

4.3.5 MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES, MINISTER FOR AGEING, MINISTER FOR DISABILITY SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN

OVERVIEW

Agency	Forecast 1997-98	Estimate 1998-99	Variation
	\$m	\$m	%
Department of Community Services			
Total Expenses	883.2	895.0	1.3
Asset Acquisitions	16.2	19.9	22.7
Community Services Commission			
Total Expenses	3.8	3.9	3.8
Asset Acquisitions
Ageing and Disability Department			
Total Expenses	649.8	705.2	8.5
Asset Acquisitions	0.3	0.3	...
Home Care Service			
Total Expenses	126.3	133.6	5.8
Asset Acquisitions	2.0	2.0	...
Department of Juvenile Justice			
Total Expenses	87.5	92.1	5.3
Asset Acquisitions	16.2	26.1	61.0
Department for Women			
Total Expenses	5.1	5.2	0.9
Asset Acquisitions	0.2	...
Total, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Women (a)			
Total Expenses	1,402.5	1,483.8	5.8
Asset Acquisitions	34.8	48.5	39.4

(a) The Ministerial totals have been reduced to exclude recurrent payments made by the Ageing and Disability Department to the Department of Community Services and the Home Care Service.

Total expenses for the Department of Community Services are estimated at \$895 million in 1998-99. This represents an increase of \$91.2 million, or 11.3 per cent, compared with initial budget projections for 1997-98. Actual expenditures in 1997-98 will be greater than expected, largely due to the combined effects of increasing demands for services, Award wage increases and other increased operational costs.

Continuing Budget support of some \$43 million per annum has been provided as an adjustment to the Department's 'base funding' levels for 1998-99 and future years in recognition of these increasing service demands.

The Ageing and Disability Department's total expenses are estimated to increase by 8.5 per cent in 1998-99. This growth includes additional funding for the Home and Community Care Program of \$13.7 million, an increase of 5.2 per cent in real terms over 1997-98 levels, and a further \$4.6 million for the Post School Options Program.

Increases in the expenses of the Department of Juvenile Justice relate primarily to its Youth Justice Conferencing Scheme and competency based training program. The Department's asset acquisitions will also increase by almost \$10 million, or 61 per cent, in 1998-99 reflecting the continuing construction of new Juvenile Justice Centres and the introduction of new technology.

The Home Care Service's total expenses in 1997-98 will be lower than initially anticipated principally due to savings achieved through branch amalgamations and better control of overheads. These savings will be used to increase service provision in 1998-99.

The Department for Women increased asset acquisitions program for 1998-99 reflects the need to upgrade the Department's computer equipment.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Expenditure Trends and Recent Developments

The focus of the Department's operations is on assisting families and children and the provision of certain services to people with disabilities.

During 1997-98, the Department maintained its commitment to improving its current and future services. Activities focussed on improving its child protection response, the quality of care provided to children and people with disabilities, children's services, and support for families and people in need of accommodation.

The demand for the services provided by the Department has continued to increase over the past few years and is likely to continue into 1998-99 and beyond. This increase in demand is evident when examining the Department's outputs. For example -

- the number of children receiving protective services has increased from 25,400 in 1996-97 to 28,000 in 1997-98 and is expected to increase to 30,000 in 1998-99;
- the number of children receiving assessment has increased from 39,500 in 1996-97 to 42,500 in 1997-98 and is likely to increase to 43,500 in 1998-99; and
- the number of funded child care places has increased from 47,000 in 1996-97 to 48,000 in 1997-98 and is expected to increase to 49,100 in 1998-99.

This increasing demand for services has resulted in a growth in expenditures over recent years. Additional recurrent funding estimated at \$37 million will be provided to the Department in 1997-98 to meet the costs of increased service demands, including funding to address a number of child protection issues highlighted by the Police Royal Commission.

The findings of the Police Royal Commission and the review of the Department's management by the Council on the Cost of Government recently highlighted an urgent need for the Department to improve its accountability and delivery of services.

In 1997-98, the Department prepared a *Key Directions Statement* outlining a strong framework for future delivery of services. This Statement underpins the Department's 'Recovery Program' and includes four priority areas aimed at -

- improving the quality, delivery and accessibility of community services to ensure that they are available when needed;
- enabling Areas and communities to become self supporting by providing effective services and infrastructure;
- supporting community initiatives; and
- using resources more effectively in response to the community's need.

During 1997-98, the Department commenced implementation of the priorities identified within the Statement. In 1998-99, the Department will continue to focus on these priorities and vigorously pursue the delivery of more effective services to clients.

