points.

1.1 Expanding the sector's capacity for faster service

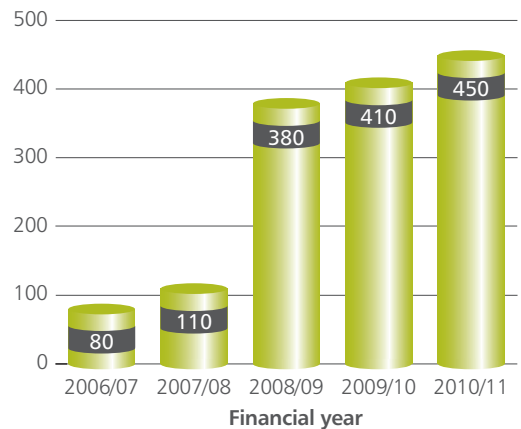
Many disability services are in such heavy demand that the delays in accessing them can destabilise families. We will focus on:

- > expanding the number of therapy and respite places available;
- > widening the range and location of respite choices to better match with the age of the child or young person and the needs of them and their family; and
- > finding support as similar as possible to a family environment for the small number of children and young people who cannot remain at home.

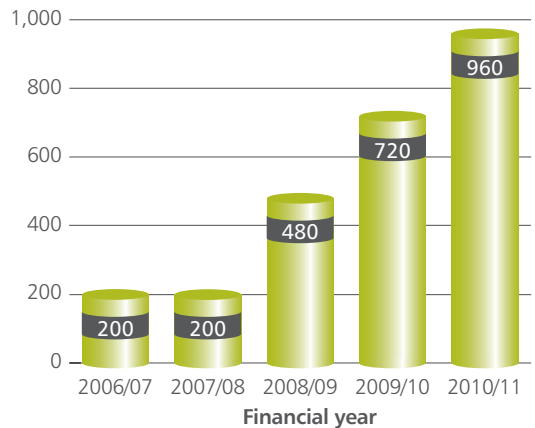
What we will build on

- > Recent recruitment of 18 new behaviour support workers² at a cost of \$6 million over five years.
- > Increased funding of \$6 million in 2005/06 for Community Support Teams², to allow additional therapy services.
- > \$300,000 to The Spastic Centre of NSW to purchase speech generating devices which enable children with little or no functional speech to communicate.

New respite places for children and young people



New therapy places for children and young people



² These workers also assist adults with a disability.



“ Over the 10 years
of *Stronger Together*,
we will work to
keep families with
children with a disability
together.”

What we will do now

- > Provide 80 new flexible respite packages at a cost of \$1.6 million a year.
- > Trial new models of respite for children with challenging behaviours at three different sites.
- > Provide 200 additional therapy places at a cost of \$1.1 million a year.

This will lead to

- > A 30 per cent increase in the number of respite places for families over five years. The range of places will be expanded to include:
 - shared care to assist working carers with young children;
 - recreational support for teenagers to help them create the lifestyle of a young person away from their family; and
 - respite which spans crisis, regular and occasional services.
- > A 25 per cent increase in the therapy places for children and young people over five years. In 2010/11 there will be 960 new places.

1.2 Enhancing support to parents and other carers

Although parenting or caring for a child with a disability is rewarding, it can also be difficult and stressful. We will assist families in need to make it easier and increase the opportunities for children and young people to remain at home by:

- > increasing the investment in early intervention services;
- > providing training and intensive support for parents, including families with children with challenging behaviours; and
- > building information and networks to support families.

Our services must respond better to needs. We require the right mix of services to enable our interventions to be successful. Families and carers should not be expected to know exactly what they need now or may need later. Specialists will help sort out the best solution including the mix of services. We will focus on:

- > improving case management and coordination to provide the right mix and sequence of services; and
- > improving linkages between specialist and mainstream services for families.

What we will build on

- > Fifteen intensive family services to help up to 400 families at risk of breakdown, with three services specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- > Twenty casework consultants to improve services for children and young people.
- > A Family Assistance Fund for small amounts to help families buy one-off items they couldn't get in other ways.

