



Thursday, 10 December 2009

\$31m BOOST TO DISABILITY SERVICES AHEAD OF WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT REFORM

The Rann Government will inject more than \$31m in additional funding for disability services over the next four years to give families more respite and more in-home support.

Disability Minister Jennifer Rankine today joined Social Inclusion Commissioner Monsignor David Cappo to announce the new package of support for people with a disability.

The package will provide more than 162,000 hours of support each year to more than 250 families.

Ms Rankine will also announce that Monsignor Cappo has been asked by the State Government to apply the Social Inclusion approach to disability services across government in order to develop a blueprint for long-term reform across all Government agencies in South Australia.

“Since coming to Government, we have almost doubled funding and we can be proud that we are helping 4000 more people than before,” she said.

“But national figures continue to tell us that the number of people with disabilities needing assistance continues to grow and this is a problem we must be prepared for.

“The fact that all state and territory governments are struggling to meet large increases in demand is evident in the Rudd Government's announcement of a Productivity Commission inquiry into a National Disability Insurance Scheme - a new long-term, sustainable disability service and funding model.

“We recognise that there is clearly more that needs to be done - that is why the Premier and I have asked the Social Inclusion Board to develop a blueprint for long-term reform - to join-up services between Health, Education, and the Department for Families and Communities.”

Ms Rankine said the additional funding will immediately allow Disability SA to better respond to the needs of families, on top of current effort.

The new funding will start to roll out immediately and will be distributed by a Family Support Assistance Panel - a new mechanism which will make strict needs-based assessments across the state (made up of a Disability SA director and other Disability SA experts).

“We know that many families and carers are struggling with the challenges of caring for loved ones with a disability and we are determined to maximise the help available to them,” Ms Rankine said.

“The new funding will provide 162,000 hours of support in the form of personal support, therapy and respite services.”

Personal support will assist people with rapidly deteriorating degenerative conditions (such as multiple sclerosis and motor neurone disease) to live in their own homes.

Therapy is used to stabilise problematic behaviour and redirect it to more positive outcomes.

Respite provides relief for families from intensive caring roles and can be provided in a group-based or individual setting.

Social Inclusion Commissioner Monsignor David Cappo said that he welcomes these new funds and the challenge of reforming the way Government delivers disability services.

“South Australians with a disability, their carers and families have the right to an independent and dignified life where they can actively participate in and contribute to the life of the community,” he said.

“I thank the Premier and the Minister for Disability for asking the Social Inclusion Board to present a system where the citizen is placed at the centre.

“Just as we did for the Stepping Up reforms of Mental Health, the development of this blueprint for long term disability reform will be informed by significant consultation. We will actively listen to people with a disability, their families and carers, the community sector and other leaders in the field.”

Ms Rankine said the Social Inclusion Board would look at the interface between health agencies, education providers and social agencies such as DisabilitySA.

“Since its formation in 2002, the Social Inclusion Board has provided the South Australian Government with valuable advice on how to tackle a range of social issues,” she said.

“The Board’s emphasis on putting in place joined-up and more integrated service systems to address complex disadvantage has been critical to its success.”

The Social Inclusion Board will be given maximum flexibility in the development of this blueprint so that disability services:

- are integrated and person-centred
- recognise and supports the role of carers and families
- provide better support during key transition points in the lives of people with disability (education to employment)
- enhance dignity, independence and participation
- provide choice via consumer-directed funding where possible
- better responds to the factors fuelling growth in demand for services.”

Monsignor Cappo will also announce the appointment of Dr Lorna Hallahan to the Social Inclusion Board – a long-term disability advocate who he said will “make a significant contribution to the Board’s work.”