



Media Release

MAL BROUGH MP

**Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Indigenous Affairs**

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Government calls on states and territories to follow the lead on disability

The Australian Government today offered the states and territories a new deal to help people with disabilities, at a meeting of Commonwealth, State and Territory disability ministers.

Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Mal Brough, said he had invited the states and territories to evaluate their unmet need and submit the results to the Commonwealth for consideration of a plan to address this need on a dollar-for-dollar funding basis.

“Unfortunately, the states and territories caucused and returned to the meeting with a written rejection of the proposal and then closed the meeting,” Mr Brough said.

“This was a generous and genuine offer from the Australian Government and one which I had hoped would receive a favourable response,” Mr Brough said.

“The only stipulation I put on the offer was that it be outcomes based; that is, it be linked to hard targets for new places for supported accommodation for people with disabilities or respite for people seeking that service.

“As I have said previously, I am determined to secure a better deal for people with disabilities and their carers and I believe this offer would have helped achieve that.

“The response of the states and territories is extremely disappointing.”

Mr Brough said today’s offer was in addition to the offer already made to provide an extra \$400 million for the new, five-year Commonwealth, State, Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA.)

“In return for the additional \$400 million, I asked the states and territories to focus on improving transparency and accountability; quantifying unmet need; initiating independent accreditation systems, and; improving access to mainstream disability services for Indigenous people,” Mr Brough said.

“Substantial effort has been made by the Howard Government to improve the accountability, quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the specialist disability employment services for which it is responsible.

“State and territory Government’s have been slow to follow the Howard Government’s lead in initiating independent accreditation systems for disability services, leaving some of our most vulnerable population at risk.

“The current CSTDA provides \$2.9 billion in funding to the states and territories for disability services.

“In 2006-07 alone the Howard Government will spend about \$12.8 billion across a range of programmes to support people with a disability, their families and carers.

“The Howard Government continues to make a significant contribution under the CSTDA, both in its own areas of responsibility and by showing leadership and commitment in areas that are the responsibility of the states and territories.

“This includes allocating an additional \$704 million during the previous and current agreements to help states and territories address unmet need in their own areas of responsibility.

“While state and territory governments agree unmet need is an important issue, they are unable to show what difference previous investments have made for those most in need.

“As a result, I am not convinced that our funding is achieving the best outcomes for as many people as possible.”

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