³ Early intervention program including providing practical support or short-term intensive assistance (see Glossary).

⁴ Community-based facilitators (see Glossary).

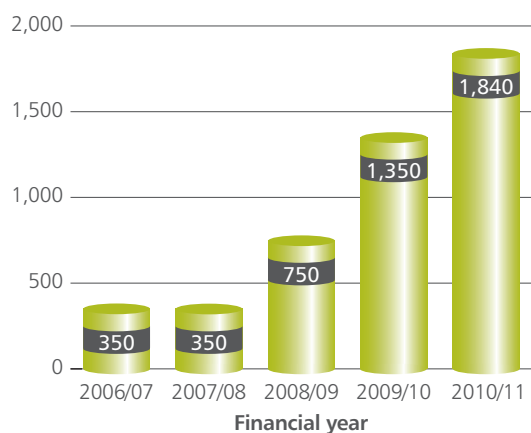
What we will do now

- > Develop and introduce new parenting programs costing \$300,000 in 2006/07.
- > Trial programs to promote parent, sibling and peer support networks and development of information (\$3.6 million over five years) including information kits for families with a child with a disability.

This will lead to

- > The extension of Support for Children and Families³ by \$31.2 million over five years (plans are already in place from earlier budgets and \$30 million has been allocated from 2005 to 2008). By 2010/11 we will assist a further 1,840 families.
- > An innovation fund of \$2 million a year from 2008/09 to trial new ways of assisting families to support their children with a disability. These will include more Local Support Coordinators⁴.
- > Developing our carers' policy consistent with the NSW Government carers' statement.

New family support places





*a plan to help people be
more active in their community*

count me in...promoting
community inclusion

∴

2



2. Count me in...promoting community inclusion

Being part of the community and enjoying the lifestyle and recreational activities it offers are a great part of most of our lives. New opportunities for school leavers and other people with a disability to participate in community activities are a feature of our new approach.

Our objectives

Over the 10 years of *Stronger Together*, we will:

- > assist people to be more active members of their communities;
- > increase the opportunities for people with a disability to live in their own home;
- > expand the range of housing for people who require specialist accommodation; and
- > increase community awareness and acceptance of people with a disability.

Our approach

Stronger Together focuses our efforts on three strategies:

- > building a wider range of opportunities for community participation;
- > expanding the ways we provide support services; and
- > improving the quality of specialist supports.

What the service system will look like

Day programs will become central to how we assist people with a disability. Approximately 3,000 new places for adults will be available over the next five years.

Complementing this will be a greater range of respite, therapy and in-home support packages to reduce reliance on specialist accommodation.

For people unable to remain in their own home, there will be a more diverse range of accommodation with greater choice and more opportunity. There will be more emphasis on encouraging people in specialist support to transition to less intensive arrangements where appropriate. They will be able to return if this does not meet their needs.

The quality of the services provided in specialist accommodation support will be improved, particularly through improved standards of health and related care and increased supports to enable people to participate in community life.

2.1 Building a more diverse range of community supports

As we increase opportunities for adults with a disability to participate in the community, their capacity to remain in their preferred home environment will also improve. We will focus on:

- > investing in programs that provide useful and enjoyable activities and skills development, supported by enhanced respite, therapy and in-home support services and case management;
- > improving choice as we develop a wider range of opportunities that suit various ages and help people with a disability transition through their life stages; and
- > raising public awareness and acceptance of people with a disability.

What we will build on

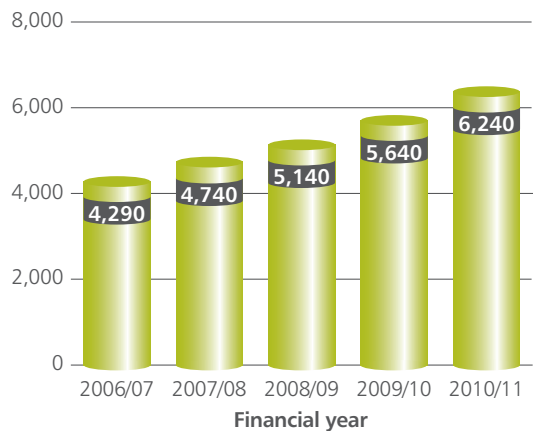
- > Reform of current post school programs.
- > Expansion of Attendant Care places, up from 214 in 2003/04 to 314 places in 2005/06.
- > Injection of \$48 million, jointly with the Commonwealth Government, for respite for older carers.
- > \$500,000 to the Motor Neurone Disease Association of NSW to expand its equipment library.

