

3. OUTCOMES OF THE 1995-96 BUDGET INITIATIVES

Reporting on the achievement of the Government's social justice strategy will be a function of each Social Justice Budget Statement.

Since coming to office in April 1995, the Government has introduced a substantial range of policy, program, service and machinery initiatives in line with its commitment to social justice. Many of these were announced in the 1995-96 Budget Statement. In keeping with the reporting function of the Budget Statement, this section outlines outcomes to date from the major commitments in the last Statement.

Over the past year the Government has implemented many of the initiatives outlined in the 1995-96 Budget Statement.

The Government's Hospital Waiting List Reduction Program resulted in a 56.2 per cent reduction in elective surgery waiting lists by December 1995, and significant reductions in waiting times for all elective surgery. A major review of the Higher School Certificate has resulted in the launch of a Discussion Paper, with public consultations to occur up until August 1996. The Aboriginal Education Policy has been launched to improve the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students and ensure that Aboriginal students have high quality, culturally appropriate education. Major statements have been released on the new directions in health care and a Green Paper on housing policy was released in December 1995, setting out five key strategies to enable more housing choices and ensure quality housing outcomes for people in NSW.

The Social Justice Reference Group, the Premier's Council for Women and the Council for Crime Prevention have all been established. More child protection specialists, nurses, teachers and police have been recruited. The Women's Domestic Violence Assistance Program, the Women's Equity Bureau and the Aboriginal Women's Legal Advisory Service have been established.

Funding for community services has been boosted, new rural health services have been introduced, access for people with a disability has been improved, programs to support young people have been implemented, and many new child care places have been created. The Child Protection Council has been restructured, a Child Death Review Team has been established, corporal punishment has been abolished in schools, and in April 1996 the Premier announced the most substantial package of child abuse prevention reforms seen in this State for many years.

These outcomes show the Government is committed to achieving its social justice aims. The following tables provide information on progress in the implementation of many other measures.

Initiatives in the 1995-96 Budget Statement were reported largely according to portfolio areas and population groups, and the outcome information in this Statement on the major commitments has been organised within the same categories.

