

Tuesday, September 7 2010

FAMILIES BENEFIT FROM NEW DISABILITY FUNDS

More than \$5m has been spent to support almost 250 families since the formation of the Family Support Assistance Panel in December last year, the State Government announced today.

Disability Minister Jennifer Rankine today said end of financial year figures showed 25 people had been provided supported accommodation places and another 64 received extensive support packages of up to 50 hours per week.

“It’s very pleasing to know there are 239 mums, dads, brothers and sisters better enjoying their lives because of this help,” she said.

“There are 68 of these families who are now receiving vital respite to allow them to continue to care for their loved ones and a further 49 parents are seeing their children enjoy day options as part of their support.

“There is no doubt there is more to be done in the disability sector but this is a clear indication of the improvements that are being made.

“We have almost doubled the Disability annual budget since coming to Government and we have increased the number of people we assist from 15,000 to more than 19,000 so this is another important step forward.”

Ms Rankine said despite these achievements, increasing demand had contributed to June unmet data showing an increase of 49 people registered as needing assistance.

“It is a constant battle to be able to meet the rapid growth in the disability sector across Australia,” she said.

“It’s pleasing that we’ve been able to reduce the number of people with an unmet need for community support such as therapy, case management and counselling but overall there is a slight increase so we need to keep working hard.”

Ms Rankine said the figures, printed on the DFC website, showed accommodation support need had increased from 1032 to 1097 between December and June, Personal Support increased from 1075 to 1116, Community Support dropped from 719 to 654, Community Access increased from 352 to 359 and Respite clients needing assistance increased from 454 to 469.

Ms Rankine pointed to the Productivity Commission's investigation into a National Disability Insurance Scheme as an important step to future funding of disability services.

The State Government has charged Social Inclusion Commissioner David Cappelletti to better link up services across Government including DisabilitySA, Health, Education and Transport.

The Department for Families and Communities is also reforming the Disability and Ageing divisions to make it easier for people to get the support they need.

"All of these steps are very important and the reality is, we are helping more and more people with disabilities all the time," Ms Rankine said.