What we will do now

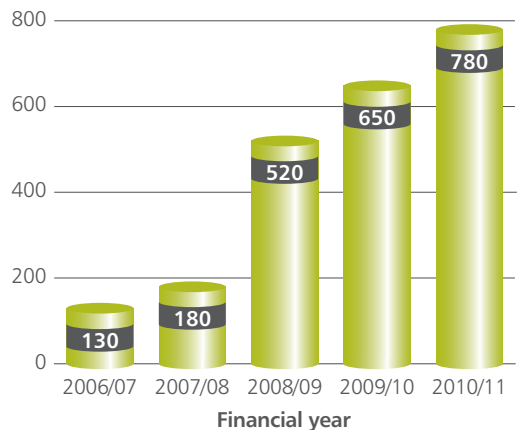
- > Expand programs for school leavers with a significant disability. Those who cannot enter the workforce immediately or within two years will receive a place in the Community Participation program. From February 2007, these places will increase from three to four days a week and people with very high support needs will receive five days. It is estimated that the number of places in post school programs will increase by 46 per cent over the next five years.
- > Increase the number of other day programs by 13 per cent over five years.

- > Increase therapy places by 25 per cent over five years for adults with a disability.
- > Expand the number and the range of respite places by 30 per cent over five years.
- > Increase Attendant Care program places by 320, from 314 in 2005/06 to 634 in 2010/11.
- > In partnership with the NSW Department of Housing and community housing providers, allow 40 people to make the transition to public and community housing at a cost of \$10 million over five years.

