

**Report on services
provided or funded by the
Department of Ageing,
Disability and Home Care**



2010



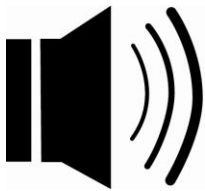
How to use this document



This information is written in an easy-to-read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Some words are written in **blue**. The blue words are explained in the word list. The word list starts on page 33.



This information is also available in an audio format.

Please visit **www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/socialissues** to listen to the report.

Please contact us if you would like to receive this information in other formats.



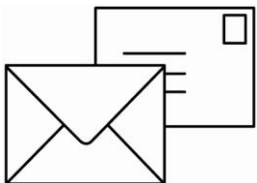
You can phone us on **(02) 9230 3504** if you have any questions.



You can also send an email to:

socialissues@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Or you can write to us at this address:



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What this report is about



This Easy Read document is a summary of a large report. The large report is over 300 pages long.

In this Easy Read document, we have included some of the information from the full report. However, we can't include everything because the full report is so long.



The report is about the way that the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) manage disability services in NSW. ADHC is a part of the NSW Government. ADHC provide disability services and also fund other organisations to provide services.



The full report includes a number of **recommendations**. These are ideas for things that we think should be done to improve disability services in NSW.



If you want to read all of the recommendations in detail, please see the full report. This is available on our website at:

www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/socialissues

Who wrote this report?



This report has been put together by the Standing Committee on Social Issues. This is a group of 6 people who are Members of Parliament. These people come from different political parties.



The NSW Government is run by Members of Parliament. Parliament makes decisions about what the Government should do and make **laws** that we all have to follow.



Sometimes, Members of Parliament work together on issues that are important to people in NSW. When the members of Parliament work together like this, it is called a **Committee**.

On the next pages you will see the 6 people who are in the Committee that put this report together.



The Hon Ian West MLC

Chair of the Committee, or the person who manages the Committee

Australian Labor Party



The Hon Trevor Khan MLC

Deputy Chair of the Committee or the person second in charge

The Nationals



The Hon Marie Ficarra MLC

Liberal Party



Dr John Kaye MLC

The Greens





The Hon Greg Donnelly
MLC

Australian Labor
Party



The Hon Helen Westwood
MLC

Australian Labor
Party



How this report was written



The work that the Committee did is called an **Inquiry**. This is when a Committee or group of people look into an issue and write a report about what they find. They also make suggestions to the Government about how to do things better.



The Inquiry began on 24 June 2010.



As part of the Inquiry the Committee looked at a range of information, including:

1. Information from people in the **community**
2. Reports, documents and information from ADHC and other government departments





3. The **law**

Each of these areas is explained below in more detail.

Information from people in the community



A lot of people in the community wrote to the Committee to share their ideas and experiences.

These documents are called **submissions**. The Committee received 120 submissions.

The submissions helped the Committee to understand what it is like for people with disability to use the services provided by ADHC.



The Committee is very grateful to the people who wrote in with their ideas and experiences. Some of the stories that people told were sad and difficult to share. By writing to the Committee, some people showed a lot of courage.

Information from ADHC and other government departments



The Committee also examined reports, documents and information from ADHC and other government departments.

For example, the Committee looked at data collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.



The Committee looked at work that has been done as part of the **Stronger Together** program.

This is a large Government project that started in 2006. It is helping to improve disability services in NSW.

In the future, a second stage of Stronger Together will begin, this will be called Stronger Together 2.

The law



In Australia, everyone must follow the rules that are made by the government and the courts. These rules are called the **law**.

During the Inquiry, the Committee looked at the rules that ADHC must follow.

There are laws that apply to the way disability services are provided in NSW. These laws are:



- The Disability Services Act 1993 is a law that explains how disability services should operate in NSW.



- The Home Building Act 1989 is a law that explains the rules about building houses in NSW.

There are 2 other important documents that the Committee referred to during the Inquiry.

These documents are not laws, instead they are guidelines. These documents are:



- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This is an international agreement that identifies how people with disability should be treated fairly.

This agreement is used in Australia and in other countries around the world. It includes rules that explain how people with disability should be treated.