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<u>HEALTH CARE</u>	
<p>Hospital waiting lists: to meet the goal of halving elective surgery waiting lists, the Waiting List Reduction Program was introduced, with particular emphasis placed on people who had been waiting more than six months for surgery. Long waiting items in areas such as cataract extraction/lens insertion, total hip or knee replacement, and ear, nose and throat procedures to be reduced.</p> <p>Hospital and community health services staff: more staff to be employed in the public hospital system and in community health services, including additional community nurses and more ambulance officers.</p> <p>Health service planning and delivery for people living in rural and remote areas to be improved.</p>	<p>\$75 million was provided (at December 1995). By 31 December 1995 the elective surgery waiting lists decreased by 25,118 patients, a reduction of 56.2 per cent. Nearly all Area Health Services exceeded their 50 per cent target. The number of people waiting longer than six months for surgery decreased by 6,297, a drop of 71 per cent. The number of people waiting for cataract extraction/lens insertion dropped by 80 per cent, total hip replacement by 50 per cent, total knee replacement by 35 per cent and ear, nose and throat surgery by 52 per cent. There were also significant reductions in other waiting times.</p> <p>Enhancement funding of \$500,000 was provided towards employing additional community nurses allocated to high need areas of the State, including South Western Sydney Area Health Services and the Wentworth Health Services. Ambulance Service Budget increased by \$500,000 in 1995-96 to employ additional ambulance officers.</p> <p>Four multipurpose services have been established at Baradine, Braidwood, Urana and Urbenville. Twelve more services are currently in development with more to follow. Announced the Government's Vision for Rural Health.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Community Health Accreditation and Standards Program: funding to be allocated to ensure community health services are accredited for the provision of quality services. Community health policies to be developed which give clear directions about the future role and potential for community based services.</p> <p>Injection of funds into programs with high demand from disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>Access to health services: the disparities in access to health services between different groups in the community will be redressed through better matching the needs of these groups with resources. Additional funding for:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal health • women's health services • services for people of non English speaking background. 	<p>Funding of \$120,000 allocated for a Community Health Accreditation and Standards Program. The Program will complete 31 reviews of Community Health Centres, including Women's Health Services, during 1995-96, as well as three pilot reviews of non-Government organisations. NSW Health has employed a principal policy adviser for community health. This officer will consult widely and be the Department's link with the community health sector.</p> <p>More funds allocated to the Isolated Patient Travelling Allowance Scheme (\$500,000 per annum); \$500,000 additional funds for the program of aids and appliances for people with a disability (\$50,000 of which was allocated to the Corrections Health Service) to enhance service delivery to people with a disability.</p> <p>A key aspect of improving the health status of Aboriginal people is self-determination by Aboriginal people. NSW Health's Partnership Agreement with the Aboriginal Health Resource Co-operative will ensure that Aboriginal people are joint decision makers in the planning and researching of health services to Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal Family Health Strategy was launched in December 1995.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Access to health services (continued)</p>	<p>Resources for women's health have increased. Health service provision continues to be expanded to women throughout NSW, particularly to groups of women who for either cultural, economic, social or geographic reasons find it difficult to access mainstream health services.</p> <p>In 1995-96 an additional \$500,000 was allocated to services for victims of sexual and domestic violence, including a significant allocation for training and education of health service providers on sexual assault and domestic violence issues specific to women of non-English speaking background. A senior policy analyst in NSW Health has been appointed with responsibility for sexual assault services.</p> <p>Multicultural health: \$200,000 has been committed to improve health literacy; \$150,000 for rural interpreters. \$100,000 has been allocated to research programs and service improvement projects targeting people of non-English speaking background and \$50,000 to the Transcultural Mental Health Centre. Existing services such as the Health Literacy Programs and <i>back to basics</i> health access programs are being expanded into rural NSW.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Extensive capital works program to be undertaken.</p> <p>Implement a suicide prevention strategy.</p> <p>Provide funding to research and improve the health of people with mental illness.</p>	<p>In 1995-96 over \$488 million was allocated for capital works, including allocations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liverpool Hospital (\$45.8 million) • Bankstown Hospital (\$37 million) • New Children's Hospital (\$24.5 million) • Prince of Wales Hospital (\$25.8 million) • Royal Women's Hospital (\$19.2 million) • Sydney and Sydney Eye Hospital (\$7.5 million) • Nepean Hospital (\$6.8 million) • St George Hospital (\$7.8 million) • Maitland Hospital (\$9 million) • Walgett Hospital (\$7 million) • commencement of redevelopments at Blacktown, Dubbo, Lithgow, and West Wyalong Hospitals. <p>The Health Department has appointed a suicide prevention coordinator. The mental health goals and targets process has resulted in the establishment of a suicide prevention strategy. The strategy will be completed in 1996.</p> <p>\$12 million provided in 1995-96 to Areas to address the inadequacies of care in the Burdekin Report and to increase community mental health services for those with serious mental illness.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<u>EDUCATION AND TRAINING</u>	
<p>HSC Advice Line to be established to enable students to obtain advice on a wide range of HSC subjects.</p> <p>Major review of the HSC to be undertaken.</p> <p>The Reading Recovery program to be expanded and access to targeted schools increased.</p> <p>Additional teaching positions over four years.</p>	<p>The HSC Advice Line was open from 16 October, through the examination period, until 20 November 1995. The line operated seven days a week and took 23,849 calls from students in all metropolitan and country regions. This initiative provided students across NSW with access to expert advice during the critical period before their HSC examinations.</p> <p>The HSC Review <i>Their Future: Options for the reform of the Higher School Certificate</i> was released by the Premier and the Minister for Education and Training on 1 May 1996. Consultations on the Review paper will run until 30 August 1996.</p> <p>400 new Reading Recovery teaching positions over the next four years announced. Reading Recovery produces significantly improved literacy outcomes for students and reduces the number of students with reading problems in schools. An additional 100 teaching positions across the State will be allocated each year. In the first half of 1996 teaching positions were established in 205 schools, representing 37 districts across NSW.</p> <p>126 additional teachers will be appointed in 1996-97, resulting in a total of 464 additional teachers since 1995-96.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<u>YOUTH</u>	
<p>Funding to be aimed at directing minor offenders away from the court system towards alternative community based programs such as community youth conferencing.</p> <p>Programs to be funded to address the social and economic inequities faced by some young people. The programs target disadvantaged young people (aged 12-24) at risk of leaving school early or who have left school early.</p> <p>A Youth Crisis Service at Murwillumbah to be established.</p>	<p>Community youth conferencing is operating in six pilot areas (Wagga Wagga, Moree, Bourke, Marrickville, Campbelltown and Castle Hill) around NSW. Approximately 180 conferences have taken place since the pilot began. An evaluation of the scheme has recently been completed by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to assess and indicate the extent to which the scheme is meeting its stated targets. The report of the evaluation is currently being considered by the Minor Offenders Punishment Scheme Working Party.</p> <p>Over 1995-96 the Government allocated \$6.8 million to programs including Helping Early School Leavers Program (\$3.27 million), Time Out (\$874,000), Circuit Breaker (\$1.58 million), and Koori Youth Program (\$296,000). These initiatives provided literacy, numeracy, and self-esteem assistance which resulted in 4,800 people either remaining in school, returning to school or moving on to further education.</p> <p>Negotiations with St Joseph's Futcher House have been completed and an agreement to proceed signed. An integrated Case Management Service for homeless youth in Murwillumbah and Tweed Valley will aim for either the return of young persons to their family home or the establishment of independent accommodation with a stable income. There will be two medium-to-long term houses, and support workers based in</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
	offices located in Murwillumbah.