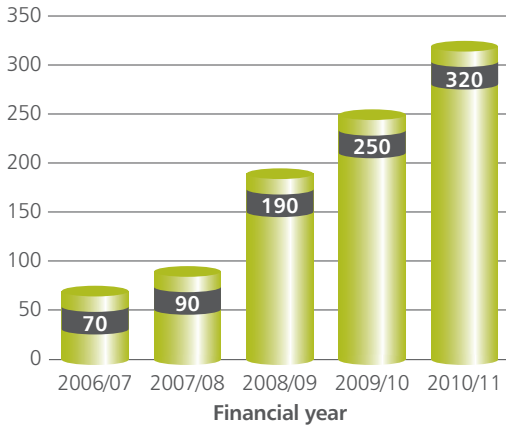
Total places in post school programs



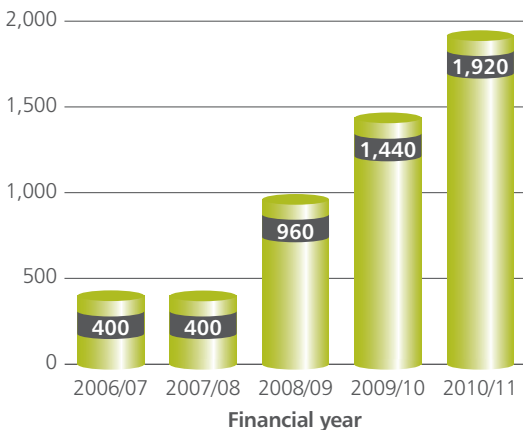
New day program places



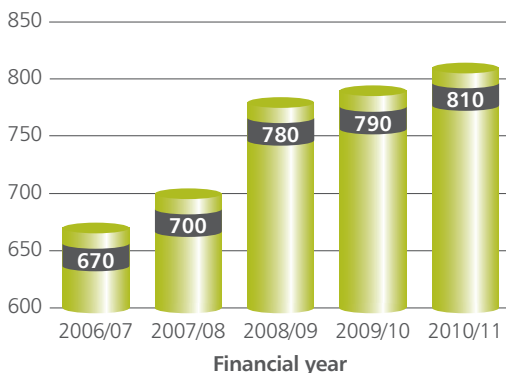
New attendant care places



New therapy places for adults



New respite places for adults



This will lead to

- > Working with the Commonwealth Government to improve the interface between disability and ageing and between disability and employment programs.
- > Developing new and different models for day programs. The focus will be on continuing to improve the quality of life for people with a disability and widening the range of programs to meet changing needs and interests. This will include:
 - new and different models for day programs for older people who are retiring;
 - programs for young people living in nursing homes where there are currently no alternative supports; and
 - transition programs for people to develop skills and confidence to participate in the community independently.
- > Improving in-home support services. We will give them greater priority and draw on research and experience with various models including the new 40 places to be developed in partnership with the NSW Department of Housing and community housing providers. There will be opportunities to increase the number of these services in conjunction with the expansion of specialist support places.

2.2 Expanding the options for specialist support

A growing number of people with a disability require assistance to continue living in their own homes. This can range from a simple renovation to intensive personal assistance. For a small proportion of people it may mean special accommodation with back-up support.

We are committed to increasing the range of in-home services and the type of supported accommodation to match the needs of people with a disability. We will focus on:

- > more flexible types of supported living, including options for people whose needs fluctuate;
- > new models of accommodation for people with challenging behaviours, complex health issues or those who are leaving correctional settings; and
- > assisting people to move from one form of support to another as their needs change.

What we will build on

- > In January 2006, after an extensive state-wide consultation, we released the *Accommodation and Support Paper*. It provides our framework for delivering:
 - a greater focus on assistance and flexible options to enable people with a disability to be supported by their family and friends; and
 - a wider range of specialist support services for those for whom family and friends can no longer provide the primary supports.
- > Assistance for 75 people with serious challenging behaviours who are moving into more permanent housing through our whole-of-Government Integrated Services Project.

- > The expansion of specialist accommodation and support for people with a disability leaving the criminal justice system. Thirty places were created in 2005/06.
- > The introduction of new approaches for 90 young people leaving foster and other care at 18 years of age who may need to move into other forms of support or accommodation.

What we will do now

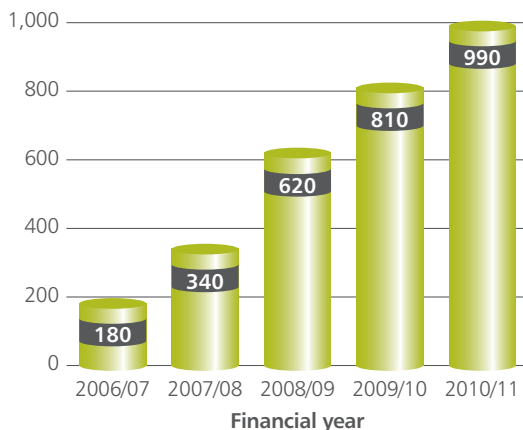
- > Increase the number of specialist accommodation places from 180 new places in 2006/07 to a total of 990 additional places in 2010/11. This is a 20 per cent increase in the number of specialist accommodation places. This allows us to develop a more flexible system tailored to individual needs. The emphasis will not be on group homes; instead we will use new approaches.
 - The number of places for people leaving the care of the NSW Department of Community Services will continue to be increased in line with projections. This will see an increase of 450 places over the next five years.
 - The specialist supports for people with a disability exiting the criminal justice system to be expanded each year. Over the next five years an additional 200 places will be created.

- > Sign an agreement with the Commonwealth Government to assist younger people with a disability living in nursing homes. *Stronger Together* will focus on preventing younger people entering nursing homes in the first place, improving the opportunities of people in nursing homes and developing a program for people to move out. Total investment, shared equally with the Commonwealth Government, will be up to \$80 million over five years.
- > We will build two specially designed 10-bed houses for adults with complex health care needs on the Grosvenor Centre site in Ashfield. It will also include two five-bed homes for respite for people with complex health care needs; one home will be for children. The investment in the Grosvenor Centre is \$9.5 million for capital plus an ongoing funding increase of \$6.5 million over five years.