- The New South Wales Disability Service Standards. This document explains how disability service providers are expected to work in NSW.

Planning for the future



The Committee looked at the way that disability services in NSW receive money from the Government. This is called **funding**.



A lot of disability services currently receive funding through the **Stronger Together** program. The Committee found that disability services have improved a lot since Stronger Together started in 2006.



There is more information about Stronger Together on page 7



The Committee also found that there are still a lot of people who are not receiving the services they need.

The Committee was told that the number of people who need disability services is growing.



This is because more and more people are living in NSW. A lot of these people are getting older and might need disability services in the future.

The Government needs to plan to provide and pay for these services.



Planning for more services will be part of Stronger Together 2 – the second part of the Stronger Together program. The Committee has suggested that at least \$2.5 billion is made available for Stronger Together 2.

Meeting peoples' needs



The Committee found that a lot of people with disability are frustrated with the disability service system. Their families and carers are frustrated too.



Sometimes, people can't make the choices that are right for them. And sometimes, people feel that they do not have enough control over their lives.



Every person is an **individual** who has their own needs. The Committee thinks that the disability service system should consider each person as an individual and work out what their needs are.

The Committee has recommended 2 ways that this can be done:

1. Individualised funding
2. Person-centred planning.



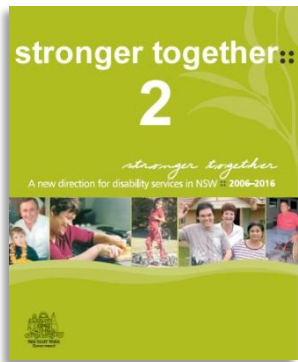
Individualised funding is a way of paying for services that are right for each person. It gives people more choice about their services.

By using individualised funding, people with disability have more control over the way that money is spent on the services they use.



Person-centred planning is a way of working with each person to make sure they get the services they need. It means that services should to meet the needs of the person, rather than the needs of the system.

With person-centred planning, the person with disability and their family and carers are involved in all the decisions about the services they use. This gives each person more choice.



The Committee thinks that the Government has made good progress towards these 2 important areas – individualised funding and person-centred planning.

The Committee hopes to see more improvements through Stronger Together 2. The Committee would like person-centred planning to be used for **all** funding programs and service types.

Having a good place to live



During the Inquiry, the Committee found that there are a lot of problems with the places where people with disability live. These places include:

- **supported accommodation**
- large residential centres
- private houses
- boarding houses.



One of the biggest problems that the Committee found is that housing is often only provided when people have nowhere else to go.

This means that a lot of people with disability don't get the housing they need unless it is an emergency.

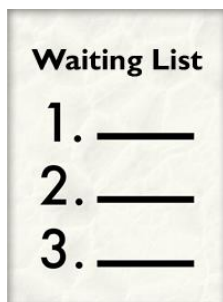
The Committee thinks that there should be a number of changes in this area. They would like better planning to ensure that people can get the housing they need, when they need it.

Supported accommodation



Some people with disability live in a house with other people with disability. There are also people in the house to help with things like shopping, making lunch and going out for activities. This is called **supported accommodation**.

The Committee found that there are not enough supported accommodation places in NSW at the moment.



Currently, there is a waiting list. This is called the Register of Requests for Supported Accommodation.

The Committee thinks that communication with people on the waiting list should be improved.

This way, people would have a better idea of how long they have to wait to get supported accommodation.

Large residential centres



Large residential centres are big buildings where a lot of people with disability live together. The Committee found that these centres do not always meet the individual needs of people with disability and their families.

For example, sometimes large residential centres can't offer everyone the right level of **person-centred planning**.



The Committee would like to make sure that everyone who lives in large residential centres receives person-centred planning. By using person-centred planning, ADHC can work out whether or not each person is living in the place that suits their needs.

For example, some people who have very high support needs may benefit from living in a large residential centre. Other people may have a better experience living in a private house or supported accommodation.

The NSW Government is reducing the number of people living in large residential centres. The Committee thinks Government should keep doing this.