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<u>INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN</u>	
<p>A Premier's Council for Women to be appointed to enhance women's involvement in decision-making at the highest level.</p> <p>Recurrent funding (\$320,000 pa) to be allocated for the Women's Information and Referral Service (WIRS) run by the Department for Women, which had previously operated as a pilot project. This service is to ensure that women throughout NSW have access to information and advice on a wide range of government and non-government services and community support networks.</p> <p>The Women's Court Assistance Scheme Network (\$1.5 million per annum) to be established to provide legal representation, advice, non-legal assistance and support to women appealing for apprehended domestic violence orders.</p>	<p>The twelve members of the Council for Women were appointed on 3 October 1995, and have since held three full Council meetings. The Council is overseeing a whole-of-government strategy (under development by the Minister and the Department for Women) and has set six broad objectives. Sub-committees have been established to address these objectives and action plans are being developed for each objective which will be presented to the Premier in mid 1996.</p> <p>Recruitment action for the five full time positions has nearly been completed and it is intended that the Service will be at full strength by the end of the 1995-96 financial year. Special arrangements exist to service women who are deaf or hearing impaired, live in rural or remote areas, or are of non-English speaking background.</p> <p>The Department for Women has also established a complementary fax-based information service, offering up to 100 sets of information on services for women in NSW.</p> <p>The NSW Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Program was officially announced by the Minister for Women and the Attorney General on 31 January 1996, with funding to be administered by the Legal Aid Commission.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

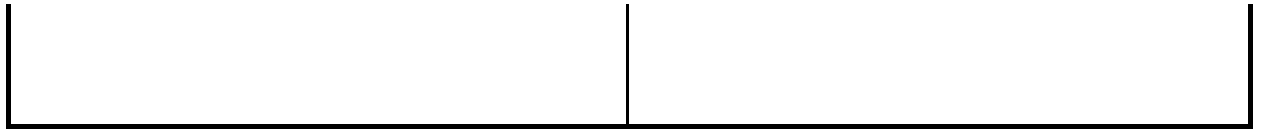
1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>\$100,000 to be allocated to the Sport Administration and Travel Scholarship for Women.</p> <p>A Women's Equity Bureau to be established within the Department of Industrial Relations to monitor and advise on equity aspects of enterprise bargaining, to promote incorporation of equal opportunity, occupational health and safety, and fair pay clauses into awards and enterprise agreements.</p>	<p>Under the program 50 special scholarships will be awarded to women to enable them to gain accreditation in sports administration, and two travel scholarships of \$25,000 will be granted for women to become senior sports administrators. Some of the scholarships will be targeted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from non-English speaking background, women with a disability and women in rural and remote areas.</p> <p>Following an extensive consultation process with key Government and community stake-holders, the Bureau was established to develop industrial relations policy which progresses the interests of women. The Director of the Bureau has been appointed, and a total of 10 staff will be appointed to the Unit by June 1996.</p>
<p><u>CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES</u></p>	
<p>Additional funding of \$2.5 million per annum for the Community Service Grants Program.</p> <p>The Child Protection Council to be restructured.</p>	<p>Additional funds for Community Services Grants Program projects across the State provided to strengthen the ability of services to reduce disadvantage and provide less intrusive services to families in need.</p> <p>The NSW Child Protection Council has been restructured to broaden its emphasis on prevention and was allocated an increase of \$100,000 in 1995-96 for prevention activities.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