This will lead to

- > \$40 million in specialist support set aside for innovative approaches. These will be developed in partnership with non-government providers, and with guidance from the research and development expert group (see page 23).
- > Trial of a shared equity accommodation model, in partnership with a non-profit organisation, where a family sponsors housing for their relative with a disability as a contribution to their continued support.
- > Opportunities for some people to move to less intensive options that better meet their needs. To facilitate this we will develop processes which allow them to trial these options and return if it does not prove appropriate.
- > Closure of large residential centres over time. In some cases, the properties will be redeveloped to provide support for people with complex needs. Over the next 24 months, planning for the redevelopment of other sites will be undertaken. Government will involve the residents and their families in this planning. We will also consult with broader stakeholder groups who have a legitimate interest in these changes.
- > New accommodation and support options for younger people with a disability who are at risk of entering or who are exiting nursing homes.

New supported accommodation places (including leaving care and criminal justice programs)



2.3 Improving the quality of specialist support

It is essential that people with a disability receive quality support and that our approach is informed by good practice and sound research. We are committed to improving the quality of support for our clients who use the specialist disability system. We will focus on:

- > improving the standard of health and related support for people in specialist accommodation services;
- > improving the standard of behavioural intervention for people with challenging behaviours; and
- > increasing the range of opportunities that people with a disability have to participate in community life.

What we will build on

- > \$2 million to clear the waiting list for essential equipment for children and young people.
- > \$2.5 million per year for aids and appliances for people with a disability who live in supported accommodation operated by the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care.
- > The work of the Specialist Health Care Advisory Committee.
- > The work of the Advisory Committee for the Criminal Justice Accommodation Program.
- > The work of the Specialist Clinical and Casework Team for the Criminal Justice Accommodation Program.
- > The roll out of regional behaviour intervention teams across NSW.
- > The review of the Health Care Policy.

What we will do now

- > Establish a Research and Development Group of independent research experts. It will advise the Minister for Disability Services and the Director-General of the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care on trials, innovative approaches, program evaluations and other strategies to build the evidence base which will be used to inform future development of disability services.
- > Research on the effects of ageing on people with an intellectual disability.
- > Establish a joint professorship with a university in NSW in disability and mental health to build the evidence base for good practice; \$0.7 million over five years.
- > Create an Office of the Senior Practitioner to oversee behaviour intervention practices and lead improvement in the quality of services for people with complex needs.

This will lead to

- > Improvement of health outcomes through working in partnership with NSW Health. We will improve the linkages between specialist care services and the health system. We will also work with NSW Health to improve the ability of health services to respond to the needs of people with a disability.
- > Identification of suitable technological innovations to increase safety for people with a disability, their carers and care workers and to lessen the hours of paid support needed for them to live in the community.



*a flexible plan matching
services to people's needs*

improving the system's
capacity and accountability

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3



3. Improving the system's capacity and accountability

We want a system that promotes opportunities for people with a disability to realise their potential. To achieve this we need clarity about what services are available. The range of services must be varied, innovative approaches must be fostered and services need to be good quality, cost-effective and provided by well-trained staff.

We know we need to assist the disability sector to deliver *Stronger Together*.

Our focus will be on improving the system's cost effectiveness by providing clearer entry and exit points based on assessment of needs, by building new types of services to match people's needs and regularly reviewing their needs as they change over time.

We will shift to purchasing services based on the results we require and the outcomes people with a disability need. We will develop better ways to ensure people get quality services and develop robust data to guide improvement of these services.

As the whole service system grows we will need a larger and more skilled workforce. Because our growth will be simultaneous with similar systems, like aged care, we will offer the competitive advantage to new recruits through entry level and advanced training and special traineeships.

Our objective

Our objective is to grow an innovative, accountable service system focussed on improving outcomes for people with a disability.

Our approach

Stronger Together will focus our efforts on three strategies:

- > improving entry and exit points to services and matching services to people's needs in a clear, fair and predictable way;
- > improving how we contract our services and how efficiently they are operated; and
- > improving how the sector accounts for its services and how it responds to our policies.