Strategic Directions

The *Key Directions Statement* outlined a number of initiatives which the Department will implement over the next few years. These include -

- reshaping child protection services in response to the findings of the Police Royal Commission;
- improving community service planning and delivery;
- providing professional supervision and support to departmental workers and encouraging other community service employers to provide supervision and support to their staff;
- responding to the special needs and circumstances of Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse communities;
- promoting community development and crisis prevention strategies; and
- distributing resources to achieve greater equity and social justice.

1998-99 Budget

Total Expenses

The Department's total expenses budget for 1998-99 is \$895 million, an increase of \$91.2 million or 11.3 per cent on the 1997-98 Budget figure. Additional recurrent budget support provided to the Department to meet growth in service demands during 1997-98 continues into 1998-99 and future years.

Key activities of the Department of Community Services include -

- **Child and Family Support**

A number of the Department's activities are focussed on the need to provide support and assistance to children, adolescents and families under stress or in crisis. Expenses are estimated at \$315.9 million for child and family support in 1998-99. This represents an increase of \$11.1 million over the 1997-98 level of expenditure, or \$30.3 million as compared to the amounts initially allocated last year.

Included within this program are projects associated with the protection of children from abuse and neglect. A total of \$89.3 million is being provided for this purpose.

An additional \$250,000 has also been provided to the Department in 1998-99 towards implementation of the Government's recently announced Families First Program. This initiative, which will be undertaken jointly by the Office of Children and Young People and the Department, will focus on reconfiguring and enhancing existing local services to create a state-wide network of prevention and early intervention services for 0-8 year olds and their families. This will create a three tiered service system comprising early childhood health visitors, volunteer home visiting and parenting programs and targeted early intervention programs for children at risk.

The first year of this initiative will be devoted to consultation, planning, education, training and development of the program. New and expanded services will commence in 1999-2000, with available funding growing to \$2.4 million in that year and \$5 million annually thereafter.

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) plays a key role in assisting people who are in crisis, homeless, moving towards independent living or who are returning to their own families. This Commonwealth-State program provides assistance to community organisations that operate accommodation or other support services for these people in need. Total SAAP payments in 1998-99 are estimated at \$88.6 million.

Other programs to assist children and families include family and individual support (\$18.8 million), and the Child Sexual Assault Program (\$776,000).

- **Children's Services**

Funding of \$103.3 million has been allocated to assist the community in the provision of childcare. \$79.9 million will be provided to pre-schools and day care centres to fund an estimated 49,100 child care places during 1998-99. In addition, funding will be provided for 15,800 vacation care places (\$3.4 million), while \$4.1 million has been allocated for early childhood resource and support services.

Funding for 1998-99 also includes provision for capital grants of \$5.6 million to assist in the establishment or expansion of childcare centres.

- **Community Resources**

An amount of \$108.1 million is being provided for support services and concessions which will assist in reducing the effects of social disadvantage of local groups and increase community self-sufficiency.

\$18.4 million has been provided for community development projects, such as the provision of neighbourhood houses and playgroups, while \$13.6 million has been allocated for community youth projects and adolescent support programs.

It is estimated that \$60.5 million will be required to meet the costs of electricity rebates to pensioners and financially disadvantaged people. These rebates, while provided by electricity distribution authorities, are funded by the Government.

- **Disability Services**

Almost \$368 million is being made available in 1998-99 to enable the Department of Community Services to assist, accommodate and support persons with a disability. \$245 million of this sum is to be provided through the Ageing and Disability Department.

The disability services provided by Community Services are part of the Government's overall strategy to assist people with a disability to maximise their independence and participation in the community.

Asset Acquisitions

An amount of \$19.9 million has been provided for the Department's asset acquisition program in 1998-99. This program comprises -

- \$5 million for essential corrective and preventative maintenance of the Department's large residential and other facilities;
- funding of \$5.7 million for the development and implementation of new Client Systems and Funded Services System databases. The Client Systems database will provide a whole of Department information support system to allow departmental staff to efficiently and effectively manage the needs of clients. The Funded Services System will assist in the administration and management of the Department's grants and subsidies;
- an amount of \$4.2 million for the continued upgrading of residential accommodation, including the removal of material containing asbestos, essential refurbishment, and essential capital maintenance;

- \$4 million for minor projects, including replacement of furniture and equipment and costs associated with design and preliminary planning; and
- \$1 million to meet establishment costs associated with the introduction of a State-wide Intake System for child protection services.

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION

The Community Services Commission is a complaints and monitoring body that covers services provided by the Department of Community Services, the Ageing and Disability Department, the Home Care Service and non-government services funded by the Minister.