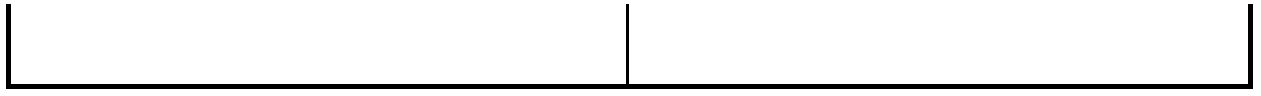
1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Sixty new child protection specialists to be employed.</p>	<p>Approximately two-thirds of these positions have been filled, with the remaining positions in the process of being recruited. These positions are intended to improve the quality of assessment and casework undertaken by the Department, and enable better coordination of departmental and non-government child protection services. They are located in Community Services Centres to support District Officers in the provision of child protection services. The primary outcome for this initiative will be to improve the quality of assessment and casework undertaken by District Officers.</p>
<p>Culturally appropriate substitute care service models to be developed to assist Aboriginal people.</p>	<p>An Aboriginal Coordinator has been appointed to the Department of Community Services to coordinate the consultation with Aboriginal communities and planning of substitute care services for Aboriginal children and young people.</p>
<p>Extra child care places to be provided. Sign Expanded National Child Care Agreement. Provision for pre-school, occasional child care, mobile child care, vacation care and access measures.</p>	<p>\$22 million has been provided for this initiative over three years, together with \$2 million carried over from 1994-95. 398 new long day care places have been approved for 1995-96. Under the Expanded National Child Care Strategy, \$2.85 million recurrent funding over three years for 1,988 long day care places has been allocated. The target group is families with dependent children under 12 years of age, especially working families with child care needs. This strategy has improved access to child care, and improved equity in the distribution of child care places. Protocols between the State and the Commonwealth on implementing the commitment for child care places for children at risk are nearing</p>

finalisation. 100 pre-school places have
been approved

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<u>AGEING INITIATIVES</u>	
<p>Ageing and Disability Department to be established, combining the former Office on Ageing, the Office on Disability, and the Ageing and Disability Directorate.</p> <p>Ageing and Disability Department to assume responsibility for the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program, with \$239 million allocated in 1995-96.</p> <p>The \$10 charge on two intrastate rail services per annum to be abolished for pensioners (\$3.3 million per annum).</p> <p>The entry fee to be removed from the Powerhouse Museum and the Australian Museum for seniors and pensioners.</p> <p>The proportion of dwelling units to be increased for aged people in the public housing construction program (1346 units to be acquired or constructed in 1995-96 at a cost of \$53.7 million).</p>	<p>The new Department has been established.</p> <p>Major work has commenced in the following areas: the rationalisation of HACC resources across Government; implementation of recommendations arising from the efficiency and effectiveness review; the introduction of brokerage services; the establishment of a Home Care Review; and better distribution of resources according to need.</p> <p>This charge was abolished on 1 January 1996.</p> <p>This commitment was implemented on 1 July 1995 under the Seniors Card Scheme. It ensures older people have greater access to, and are able to benefit from, the full range of exhibitions and activities of the State's two major museums.</p> <p>To date, arrangements have commenced for 1276 pensioner units at a total cost of \$45.9 million.</p>



1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Priority to be given to improving older people's access to surgery and geriatric services.</p> <p>Establish a Seniors' Information Line.</p>	<p>Aged care services are a priority for the strategic planning processes undertaken by Area Health Services. Where residential care services are provided, the priority is to improve dementia services. Older people have benefited from the reductions to waiting times for elective surgery.</p> <p>The tender process for providing the Seniors' Information Line has been finalised. It is expected that the line will be able to receive calls in July 1996, depending on confirmation of arrangements for the launch.</p>
<p><u>DISABILITY INITIATIVES</u></p>	
<p>Ageing and Disability Department to be established.</p> <p>Accommodation for people with a disability to be boosted through the establishment of 300 new supported accommodation places (\$24 million per annum, as well as \$26 million for the purchase of suitable group homes) in the community.</p> <p>An individually designed education program to be developed for each child with a disability.</p>	<p>Department established, with responsibility for strategic policy and planning for ageing and disability; funding of the Home and Community Care Program; the Disability Services Program; and quality assurance, monitoring and review of these programs.</p> <p>These places address outstanding accommodation needs, and are aimed at providing accommodation for people with high support needs, people at home with ageing parents, and those with an urgent need for accommodation. Most of the 300 places have been allocated and provided to people in need.</p> <p>Kindergarten to Year 6 Curriculum Pilot Project in Special Education established to develop support materials across all primary Key Learning Areas.</p>