What the service system will look like

Over the course of *Stronger Together*, these strategies will enable:

- > people with a disability to obtain the services they need with minimum administration;
- > the disability sector to retain a skilled workforce;
- > reduced red tape through improved reporting requirements;
- > Government, as the purchaser of services, to get value for money and people with a disability to get the full benefits they require; and
- > new types of services to be developed to meet people's changing needs.

3.1 Clearer entry and exit points based on need

Gaining access to disability services should be simple and clear. While increasing numbers of people with a disability with more complex needs create challenges, the system should be able to respond effectively at entry points. This requires two major changes:

- > matching services to need, assessed against clear guidelines for eligibility; and
- > simplifying the complicated array of services and providers.

Access needs to be improved for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from other culturally and linguistically diverse communities and residents of rural and remote areas.

What we will build on

- > The review of the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care's intake and referral systems.
- > The increased self-advocacy opportunities for people with a disability and their families arising from the review of the advocacy and information services.
- > Funding of specialist service providers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from other culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the Community Participation and Intensive Family Support programs.

What we will do now

- > Provide \$450,000 to build the cultural competence of disability service providers.
- > Require reporting on participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from other culturally and linguistically diverse communities in all new programs.
- > Support, with \$250,000, the expansion of ServiceLink and ReferralLink for the whole disability sector.

This will lead to

- > Fairer and clearer eligibility guidelines and priority of access guidelines.
- > Streamlined entry and access points to the disability service system together with a review of all assessment tools.
- > The use of new technologies such as HSNet and video conferencing to improve the access for people in isolated communities for assessment and referral. Use of new technologies will include appropriate privacy safeguards.
- > Collaboration among agencies (NSW Departments of Community Services, Health, Housing, Education and Training and Ageing, Disability and Home Care) and non-government organisations to improve access to mainstream community activities. There will be a special focus on rural communities.
- > Consultation with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service users and their families to improve services.
- > A requirement that all funded services have policies to promote appropriate cultural practices and train staff to be culturally competent.
- > Fair and transparent fee policies for all program areas.

3.2 Quality and value for money

Ten years ago, less than 40 per cent of disability funding was directed through the non-government sector; now it is nearly 60 per cent. Most of the funding increases under *Stronger Together* will purchase services from the non-government sector. At the same time community expectations about achieving value for public money are continuing to increase.

The disability sector, like elsewhere in human services, must recruit and retain a skilled, stable workforce that supports the growth in the disability sector funded under *Stronger Together*. We will focus on:

- > purchasing all our funded programs in ways that promote value for money and innovative approaches to delivering outcomes;
- > developing and implementing a disability sector workforce plan; and
- > continuing to improve the efficiency of Government operated services.

What we will build on

- > The existing experience of purchasing services for the Community Participation program. This provided the first substantial experience in competitive tendering for disability funded services and the NSW Government assisted by providing training in unit costing and tendering for service providers.
- > The recruitment actions and review of all rosters and costs in the group homes operated by the NSW Government.
- > Rationalisation of all service description schedules with the 900 organisations that we fund.

What we will do now

- > Boost training for OHS in the disability sector with a one-off injection of \$500,000, in partnership with WorkCover NSW.
- > Introduce traineeships for disability workers at a cost of \$1.4 million in 2006/07, with \$5.6 million over five years.
- > Invest \$100,000 in professional training in early intervention for the sector, in partnership with the University of Newcastle.
- > Inject \$9.8 million over five years for skills development in the sector.
- > Streamline service contracts to offer greater flexibility to providers while delivering and reporting on clear outputs.
- > Provide \$2.5 million to assist redevelopment of Ferguson Lodge, located in Lidcombe.
- > Continue our refurbishment program for supported accommodation facilities with capital works totalling \$120 million over the next five years.
- > Close two of our large residential centres, replacing them with specialist support services.
 - Invest \$7 million in the redevelopment of the Lachlan Centre, located at Ryde, into small village accommodation to provide specialist state-wide services for people with challenging behaviours.
 - Develop a retirement village, specialising in aged care, for 100 older people with a disability, near Peat Island and a further 20 beds in the community that will allow the closure of the existing facilities on Peat Island.



