



PRIME MINISTER
QUEENSLAND

29 SEP 2006

The Hon Morris Lemma MP
Premier of New South Wales
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

RECEIVED
05 OCT 2006
PARLIAMENTS OFFICE

My dear Premier

Thank you for your letter of 29 August 2006 regarding the Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA).

The Commonwealth Government is committed to supporting people with a disability to participate in all aspects of community life. In 2006-07 it will provide a total of around \$12.8 billion to support people with a disability and their carers.

The Commonwealth Government's main commitments are to income support payments, including Disability Support Pension and Carer Payment, and services that help people with a disability find and retain employment. As you may be aware, the Commonwealth Government has recently announced significant additional investments to assist people with a disability to live full and productive lives and to provide their carers with the supports required to assist them in this role. These initiatives included:

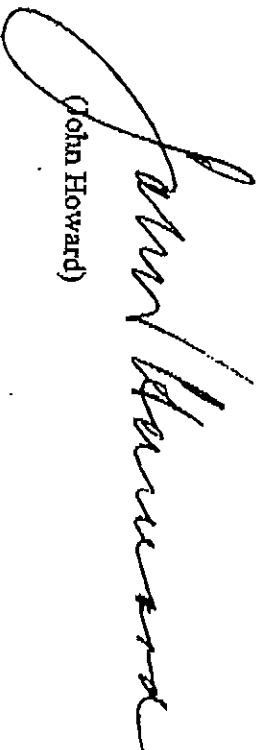
- the Welfare to Work package announced in the 2005-06 Budget that included an extra \$394 million over four years to increase access to services for people with a disability;
- measures to encourage older parents who are carers of sons and daughters with a disability to put arrangements in place for the future care and accommodation of their children at a total cost of \$230.5 million over four years;
- funding of \$122 million over five years from 1 July 2006 to help reduce the number of younger people with a disability living in residential aged care facilities;
- funding of \$72.5 million over four years announced in the 2004-05 Budget for respite care for older carers and for young carers;

FN	25004
IN	29106

- extending the eligibility criteria for Carer Payment (Child) to carers of children with severe intellectual, psychiatric or behavioural disabilities who require supervision for their safety or the safety of others at a cost of \$55 million over four years; and
- significant increased funding of \$1.9 billion in the Council of Australian Governments' mental health package for a range of mental health programmes, including 900 respite care places.

I welcome the Stronger Together package and its injection of funding in areas of acknowledged New South Wales responsibility. I note also the robust revenue source the GST has provided to the states, demonstrated by each state including New South Wales receiving more revenue in 2006-07 than they would have received under the old system. I look forward to working with you and the other Premiers on ways to improve the lives of people with a disability, their families and carers.

Yours sincerely



(John Howard)