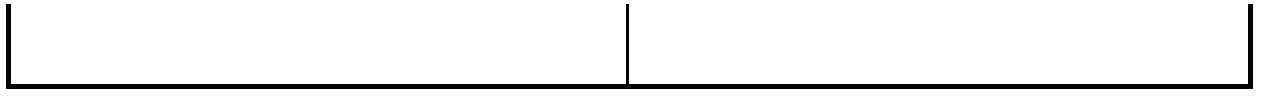
1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Access to transport for people with a disability to be improved.</p> <p>\$200,000 to be provided for elite disabled athletes under the Elite Sports Grant Scheme.</p> <p>\$150,000 to be provided to support the work of the Sports Council for the Disabled.</p>	<p>Measures include: improvements to driver training; a staged expansion of ramps and audio devices at traffic intersections; the expansion of the Disabled Persons Parking Scheme; and the broadening of the eligibility criteria for the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme (at a cost of \$2.7 million). Benefits flowing from these measures include increased road safety and accident prevention, better access to the transport system for all people with a disability, and more parking facilities for people with disabilities.</p> <p>The Department of Sport and Recreation has allocated \$140,000 per annum for a new High Performance Disabled Sport Support Program which provides scholarships of either \$2000 or \$1000 to 34 athletes with a disability. A further \$60,000 per annum was allocated to support a new Disabled Talented Athlete Program. Under this program funding is provided to five sports (track and field, swimming, cycling, rowing and weight-lifting).</p> <p>Funding from last year's Budget enabled increased participation in sport by sports-persons with a disability. During 1995-96 the number of competitors with a disability increased from 2,500 to 3,200. The Council acts as an umbrella organisation for the development of sport for people with a disability in NSW and currently provides assistance to competitors participating in 40 different sports. The Council provides a wide range of services to all member sports associations, and also designs and implements regular sports programs, annual</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
	championships and special events.

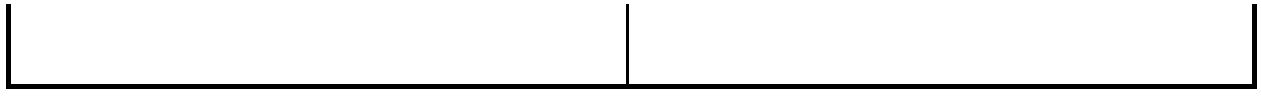
1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Access to National Parks to be improved for people using wheelchairs, people with a visual impairment, families with prams and strollers and older members of the community.</p>	<p>The Minister for the Environment has released the Access for All booklet, providing a clear guide and easy reference for people with disabilities, and in particular people using wheelchairs, to those national parks, nature reserves and historic sites around NSW which provide facilities for people with a disability, allowing them to enjoy the natural experience which these areas provide.</p>
<p><u>JUSTICE</u></p>	
<p>The Council on Crime Prevention to be established.</p> <p>Introduce legislation incorporating greater penalties for peddling drugs that reach school age young people and home invasions.</p>	<p>The Council has been convened. It is chaired by the Premier, includes ten Ministers, and has significant non-Ministerial memberships, including the Director of the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, several criminologists, a former Children's Court Magistrate and representatives of local government, the insurance industry and victims' groups.</p> <p>Both these initiatives have been achieved pursuant to the Criminal Legislation Amendment Act which commenced in July 1995. Penalties for home invasions have been increased for a break and enter offence from 14 years to 20 years where the occupants are at home at the time of the offence. Penalties for drug dealers have been increased where the sale has been to a school age young person.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

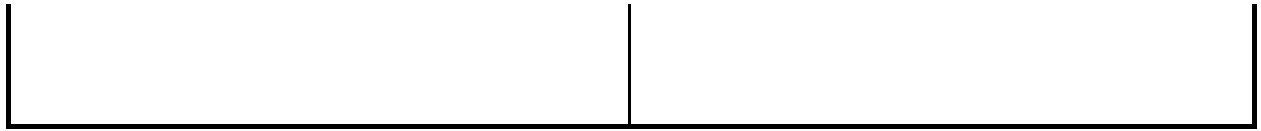
1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>\$250,000 to be directed to financial counselling.</p> <p>Additional assistance to be provided for Community Justice Centres for family mediation services.</p> <p>Additional assistance to be provided to the Legal Aid Commission (\$1 million) for backlog funding.</p> <p>Provision of an extra 650 police (an additional \$32 million per annum when all officers are appointed) over the next four years in locations of highest need.</p>	<p>Funding for financial counselling was increased to a total of \$971,000 in 1995-96 including \$815,000 for the Credit Counselling Program. A total of 25 financial counselling services and community legal centres, together with a toll free helpline, have been funded. Over 2,500 contacts have been made with financial counselling services in the first quarter of the programs.</p> <p>The Family Mediation Program initiated by the Community Justice Centres is now in a pilot stage. Additional funding of \$170,000 has been allocated.</p> <p>This funding has assisted in increasing the separate representation of children's matters in the Family Court and the recent expansion of guidelines in civil law matters.</p> <p>The authorised strength was increased by 100 to a record 13,107 in August 1995. This initiative also included increasing the effective number of operational police by 150 through recruitment of 100 General Support Officers to relieve police of administrative work, and the transfer of prisoner escort and court security duties in rural areas to the Department of Corrective Services. This transfer has been affected, and the majority of General Support Officer positions have been filled.</p>