Private houses



Many people with disability live in private houses, on their own or with their families. Sometimes people need to make changes to their house to help them live independently.



Occupational Therapists are health professionals who help people with disability to keep living in their own house. They visit houses and suggest changes that might be needed. The Government can pay for these changes.

At the moment, there is a shortage of Occupational Therapists. This means that people who need changes to their houses have to wait a long time.

The Committee is concerned that unlicensed builders might be used to modify houses.



The Committee would like to know that all builders who modify houses for people with disability are licensed and meet the standards in the Home Building Act 1989.

Boarding houses



Boarding houses are a type of accommodation where a number of people live together in a large house. Sometimes, boarding houses have shared facilities like kitchens and bathrooms.

The Committee is concerned that some people with disability live in boarding houses because there is nowhere else for them to live.



The Committee recommends that all people with disability who live in boarding houses receive person-centred planning. This way, we can work out if boarding house accommodation suits each person's needs.

Improving services



The Committee found that there are a number of areas where services could be improved.

These areas include:

- making it easier to use disability services
- respecting different backgrounds
- dealing with complaints
- reducing conflict of interest
- changing the way **advocacy** works.

Making it easier to use disability services



ADHC has processes that are used to:

- check to see if people are **eligible** for services
- make sure that the service meets people's needs
- include people in a service or program.

Many of these processes are complicated and hard to understand. Some of the processes are repeated even though they don't need to be. For example, needs **assessments** are sometimes done twice.

The Committee recommended that all of these processes be made simpler.

Respecting different cultures



In Australia, people come from a range of different countries and **cultures**. The Committee found that many disability services do not meet the needs of people from different cultures, especially those that speak English as a second language.



They also found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability are some of the most **disadvantaged** people living in Australia today.

The Committee has lots of ideas to improve the way that services are provided people from different cultures, including:

- more staff training
- employing more Aboriginal staff
- giving Aboriginal people with disability more choices
- helping Aboriginal people speak up for themselves
- respecting and encouraging differences.

What happens when people make complaints



In NSW, we want disability service providers to deliver excellent services. When people are unhappy with the service they receive, they can complain.

Disability services must meet the standards set out in:

1. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
2. The Disability Services Act 1993
3. The New South Wales Disability Service Standards.



There is more information about each of these sets of rules on pages 8 and 9

The Committee found that some services do not always follow these rules. The Committee is also concerned that ADHC does not respond quickly enough when the rules are broken.



The Committee thinks that improvements are needed in the way that people can make complaints about disability services. This includes:

1. making sure that it is easy to find information on making complaints on the internet
2. making information available in different formats
3. making sure that people get a response to their complaints quickly.
4. training staff so that improvements can be made.

Reducing conflict of interest



Conflict of interest is a problem that happens when there are goals that clash. This can influence the way that decisions are made or how results are measured.

ADHC has a range of goals including:

- providing disability services themselves
- paying for disability services for other organisations
- making sure that all disability services are operating properly.



The Committee thinks that it would be better if ADHC provided and paid for services and another organisation focussed on making sure that services meet all the standards.

The Committee would like the NSW Government to create a new, separate organisation to check that disability services are operating properly. This way, ADHC would not have conflicting goals.

Advocacy



Advocacy is a way of supporting people with disability, and their families and carers.

Advocates can also help people with disability have a say about things that are important in their lives, or about things that need to change.

At the moment there is only one advocacy organisation that is paid by ADHC to help people from different **cultures**.



The Committee learned that better help could be provided if an organisation other than ADHC paid for advocacy.

The Committee thinks that good advocacy should be available to people from all cultures and that more choices are needed.

Helping people at different stages of life



We all need different things at different times in our lives. Some people need different levels of support as their life changes.

Here are some examples of important life changes:

- starting school
- starting a new job
- moving into a new place to live
- leaving hospital.



The Committee thinks that ADHC should provide better support to people as their lives change. This includes:

- planning ahead
- providing support at the right time
- giving people information about the support that is available
- working well with other government departments or organisations, such as NSW Health.

Getting the right equipment



Many people with disability need equipment and aids to help them get by in everyday life. Equipment helps people to:

- move around
- communicate
- go to school or work
- take part in the community.