The Commission seeks to promote high quality community services, expose abusive and poor quality services, protect consumer rights and foster informed community attitudes on the state of community services in New South Wales.

1998-99 Budget

Total Expenses

The Commission will continue to inquire into community services, monitor systematic issues arising from complaints and reviews, provide community education and co-ordinate the Community Visitors Scheme. Estimated total expenses for 1998-99 are \$3.9 million.

Asset Acquisitions

The Commission's asset acquisitions program of \$18,000 in 1998-99 provides for the replacement of computer and office equipment.

AGEING AND DISABILITY DEPARTMENT

Expenditure Trends and Recent Developments

The Department is responsible for improving outcomes for people with disabilities, older people and their families. In this context, it provides funds to other government and non-government agencies on a contract basis to enable services to be delivered to frail older people, people with disabilities and their carers. The Department also provides strategic policy and planning for ageing and disability across New South Wales.

Total Departmental expenses are estimated at \$649.8 million in 1997-98 - an increase of \$80.7 million, or some 7.8 per cent in real terms since 1995-96.

This increase primarily relates to additional funding of \$53.7 million provided under the Disability Services Program for a range of services. These include services to meet the needs of school leavers with a disability, the provision of additional supported accommodation placements for people with a disability, and the provision of a specific children's program.

The Home and Community Care program has also seen growth of \$14.2 million during this period.

Strategic Directions

Over the next two years the Department will continue to work collaboratively with other agencies to maximise the use of available resources to -

- improve access to services for older people and people with disabilities;
- provide support for families and carers;
- improve the efficiency, effectiveness and equity of the system of specialist services and improve the quality of the services provided;
- continue to support programs targeted at the prevention of abuse of vulnerable older people and people with disabilities; and
- allocate resources fairly and be fully accountable for these resources.

1998-99 Budget

Total Expenses

The Departmental total expenses budget in 1998-99 is \$705.2 million, of which \$677.8 million or 96 per cent is administered under three major programs – the Disability Services Program, the Home and Community Care Program and the Ageing Program.

- **Disability Services Program**

Total funding provided under the Disability Services Program for 1998-99 is \$461.2 million, an increase of \$43.3 million over estimated expenditures in 1997-98. This includes \$120.7 million to fund a range of programs under the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement (CSDA).

The CSDA has resulted in the development of standards that aim to establish clearly what is expected of present and prospective service providers and encourage service quality improvement, including funding under transition arrangements to assist community organisations upgrade facilities for clients with disabilities.

The Disability Services Program is targeted at maximising the independence and community participation of people with disabilities. To this end, \$247 million will be provided to both government and non-government organisations in 1998-99 to accommodate and support people with a disability through direct accommodation services and in-home support. This includes additional funding of \$14 million in 1998-99 to meet Crisis Support and Accommodation needs.

Further funding of \$57.9 million will be provided to government and non-government organisations to provide a range of services to support families and reduce the cost of disability. These services include respite care, day programs, early intervention, therapy and provision of services under the Brain Injury Action Plan. A specific children's program will also be operated within this funding allocation.

The Post School Options program, which provides a planned transition from school to training and community access opportunities for people with disabilities, will continue in 1998-99. Early identification of the needs of people with a disability who are leaving school allows for the development of individual transition plans that best suit their needs and those of their families. Funding of \$35.6 million allocated for this program in 1998-99 includes an additional \$4.6 million to assist 1998 school leavers.

- **Home and Community Care Program**

The Home and Community Care Program (HACC) is a joint Commonwealth/State program which has operated since 1986. The program is targeted at frail older people and people with disabilities, who do not receive residential care support, and their carers.

HACC provides funds for an extensive range of support services to assist people to continue to live independently and minimise premature or inappropriate admission to permanent residential care. The Ageing and Disability Department administers the program with assistance from the Departments of Health, Housing and Transport.

One of the main HACC service providers is the Home Care Service, which is shown as a separate agency in the 1998-99 Budget Papers.

Total estimated expenditure on the HACC program, including funding allocated direct to the Department of Health and a contribution from local government, will total \$265.5 million in 1998-99. This represents an increase of almost \$15 million, over last year. The NSW Government contribution will be \$105.6 million.

Growth in HACC funding will enable services to be maintained as well as expanded in areas such as -

- home help and personal care;
- home maintenance;
- food services;
- community respite care;
- community paramedical services;
- community nursing;
- education, information and co-ordination; and
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) services.