1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<u>ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS</u>	
<p>Over the next five years, the backlog of outstanding Aboriginal land claims to be cleared (1571 claims extant in September 1995). The Department of Land and Water Conservation to process new claims within 12 months of being lodged.</p> <p>Additional Aboriginal-Police Liaison officers to be employed in 1995-96.</p> <p>An Aboriginal Women's Legal Advisory Service to be established.</p> <p>Greater educational opportunities for Aboriginal children to be provided.</p>	<p>The Department of Land and Water Conservation is on target to deal with the backlog of 1500 land claims within the five year period, with 103 of these having been processed. The allocation of additional resources in the Department of Land and Water Conservation means that the 12 month turnaround for new claims lodged will be able to be met in the majority of cases.</p> <p>Ten additional Aboriginal Police Liaison Officers have been appointed.</p> <p>The Core Centre for the Aboriginal Women's Legal and Advocacy Centre is expected to be established in Sydney by the end of June 1996.</p> <p>The Aboriginal Education Policy was released by the Minister for Education and Training in February 1996. The broad goals of the policy are: to improve educational outcomes of Aboriginal students to a level comparable with those of the population generally; ensure that Aboriginal students have high quality, culturally appropriate education; and, target resources and programs to provide for the educational needs of Aboriginal students. Schools will be provided with training and development materials to implement the policy.</p>



1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<u>ETHNIC AFFAIRS</u>	
<p>Government advertising and information to better reflect the cultural diversity of the population. A proportion of this expenditure (7.5 per cent) to be allocated specifically to ethnic media for the provision of community information.</p> <p>The 24 hour emergency interpreter/translation service to the Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Department of Health and the Police Service to be improved and extended to include the Attorney General's Department, the Department of Corrective Services, and the Department of Juvenile Justice.</p> <p>As part of the Multicultural Education Plan, the first 42 of 96 extra community language teachers to be appointed (a commitment of \$8.7 million over three years) during the year.</p>	<p>In December 1995 the Premier and Minister for Ethnic Affairs issued a Memorandum to Ministers to ensure that from 1 February 1996 a minimum of 7.5 per cent of the campaign advertising budget allocated to newspaper advertising by Government agencies will be allocated to the placement of advertisements in non-English language newspapers. Similar targets are also to be met in electronic advertising expenditure. The NSW Government Advertising Agency has responsibility for monitoring and implementing this policy.</p> <p>The 24 hour emergency interpreter/translation service will be piloted at the Ethnic Affairs Commission in May/June and will be operational within a few months. To facilitate the provision of interpreter services, the Department of Juvenile Justice has produced two "Plain English" <i>Streetwise</i> comics aimed at improving understanding of the law; translated information pamphlets for departmental clients and their carers; and trained staff on cross cultural communication skills and the use of interpreters.</p> <p>The first 42 teachers commenced duties at the beginning of the 1996 school year. This will enable students to develop literacy skills in their home language. Some of the literacy skills developed in the home language will be transferable to literacy development in English.</p>



1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<u>REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES</u>	
<p>Additional drought assistance to be negotiated with the Commonwealth to maximise support to various sections of the rural community.</p> <p>Improvements to rural rail transport.</p>	<p>The Government is spending approximately \$800,000 per month in stock and fodder transport subsidies and welfare payments. Overall the Government allocated \$20 million for expenditure on drought in 1995-96, of which \$13 million has been spent to date.</p> <p>Services to Broken Hill and Griffith recommenced in March 1996. They have improved the access of rural communities to regular rail services and the re-introduction of regular services was welcomed by local communities. These services also demonstrate the Government's commitment to preserving the integrity of country towns and communities fearful of possible decline.</p>
<u>URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT</u>	
<p>An Urban Strategy Group to examine the options for a radical and coordinated approach to solving Sydney's growth problems.</p>	<p>The Urban Strategy Group has submitted its working Report to the Government.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