The Committee is concerned that some people have to wait a long time to get the equipment they needed. In some cases, people wait up to 2 years. The Committee understands how frustrating this can be.

The Committee said that ADHC must make sure that people get equipment when they need it and that providing equipment must be part of ADHC's **person-centred** planning.



The Committee also recommends that the Government should help people to buy the equipment they need by providing interest-free loans.

Looking after carers



A **carer** is a person who looks after someone else, often a family member or friend. Many carers help with day-to-day things, like dressing, shopping or preparing meals.

In NSW, there are currently about 750,000 unpaid carers who support people with disability.



The Committee is concerned that some carers do not receive support until they have an emergency. Instead, the Committee thinks that the disability service system should offer the support that carers need, when they need it.



Respite is when carers have a short break from looking after people with disability. It is also when people with disability have a break from their regular carer. It can be hard for some families to get respite. The Committee and ADHC agree that respite is really important.



The Committee thinks that ADHC should keep trying to achieve the goals in **Stronger Together**.

The Committee thinks that improvements to **supported accommodation** will also benefit carers.



You can read more about supported accommodation on page 16

Keeping good staff



In NSW, thousands of professional, experienced and caring people work in disability services.



The Committee is pleased to have received positive comments about some wonderful people who work in disability services.



The Committee also heard that sometimes staff can be rude, neglectful and abusive.

The Committee would like to make sure that people with disability can speak out about these problems. People should not be afraid to make complaints.



The Committee would like to make sure that ADHC has a plan for keeping good staff for a long time. The Committee recommends more training for staff.

The Committee also strongly supports people who work in disability services being paid equal amounts when they do the same job.



It can be harder to get and keep staff in country areas.

The Committee thinks that ADHC should increase **funding** for more staff in rural and remote areas.

Gathering more information



The Committee found that sometimes there is not enough information available about the disability service system. For example, ADHC needs to know how many people use the disability service system every year.

The Committee thought that if ADHC had better information, it could plan better.



The Committee thinks that ADHC should survey people who use disability services every 3 years. This includes their families and carers.

This will be a good opportunity for people to have a say about the disability service system. And it will also help ADHC work out how things can be improved.

Word list



Advocacy/advocates

Support for people with disability, and their families and carers. Advocates can also help people with disability have a say about things that are important in their lives, or about things that need to change.



Assessment

A method of working out if a service can meet a person's needs.



Carer

A carer is a person who looks after someone else, often a family member or a friend. Carers can help with all sorts of tasks, such as getting dressed, shopping and preparing meals.



Committee

A group of people working together. The people who wrote this report are a Committee made up of Members of Parliament.



Community

The community is the place where you live.

It is not just your home. It is outside your home as well. It includes the people who live in your area.



Culture

A way of life. There are many different cultures around the world. You may think or act in a certain way because of the country where you were born.



Disadvantaged

Some people in our community do not have as many opportunities as others. For example, they may find it difficult to get a job or find a good place to live.



Eligible

Able to use services. Sometimes you have to answer questions before you can use the services.



Funding

Money provided by the Government so that an organisation or service can operate.



Individual

One person. Every person is different and has their own needs.



Individualised funding

Funding based on a person's needs.



Inquiry

A committee or group of people look into a range of areas and write a report about what they find.



Law

In Australia, there are a set of rules that everyone must follow. These rules are made by the government and the courts.



Person-centred planning is a way of working with each person to make sure they get the services they need.

With person-centred planning, the person with disability and their family and carers are involved in all the decisions about the services they use.



Recommendations

Ideas for things that the Committee think should be done.



Respite is when carers have a short break from looking after people with disability. It is also when people with disability have a break from their regular carer.



Stronger Together

A program for disability services run by the NSW Government. This program has been in place since 2006. The next stage of the program is currently being developed.



Submission

Ideas that were written down and sent to the Committee.



Supported accommodation

A type of accommodation where people with disability live a house with other people with disability. Carers are often in the house too, to help people with daily tasks such as preparing meals, cleaning and shopping.

Contact us



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