- **Ageing Program**

Funding of \$2.6 million has been provided in 1998-99 for a number of initiatives associated with the Department's Ageing Program. Key areas of focus will be in the areas of elder abuse, the NSW Action Plan on Dementia, transport demonstration projects and public education on age discrimination. This includes \$500,000 in 1998-99 to support activities associated with the International Year of Older Persons.

The Government has created an Ageing Issues Directorate within the Ageing and Disability Department in recognition of the importance of a more visible and active approach to issues that affect older people.

- **Disability Council**

The Disability Council is a statutory authority that provides advice to the NSW Government on issues affecting people with disabilities, their families and carers. The budget for the Council is included with the budget of the Ageing and Disability Department and is administered on a day to day basis by the Executive Officer of the Council.

- **Guardianship Tribunal**

The Guardianship Tribunal is an autonomous body that provides guardianship and advocacy services on behalf of people with disabilities and the aged. The budget for the Tribunal is included with the budget for the Ageing and Disability Department.

Asset Acquisitions

The Department's asset acquisition program for 1998-99 of \$300,000 provides for the completion of its 'Data Rationalisation Project' and for normal equipment replacements and upgrades.

HOME CARE SERVICE

The Home Care Service is mainly funded through the Home and Community Care (HACC) program. The Service's objective is to provide high quality, cost effective household support services to people with disabilities, frail or at risk aged people and their carers.

Expenditure Trends and Recent Developments

Over the past five years there has been an increase in demand for the services provided by the Home Care Service to HACC target customers. This has resulted from general ageing of the population and trends for people with mental and physical disabilities to be placed back in the community from residential institutions.

Consistent with the HACC objective of assisting people to avoid inappropriate residential care, Home Care has been increasingly responding to people with complex care needs. The impact on Home Care is that it has delivered a higher number of hours of service per customer to a reduced number of customers.

The Home Care Service has achieved a dramatic improvement in its workers compensation performance through implementation of an occupational health and safety program called *Safecare*. The savings from this reduction have been directed towards the maintenance of a balanced level of service between high and low need customers.

Strategic Directions

As a result of the Independent Review of the Home Care Service, the NSW Cabinet endorsed a three year action plan which should result in improved services, increased cost effectiveness and more appropriate accountability and reporting requirements.

Home Care will continue to direct efficiency savings towards service provision in order to maintain the service mix between people with complex care needs and people with lower care needs.

1998-99 Budget

Total Expenses

The Home Care Service will receive \$112 million from the HACC program through the Ageing and Disability Department. The Service will continue to provide household support services to help people to live independently.

Home Care also manages the Hostel and Care program that provides assistance in project management for housing and care options for older people. Total expenses of this program are expected to be \$1.6 million in 1998-99.

Asset Acquisitions

Home Care's \$2 million asset acquisitions program provides for the replacement of plant and equipment.

DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

The Department of Juvenile Justice has responsibility for effectively implementing court orders and providing appropriate services for juvenile offenders in detention and in the community.

Expenditure Trends and Recent Developments

During 1997-98 implementation of the Department's restructure as recommended by the Premier's Department was completed.

In December 1996, the NSW Ombudsman released a report on the Inquiry into Juvenile Detention Centres. This Inquiry, initiated by the Government, identified a number of areas for action. Additional funding was provided to implement a number of the Inquiry's recommendations. Throughout 1997-98 the Department focussed on implementing recommendations from the Inquiry.

Implementation of Youth Justice Conferencing from 1 April 1998 has been another major focus of the Department.

Strategic Directions

In 1996-97 the Department released its "Juvenile Justice towards 2001" corporate plan. Implementation of the initiatives in the corporate plan has been a major activity for the Department in 1997-98 and will continue during 1998-99.

The Department's capital program to upgrade the overall standard of accommodation in juvenile justice centres commenced in 1996-97 and will continue during 1998-99 and beyond. This includes the construction of new facilities at Dubbo, Grafton, Mt Penang, Cobham and in the Hunter, so that juveniles are accommodated as close as possible to their communities of origin. The capital program addresses the most pressing accommodation issues raised by the 1996 Ombudsman's Inquiry into Juvenile Detention Centres.

In a significant initiative flowing from the Ombudsman's report, the Government provided for the introduction of a Staff Competency Based Training Program. The need for this training was also highlighted in the Ombudsman's report. The additional funding (\$1.2 million 1997-98 and a further \$1.2 million in 1998-99) is being used to introduce training based on nationally accredited competencies for frontline community based and custodial staff, and support staff whose training is crucial in assisting the direct care staff. This will ensure continuing improvement in the quality of services provided to juvenile clients and their families.