This will lead to

- > Development of a five-year plan for the recruitment and development of the disability sector workforce. It will build on our investments in training and traineeships outlined above.
- > Tendering to develop purchasing arrangements for all funded services. In consultation with providers, we will replace our current system of grants with approaches focused on the purchase of outcomes and achieving value for money through the use of benchmarked prices.
- > Applying a needs based planning approach as *Stronger Together* is implemented, especially from 2008/09, to assist with planning for the development of services and equitable access to services.
- > Improved efficiency, especially from the new approaches to purchasing. Government will work with providers to improve financial performance and to ensure consistent fees are charged for services. We will extend the review rosters and costs in Government group homes to the non-government sector. Any efficiencies we achieve will be used to expand capacity.

...an innovative,
accountable service system
focussed on improving
outcomes for
people with a disability.

3.3 Improving accountability, practices and policies

Government has a responsibility to ensure services funded for people with a disability are managed in the best possible way and improved where possible. Service providers need to be accountable for the public funds they receive. We intend to bring these responsibilities together and ensure accountability by:

- > regular evaluation of outcomes to ensure services remain responsive and appropriate;
- > expansion of research so that new policies and programs are based on sound evidence and good practice;
- > monitoring performance to ensure results are achieved; and
- > effective consultation with people with a disability, their families and carers.

What we will build on

- > Introduction of the Integrated Monitoring Framework.
- > Unit costing adopted for the Community Participation program.
- > Ongoing support for research through our contributions to national level research programs and the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care's annual research strategy.

What we will do now

- > Introduce a report card on our performance.
- > Improve and streamline compliance reporting.
- > Implement a planned cycle of program evaluations.
- > Develop training and backup material to assist volunteer boards to improve their governance at a cost of \$50,000.
- > Formalise existing consultative structures, clarifying roles and responsibilities.

This will lead to

- > Increased investment in research and data development at a cost of \$4.5 million over three years from 2008/09.
- > Introduction of performance reporting requirements matched to an organisation's size, and funding a risk management approach to monitoring and reporting.
- > Establishment of financial accounting standards.
- > The use of new technologies to provide performance information to service users.
- > Further development of consultative strategies and communication with people with a disability.
- > Improved outcomes from our investment in *Stronger Together*. We will use what we learn from research, evaluation, consultation and performance monitoring to guide implementation. We will regularly review the mix of new services we fund as we find out which ones obtain the best result.

Community support — programs and services that assist people with a disability to live in the community with the help of family and friends. Typical community support services are respite, therapy, day programs, Attendant Care and Support for Children and Families programs.

DADHC — NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care

Day programs — services provided on a regular basis during the day. They improve the quality of life for people with a disability by providing access to community activities and skills development. They also provide respite to primary carers. Day programs include post school programs such as Community Participation and Transition to Work.

DoCS — NSW Department of Community Services

Early intervention for children and young people — a broad range of interventions to support children and young people and their families. A major aim of these interventions is to build family resilience. Services are grouped under the *Support for Children and Families* program and include short term intensive supports predominantly provided in the family's home, practical support to families at an early stage and specialist case workers to support staff working with children and their families.

Group homes — provide community-based residential support for people with a disability. Usually no more than six people live in one group home and they are generally staffed 24 hours a day.

Home and Community Care — services targeted to frail older people and people with a disability under a joint funding arrangement with the Commonwealth Government. They are generally low intensity services such as domestic assistance and personal care which enable people to maintain their existing living and support arrangements.

HSNet — is a web site for staff working in the NSW human services sector, helping agencies to improve their efficiency in assisting clients.

Integrated Monitoring Framework (IMF) — a tool applied to DADHC-operated and DADHC-funded services, to integrate the various monitoring activities undertaken by the Department.

Large residential centres — provide 24-hour residential support for people with a disability in a congregate setting of more than 20 beds.

Local Support Coordination — a personal, flexible service that aims to increase the links between people with a disability, their families and their local community.