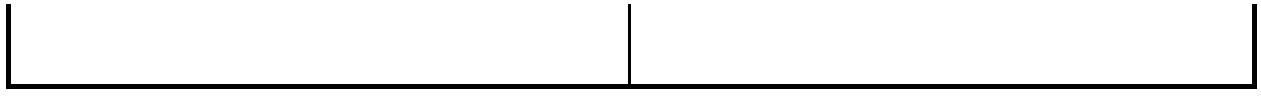
1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Transport problems associated with urban sprawl to be redressed through the further development, of inner and middle ring urban renewal and redevelopment programs.</p> <p>Rail lines in West and South West Sydney to be improved and work to begin on pilot cross regional rail links.</p> <p>Extra funding for Community Transport Schemes (\$200,000 per annum) to assist older people to be mobile in their communities.</p>	<p>The Ultimo-Pyrmont Light Rail system is being developed in concert with the City West urban renewal process. The 3.8 km route will link key residential, employment and recreational areas with quality, high frequency services. The project, at a total cost of \$84 million, is being developed jointly by the Government, and the private sector. Construction commenced in January 1996 and it is expected to open by mid 1997.</p> <p>The Harris Park - Merrylands "Y" link is due for completion towards the end of 1996, and preparations have been made to improve the East Hills line and for the Richmond line amplification. In addition, 3am and 4am services were introduced in September 1995 between the City and Blacktown via Sydenham, Bankstown, and Parramatta. These initiatives will improve the public transport services in these areas by providing an improved and more equitable rail service.</p> <p>Through this program, an average of 5,000 clients each month receive transport related assistance. It has increased the level and range of transport options for people identified as transport disadvantaged, and provided them with increased access to, and participation in, the community. Examples of the kind of assistance provided are the transport of isolated families to regional centres for their everyday needs, while other people may be assisted with travel to after school care, youth groups and senior citizens centres.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>The air quality monitoring program (\$1.4 million per annum) to be continued with a particular focus in West and South West Sydney.</p> <p>Improve rail safety for commuters.</p>	<p>The South West station (at Bargo) is operational, and the station for the West (in the Blue Mountains) is expected to be fully operational by early April. The rest of the funding augments the maintenance budget for the Statewide Air Quality Monitoring Network, and is ongoing. The two new stations extend the coverage of the network to where data is most needed, thereby improving access to representative air quality data and the knowledge available for refining current understanding of processes determining air quality. This initiative enhances existing programs and will maintain increased access to air quality information via annual ongoing support.</p> <p>The additional Nightsafe services, increased transit police numbers and the deployment of contract security officers on trains demonstrate the Government's commitment to implementing measures which have improved the security of passengers on the rail system.</p>
<u>HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS</u>	
<p>Priority to be given to obtaining a more appropriate mix of housing assistance measures and to focusing on the performance of housing providers and outcomes for housing consumers.</p>	<p>Considerable progress has been made in shifting the composition of housing stock to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of small households seeking public housing. In addition, there has been growth in community housing, assistance to private renters, and assistance to special needs groups including Aboriginals, older people and people with a disability. In 1995-96 in addition to over 138,000 households in</p>

	public rental housing, nearly 60,000 low
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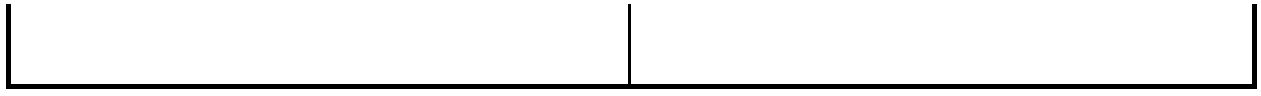
1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Obtaining a more appropriate mix of housing assistance (continued).</p> <p>Living in Harmony Policy.</p> <p>Major reforms to be made to the Department of Housing's allocation policies: families and individuals with urgent housing needs to have an improved range of immediate housing options available to them.</p>	<p>and moderate income households received some form of assistance from the State Government to meet their housing needs, including 37,800 receiving rent assistance to obtain private rental housing and 15,500 accessing new social housing tenancies.</p> <p>To date, the following action has been taken to implement the Good Neighbour (Living in Harmony) Policy: standardisation of documentation of nuisance and annoyance cases using a witness incident form; training in the presentation of cases in the Residential Tenancies Tribunal; a revision of the Department's Residential Tenancies Agreement; and development of a memorandum of understanding between the Police and the Department of Housing, which provides for structured collaboration between the agencies to deal with such matters.</p> <p>The clearer housing needs assessment criteria developed under the new allocation system (introduced in 1995) ensures greater consistency and equity in deciding who is assisted. A more streamlined allocation procedure has increased the timeliness of service delivery. Housing needs are assessed more comprehensively and the assistance provided is tailored to a household's specific needs.</p>