The Young Offenders Act 1997 was proclaimed in April 1998. The Department is responsible for the implementation of Part 5 of the Act, in co-operation with the NSW Police Service and the Attorney General's Department. The Act introduces a formal system of police warnings and cautions, and youth justice conferences. Only more serious offences will go before the Children's Court. The aim of the legislation is to ensure that police use the most appropriate responses to offending behaviour by young people in every instance.

Young people are held accountable for their behaviour in conferences through a facilitated meeting with the victim of their offence. Victims are encouraged to speak about the harm caused to them. The Scheme's objective is that this harm be healed through apology, reparation and work for the victim or the community.

The Department of Juvenile Justice has appointed 16 Conference Administrators (CAs) across the State. The CAs are responsible for promoting the scheme in their local areas and appointing a pool of Conference Convenors, who will organise and run conferences in the local area.

Reforms to juvenile justice community based support services continue to consolidate post release support schemes, the Aboriginal Mentor Scheme, additional services for young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, and the statewide expansion of the Safehaven alternative placement program for young offenders who cannot live with their parents or families.

1998-99 Budget

Total Expenses

The increase in funding from \$71.7 million in 1997-98 to \$78.8 million in 1998-99 is primarily due to increased funding for youth justice conferencing and funding for youth justice initiatives.

A sum of \$5.9 million has been allocated in 1998-99 for the continued implementation of a range of community based initiatives to break young people out of their offending behaviour cycles.

More than \$1 million is to be spent by the Department in 1998-99 on juvenile offender psychological and psychiatric services throughout New South Wales and to continue programs established for young violent and sexual offenders.

In response to the recommendations made by the Police Royal Commission's Paedophile Inquiry, funding of \$885,000 will be spent to appoint additional sex counsellors and to provide a special accommodation program in rural NSW to cater for juvenile sex offenders.

A major cyclic maintenance program which commenced at a number of juvenile justice centres in 1996-97 will continue in 1998-99, with the continuation of the increased funding (over \$3 million per annum).

Asset Acquisitions

The Department's 1998-99 capital program provides for the continuation of construction of new juvenile justice centres, an asset replacement program and office fit-outs. There will be a significant improvement in information technology, resulting in recurrent savings for the Department.

The construction, upgrading and expansion of centres is part of a capital strategic plan developed by the Department to improve the standard of accommodation for juveniles held in detention and to address the various concerns raised in the Ombudsman's report. The plan aims to locate juveniles as close to their families as practicable.

To this end, a new juvenile justice centre will be constructed at Grafton to accommodate juvenile offenders from northern New South Wales, and another centre is under construction at Dubbo to service western New South Wales.

The Government intends also to replace the Worimi Juvenile Justice Centre with a new centre, also situated in the Hunter region. This is in addition to the extension of Cobham Juvenile Justice Centre which is scheduled for completion by July 1998 and the replacement of Mt Penang Juvenile Justice Centre near Gosford.

The major components of the 1998-99 capital program of \$26.1 million are -

- construction of new 30 bed juvenile justice centres at Dubbo (estimated total cost \$10.9 million; \$7.8 million in 1998-99) and Grafton (estimated total cost \$10.7 million; \$5.9 million in 1998-99);
- the construction of a new 120 bed juvenile justice centre at Gosford to replace the antiquated centre at Mt Penang (estimated total cost \$22.9 million; \$7.3 million in 1998-99);
- the identification of a site for the construction of a new 60 bed juvenile justice centre in the Hunter region to replace the existing Worimi Juvenile Justice Centre (estimated total cost \$17.2 million);
- the implementation of the Department's information technology and telecommunications plan (estimated total cost \$6.7 million; \$3.4 million in 1998-99); and

- minor miscellaneous works comprising fit-outs, computer upgrading and an asset replacement program (estimated cost in 1998-99 of \$1.5 million).

DEPARTMENT FOR WOMEN

The Department for Women provides advice to the Government on issues of concern to women and leadership and direction in shaping whole of government policy, programs and services for women. The Department also has a role in community education, provision of information services and administration of the Women's Grant Program.

1998-99 Budget

Total Expenses

The Department will continue to support the Government's social justice objectives by working with the Premier's Council for Women, other agencies and the community to implement the *NSW Action Plan for Women*. The Department has estimated total expenses of \$5.2 million in 1998-99, which includes funding of \$1 million for the Women's Grant Program.

Asset Acquisitions

The Department's asset acquisitions program of \$151,000 in 1998-99 provides for upgrading and standardisation of computer equipment.