NGO — non-government organisation

OHS — occupational health and safety

ReferralLink — a component of ServiceLink, is a way of making inter-agency referrals. It allows agencies to refer clients to other agencies using secure systems and to track the progress of the referral.

ServiceLink — a comprehensive online directory of human services in NSW, putting people in touch with the services they need.

Specialist support or specialist accommodation — ongoing high intensity services that support people with a disability in specialised accommodation arrangements. Currently, the most common arrangements are group homes and large residential centres. The options for specialist support will expand under *Stronger Together*.

Our first five years of funding at a glance

	Increase in funding expenditure levels			
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
	(\$'m)	(\$'m)	(\$'m)	(\$'m)
Strengthening families	6.2	7.0	18.3	23.5
More timely responses				
Additional therapy places	1.1	1.1	2.6	4.0
Increased number and range of respite services	1.6	2.2	7.5	8.3
Enhanced supports for parents and other carers				
Family support programs	3.3	3.3	5.3	8.3
Information kits and peer support trials	0.2	0.4	0.8	1.0
Trial innovative integrated care models	–	–	2.0	2.0
Promoting community inclusion	87.1	141.2	213.9	265.5
A more diverse range of community supports				
Expand post school programs	20.2	38.3	47.4	58.0
Increased number and range of day programs	2.0	2.7	7.8	9.8
Additional therapy places	2.2	2.2	5.3	7.9
Increased number and range of respite services	5.4	6.0	7.2	7.4
More Attendant Care places	5.3	6.6	14.1	18.8
Expanding the options for specialist support				
Leaving care — people leaving DoCS	15.2	30.4	45.5	58.1
People leaving Corrective Services	5.6	12.2	18.8	23.8
Other specialist support places	24.9	28.0	45.0	52.5
Increased respite capacity at Grosvenor	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
Disability Housing and Support Initiative	0.9	1.7	2.0	2.7
Alternatives to nursing homes for young people	2.7	10.1	17.7	23.3
Improving specialist care quality				
Enhancements to support practice improvements	0.1	0.5	0.7	0.7
Expand Behaviour Intervention Service	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2
Improving services	61.2	44.3	49.7	43.4
Transparent, predictable and equitable access				
Case management	4.3	7.9	11.9	14.6
Improving system capabilities				
Training and traineeships	2.8	3.6	5.0	2.0
Service purchasing and benchmarking reform	6.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Large residence redevelopment and planning	21.0	2.0	–	–
DADHC supported accommodation upgrades	29.1	25.8	26.3	20.3
Improving accountability and responsiveness				
Increased investment in research and data	–	–	1.5	1.5
TOTAL	154.5	192.5	281.8	332.4

2010/11 (\$'m)	TOTAL (\$'m)	Increase in places				
		2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
		(Annual average)				
28.0	83.0					
5.0	13.8	200	200	480	720	960
8.8	28.4	80	110	380	410	450
11.0	31.2	350	350	750	1,350	1,840
1.2	3.6	–	400	800	1,000	1,200
2.0	6.0	–	–	2,000	2,000	2,000
306.2	1,013.8					
71.3	235.3	4,290	4,740	5,140	5,640	6,240
11.0	33.3	130	180	520	650	780
9.2	26.8	400	400	960	1,440	1,920
7.5	33.4	670	700	780	790	810
21.2	66.0	70	90	190	250	320
69.0	218.3	90	180	270	360	450
27.9	88.4	40	80	130	170	200
56.9	207.1	50	80	220	280	340
1.3	6.5	70	70	70	70	70
2.7	10.0	10	20	30	40	40
26.2	80.0	20	70	180	270	300
0.7	2.7	–	–	–	–	–
1.2	6.0	280	280	280	280	280
43.4	242.0					
14.6	53.3	1,000	2,990	3,990	3,990	3,990
2.0	15.4	–	–	–	–	–
5.0	26.0	–	–	–	–	–
–	23.0	–	–	–	–	–
20.3	119.8	–	–	–	–	–
1.5	4.5	–	–	–	–	–
377.6	1,338.8	–	–	–	–	–

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.

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