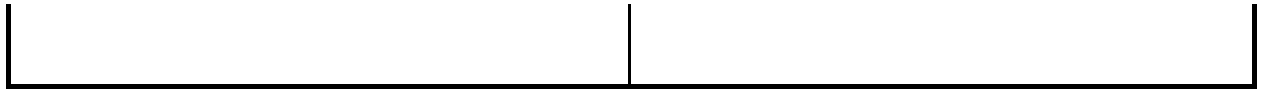
1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>A review to develop a full range of housing options for people with HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>The proportion of dwellings linked to support services for people with disabilities to be increased.</p> <p>Substantial capital works program to be carried out for public housing.</p>	<p>Funding for the Special Needs Subsidy which assists people with HIV/AIDS to meet their rental costs was increased by \$1.1 million to \$3.5 million in 1995-96. In addition, nine community housing projects targeted to people with HIV/AIDS have been established or are under development and a HIV/AIDS Housing Forum has been established in central Sydney to advise on access issues, service delivery models and to promote integration of services.</p> <p>Approximately \$12 million will be expended in 1995-96 on the Supported Housing Initiatives Program, with the commencement of around 80 dwellings. This initiative is enabling people with disabilities, particularly those with high level needs, to live successfully and independently in the community by ensuring that both accommodation and support are delivered in a flexible and coordinated way in accordance with the recipient's need for assistance. The provision of this service has also brought about a closer collaboration of effort at local and regional levels between the Departments of Housing, Health, Community Services and participating community organisations.</p> <p>The Budget specified the commencement of 3309 units of accommodation. While the specific breakdown of units of accommodation has changed slightly from last year's estimates, the Department of Housing has implemented a number of major construction and acquisition programs. Below are the outcomes for the</p>

past year.

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>888 general housing units to be constructed or acquired at a cost of \$82.97 million.</p> <p>A further \$53.7 million to be set aside for the construction or acquisition of 1346 units for the aged.</p> <p>\$22.9 million to be provided for the redevelopment of sites to provide 301 units for general housing and 740 site units for pensioners.</p> <p>\$23.6 million to be allocated for the purchase of properties for Housing Associations.</p> <p>\$48.5 million to be set aside for community housing programs.</p> <p>34 Units of accommodation to be provided for people with mental illness at a cost of \$4 million.</p>	<p>This figure increased during the year, and work has commenced on 1010 general housing units, at a cost of \$106.87 million.</p> <p>To date, arrangements have commenced for 1276 pensioner housing units in this program area.</p> <p>For an increased expenditure of \$31.6 million, site redevelopment to date has yielded 250 units of general housing and 508 units of pensioner housing.</p> <p>Over the past year, 187 properties have been purchased for Housing Associations at a cost of \$31.6 million.</p> <p>To date, 331 community housing units have been commenced at a cost of \$49 million (this includes Aboriginal Housing, the Community Housing Program, and the Crisis Accommodation Program).</p> <p>There has been a slight reduction into the units of accommodation to be built, with work commencing on 27 units for people with a mental illness.</p>



1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Neighbourhood Improvement Program to be boosted (\$8.1 million) and public housing to be improved (\$73.4 million).</p>	<p>Expenditure under the Neighbourhood Improvement Program of \$2.12 million to the end of February has been largely on planning activities. Work is now fully underway and all of the \$8.1 million will be expended this financial year. Commitment to this program will increase to \$25 million in 1996-97 and \$45 million in 1997-98. The program aims to improve both the standard of housing and the living environment of large estates by giving tenants more control of their housing and neighbourhoods, improving the standard of housing, addressing safety issues and improving access to community facilities. The total commitment to both the Neighbourhood Improvement Program and public housing improvements in general will increase from \$81.5 million in 1995-96 to \$87 million in 1996-97 and \$115 million in 1997-98.</p>
<p>Stock to be leased to selected community housing associations under the Social Housing Subsidy Program (\$44.3 million).</p>	<p>The improvements to public housing allocation has been spent on upgrading existing housing stock, for instance, upgrading of kitchens (\$60 million), and on a range of special initiatives including conversion of bedsits to one and two bedroom units, fire safety, and estate security. To date, some 260 housing units have been acquired for lease to selected community housing associations under this Program at a total cost of \$40.27 million.</p>



1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>A new 5 year agreement with the Commonwealth Government to be implemented for the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP).</p>	<p>\$81.4 million was allocated in 1995-96, including \$3.3 million carried over from 1994-95. 477 services were funded under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program in 1995-96. The delivery of SAAP strategies and initiatives is dependant on the commitment of the Commonwealth over the next three years to the funding of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement.</p>