



## CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

The Budget allocates \$26.7 million in 2007-08 (\$214.4 million over five years) for disability services, strengthening the Government's commitment through *A Fairer Victoria* to provide more supportive and accessible services for people with a disability, their families and carers. This investment will deliver additional aids and equipment, home and vehicle modifications, and support packages for people with a disability and the frail aged to support them to live independently in the community. Initiatives will also deliver access to information technology and other vital services for people with a disability.

The additional funding for disability services over five years includes \$24.5 million allocated in 2006-07 to provide additional support through the aids and equipment program and grants to non-government organisations to improve disability facilities. Capital funding of \$15 million is also allocated in the 2007-08 Budget to supported accommodation services, for the replacement and refurbishment of facilities to better support people with disabilities in the community.

### **DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES**

The Budget provides an additional \$10 million in 2007-08 (\$99.8 million over five years) to fund support packages for people with a disability as well as more aids and equipment and home and vehicle modifications. This funding includes:

- \$8 million in 2007-08 (\$70 million over four years) for Individualised Support Packages that will promote access for an additional 380 people with a disability to a wide range of flexible accommodation and support options based on their individual choices and needs.
- \$2 million is allocated in 2007-08 (\$10.6 million over four years) for aids and equipment to assist 1,300 individuals to maintain their independence, broaden the eligibility for aids and equipment to include people on a Commonwealth Aged Care at Home Package or Extended Aged Care at Home Package and provide increased subsidy levels for aids and equipment.
- \$9.7 million over three years is provided to support additional home and vehicle modifications to better support 400 people with a disability in the community.

New funding for disability supports also includes an immediate funding boost of \$9.5 million in 2006-07 to increase the number of people with disabilities, chronic illness and the frail aged assisted by the Aids and Equipment Program. This funding includes \$3.5 million in 2006-07 to resource a range of equipment libraries to trial and supply aids and equipment, and repair items in use in the community. The additional funding will improve access to the program and provide resources to subsidise high cost items required by people with complex disability support needs.

## **RESPIRE SERVICES**

As a critical element in sustaining informal care arrangements for people with a disability, the 2007-08 Budget provides \$3.2 million (\$13.1 million over four years) to deliver 350 episodes of respite that are flexible and responsive to individual families' needs and are based on individual planning with families.

## **TECHNABILITY PROGRAM**

In 2007-08 the Government will provide \$750,000 (\$3 million over four years) for the Technability program. This initiative will strengthen the Government's strategy *Connecting Communities: The Second Wave* aimed at assisting Victorians to access and use the Internet. It will empower people with a disability by providing greater access to information.

The Technability program will provide support for new equipment, computer modifications, training and assistive technology; IT support to Community Residential Units (CRUs); and assist the conversion of Vision Australia's national library from analogue to digital.

## **SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY (ABI)**

The Government will provide \$12.3 million over three years to expand the Slow to Recover program, to reduce waiting lists and provide increased assessments, case management and support for around 300 Victorians with ABI each year.

People with an ABI often require services that are not readily available in the disability system. This investment will both strengthen the disability service system's ability to meet the support needs of people with ABI and expand specialist responses for this group.

Funding will deliver packages of intensive therapeutic intervention from July 2008 to improve people's functioning following catastrophic brain injury, and reduce waiting times. Support to people with ABI will also include assessment, case management, brokerage, crisis management, secondary consultation and behaviour consultancy services.

## **IMPROVED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

The Government has also committed \$125,000 in 2007-08 (\$500,000 over four years) to assist carers wanting to re-enter the workforce.

## **OLDER YEARS/CARER SUPPORT PACKAGES**

The 2007-08 Budget also provides \$3.8 million in 2007-08 (\$15.7 million over four years) to continue the provision of older years carer support packages for 375 individuals. These packages are aimed at supporting ageing carers to maintain relationships and plan for alternative care arrangements.

As parents and carers get older, the difficulties and costs associated with supporting their adult children with disabilities increase. These packages combine respite support with other forms of assistance, including planning, to older carers and thereby assist people with disabilities to remain living in the community.

## ***CARERS CHARTER***

A Carers Charter will be developed to acknowledge the role of carers in the community. The Carers Charter will assist carers to become more involved in decision-making and policy development and provide an opportunity for government agencies to become more aware of carers physical and emotional needs.

## ***FUTURES FOR YOUNG ADULTS***

Funding of \$3.3 million (\$13.5 million over four years) will be provided in 2007-08 to continue the provision of transition planning services delivered by Future for Young Adults (FFYA) Transition Planners.

FFYA Transition Planners play a critical role in helping young people with disabilities and their families navigate the wide range of post-school options available to them. Planning and coordination at key life stages will be provided as part of a comprehensive individualised planning and support framework to assist in maintaining and developing each young person's informal and formal networks in their local community and ensuring disability supports are considered among other supports a person may need.

## ***SUPPORTING NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS (NGOs)***

The State budget provides \$5.6 million in 2007-08 (\$26.5 million over five years) to meet funding pressures in NGOs, primarily in the disability sector. The additional funding will ensure all NGOs are able to fund meet additional wage costs, ensure service delivery standards are maintained and to support the ongoing viability and sustainability of NGOs.

## ***GRANTS TO NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS TO IMPROVE DISABILITY FACILITIES***

\$15 million is provided for refurbishment of facilities and provision of equipment to community-managed disability supported accommodation services to maintain and improve the quality of facilities and support client and staff safety.

## ***NEW ACCOMMODATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY***

Building on previous investments, the 2007-08 Budget provides \$10 million over three years that will be targeted at a range of supported accommodation for up to 75 people with a disability. This initiative will allow more flexible and appropriate accommodation solutions that will enhance more independent living and improved participation for people with disabilities in the wider community.

## ***STRATEGIC REPLACEMENT AND REFURBISHMENT PROGRAM FOR SHARED SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION - STAGE 2***

Building on previous investment, the 2007-08 Budget provides \$5 million over three years for Stage 2 of the program to refurbish and replace shared supported accommodation (SSA) to better support people with a disability. Funding will support the replacement of three and refurbishment of a further six SSA units. The initiative will enable people with disabilities to participate more fully in the life of their local community, in facilities that are accessible and support enhanced quality of life.