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## LEMMA GOVERNMENT DELIVERS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

NSW State Plan Priority F2: Increased employment and community participation for people with disabilities

People with disabilities, their families and carers are getting the practical help they need for a better life, according to new figures released today.

Minister for Ageing and Disability Services, Kristina Keneally, said the results from the first 18 months of *Stronger Together* clearly show the Lemma Government's 10-year, \$1.3 billion plan is delivering real results.

Ms Keneally said the Government had already exceeded some targets and there was more good work on the way.

"There are 200,000 people in NSW with a profound or severe disability, and *Stronger Together* is doing what it is designed to do – deliver them real and tangible improvements," Ms Keneally said.

"*Stronger Together* focuses on strengthening families of people with disabilities, promoting community inclusion and improving the capacity and accountability of disability services in NSW.

"When developing *Stronger Together* we talked to people with a disability, their families, advocates and academics and that's one of the reasons it's been such a success.

"The results are now in, and show that over the first 18 months of our plan we have significantly increased the assistance, services and facilities available to people with a disability."

Ms Keneally outlined some of the areas where the Lemma Government has set, met and exceeded targets for providing disability services:

### Additional Therapy Places

- **Target:** 600 extra therapy places by the end of June 2008.
- **Achievement:** An extra 1,000 therapy places by the end of December 2007.
- **What this means:** More speech pathology, occupational therapy and physiotherapy services for people with a disability.

### More Respite Places

- **Target:** 750 extra respite places by the end of June 2008.
- **Achievement:** An extra 1,062 extra respite places by the end of December 2007.
- **What this means:** Provides carers with a much-needed break as well as opportunities for a person with a disability to access the community and socialise more widely.

### Extra Attendant Care Places

- **Target:** 90 extra attendant care places by the end of June 2008.
- **Achievement:** 95 extra attendant care places by the end of December 2007.
- **What this means:** In-home support for people with high-level care needs, including health and domestic assistance.

“We’ve had significant gains with more to come – including in the areas of refurbishing group homes, building new accommodation, and introducing specific programs to assist people with motor neurone disease and autism,” Ms Keneally said.

“In the first 18 months of *Stronger Together*, we **completed the refurbishment of 65 group homes and respite centres** and provided a grant to the Office of Community Housing to buy land and build 10 accommodation places in the Sydney metropolitan area.

“We have also **extended Intensive Family Support services by an extra 60 places per year** – providing families of people with a disability who are having a particularly hard time with co-ordinated case management of therapy services, respite services and counselling.

“Two Intensive Family Support services have been established in Dubbo and Greater Kempsey/Taree to assist aboriginal communities, and another two will soon be established in New England and South West Sydney.

“We’ve also **improved the Community Participation program**, designed for people leaving school but not able to enter further education or the workforce, providing access to meaningful activities for at least four rather than three days per week.”

Ms Keneally said that other results included:

- **Another 241 special accommodation and support places**, which provide specialised care for people with a disability, either in a person’s home or in a supported accommodation facility;
- **125 extra flexible day programs** for people cared for at home by older parents, providing meaningful activities for an adult with disabilities, and a break for their older parents; and
- **19 more support coordination services** which establish localised carer networks and peer support groups for older parents who have carer responsibilities, including two specialist co-ordination services for Aboriginal communities.

Ms Keneally said that she was committed to ensuring that the workforce was in place to deliver on the lemma Government’s *Stronger Together* commitments.

“Last month I announced a lemma Government plan to work with non-government disability services providers to jointly recruit new people into the sector,” Ms Keneally said.

“We have also created senior psychologist and therapy positions in all regions of NSW, rolled out specialist communications training to 1000 front line staff who work in respite and accommodation services, and started recruiting an extra 100 case managers and 15 specialist professionals.

“We are working to make sure that the right people with the right training are on the ground delivering expanded and enhanced disability services under *Stronger Together*.”

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