

Disability ACT
2007/08 Budget Initiative – Response to Known Unmet Demand
Questions and Answers

2007/08 ACT Budget Allocation

Known Unmet Need for Disability Services	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	3,000	4,110	4,254	4,390

An increase in service capacity to meet increased demand for a range of services for young people and adults with high level intellectual and physical disabilities.

- This budget allocation represents a significant ongoing commitment to the establishment of a robust disability service sector and the needs of people with disabilities in the ACT and the families who support them.
- The budget allocation for 2007/08 will be used to respond to the needs of those people who have been previously assessed as a priority for support.
- Disability ACT is working to establish long-range responses to individual need by improving the access pathway to new funds and vacancies.
- A Registration of Interest process will be available for people seeking more intensive and ongoing disability support services. This process will be used for the allocation of these new funds and will be used more broadly as work is undertaken to establish an **access and priority system for the ACT**. To find out about the Registration process call the Disability ACT Information Service on **6207 1086**.

What's the money to be used for?

To respond to the known unmet need for people who are seeking:

- supported accommodation places
 - additional respite services or services that give a respite effect
 - community access places
 - individualised funding
- Community agencies and Disability ACT have been working with a number of people who have high support needs and diminishing natural support or have been receiving non-recurrent funding for over two years. This includes people whose support needs are escalating because of a deterioration of their physical health, people who need intensive behavioural support, carers who are aging and families who have been assessed for a priority service but have had no surity of funding. These people will be considered a priority through the open and formal allocation processes.
 - The majority of these people require accommodation support, respite services or services that give a respite effect; and community access or day-time vocational support.
 - Those people requiring support who have yet to formally enter into an assessment and priority process will be invited to register their interest with Disability ACT.

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- There will be funding opportunities over the coming months for community providers funded by Disability ACT, to improve their infrastructure, sustainability or to undertake innovative projects.
- Disability ACT has announced a Quality of Life Grant round in June to assist people for whom a small amount of funding might provide an improvement in the quality of their life in some way.

How many people will receive services

Disability ACT is working to ensure the needs of as many people as possible are taken into account and benefit from this significant opportunity.

We anticipate that a minimum of 60 additional people will be able to receive recurrent services across the accommodation, respite and community access areas as a consequence of this total funding strategy. This may change as individual's needs are assessed. In addition, approximately 35 people will benefit from the Quality of Life Grants round.

Additional Services to be Provided	
Accommodation Support	20 places
Community Access	20 611 hours
Centre based respite	1 054 bed nights
Respite in own home	1 100 hours
Community Support	170 people assisted
Nb: actual number of people supported will depend on assessed need.	

Does this cover all of the Known Unmet Need for Disability Services?

There will always be more demand for services than available resources. That is why our response must be more than a funding response. Disability ACT has a responsibility to work at different levels to achieve better outcomes for people with disabilities in our community:

We are continuing to work to establish a future growth funding stream, taking into account the:

- changing needs of people within the service system (ie as they age)
- impact of people moving through life transition points
- need for disability services to respond to *new* areas of services provision
- impact of cost and wage increases
- impact of natural support failure; and
- anticipated annual incidence of people requiring intensive services because of acquired brain injury or progressive neurological disease.

We continue to negotiate with the Australian Government through the Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA) negotiations to achieve a better contribution federally to this important sector.

Disability ACT is working in a range of ways to respond to the broad needs of people with disabilities and their families. This includes working with:

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- **families and individuals** to expand their own options and develop models of services that meet their needs and aspirations;
- **communities** (using services like the regional community services and the Local Area Coordination service) to build their capacity, to include and respond to the needs of all community members;
- **business** to expand opportunities for people with disabilities as customers, employers, employees and suppliers; and
- **disability specific agencies** to increase their capacity to respond to the needs of people with disabilities. Their capacity obviously includes responding to issues related to the need for growth funding and strategies to improve the attraction and retention of staff.

Disability ACT will work with the community sector and people with disabilities and their families over the next few months to establish an Access and Priority System, which will ensure open, transparent and equitable allocation of resources across the sector by:

- better identify funding and service priorities and ensure resources are allocated across as many people as possible to reduce unmet need and maximise outcomes from funding; and
- direct funding into the system in a proactive manner and encourage a fair distribution of funding across the sector where currently, funding pressures have meant that crisis needs generally prevail.

Disability ACT must ensure that government resources are allocated to those in greatest need and is therefore also working on an Access and Priority System through which government and community agency resources can be allocated appropriately. This will mean that people seeking more intensive community access, supported accommodation services and ISP's, will only need to register once to be prioritised for access to resources – such as vacancies or funding - as they become available.

Will funding be directed to community providers?

Yes. Disability ACT has worked closely with the majority of agencies to address cost pressures on a case-by-case basis over the past twelve months or so. We will continue to do that; in addition:

- In undertaking the assessment of need, Disability ACT will consider, with the individual and their family, whether their needs will be best met by the allocation of funding levels in the form of Individual Support Package (ISP) or block funding. Where an individual is purchasing a place from one service it is most likely that block funding will be provided.
- There will be two new services for tender – these are for a transition service for school leavers and additional respite services.
- A grant round to respond to the needs for infrastructure upgrades in the community sector will be held.

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Will there be more ISP's?

Yes. In undertaking the assessment of need for the processes above, Disability ACT will consider the individual and family's preference and will advise whether their needs will be best served by the allocation of funding in the form of ISP or block funding.

Will People who currently have ISP's be able to have their increased needs met?

The circumstances of people whose supports needs exceed the ISP funding will be included in the access and priority system process to be developed and considered in the context of future available funds.

How will the assessment process happen?

Disability will work directly with people with the highest support needs, who have already been through an application and assessment process, to advance their application. This will of course happen with the involvement of their families, advocates and service providers.

For those people who we know require support who have yet to formally register their interest with Disability ACT, we will go through an open process of application, assessment and priority.

For those people who have engaged in a formal assessment and have been identified as a priority for need, we do not anticipate the need for a re-assessment.

For those people who have not had a formal assessment or have not been prioritised, they will need to be included in a formal process.

Some people will be asked to simply update their information.

1. Disability ACT will make the application processes as simple as possible and will:
 - contact you if you do not need to re-apply as DACT will include your details into the consideration process (for example non-recurrently funded individuals and emergency recipients);
 - use information you have already provided – for example if you have submitted a support plan previously or have been working with DACT to establish a plan for the future; and
 - let you know if further information is needed
2. The assessment process used will:
 - verify need, some people under-estimate the level of support they need, some may over estimate or not be aware of other services or options that would better suit their circumstances;
 - confirm the functional need of the individual; and
 - confirm and cost the appropriate response to this need.

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Assessment processes are important to ensure resources are allocated openly and fairly. Disability ACT will work very closely with the families it knows, and with community agencies, to minimise the impact of the assessment process particularly for those people who might have been receiving funding non-recurrently for some years, are known to the department and who's needs are unlikely to significantly change. The assessment process can provide families with an opportunity to talk to an independent person about the services and supports they need.

Who will do the assessments?

As in the past, assessment processes will be undertaken by Disability ACT staff. We will also invite workers from some of the larger community agencies to assist with the process. The assessors will be experienced in assessing the needs of people with disabilities and provided with training in the assessment tool to be used.

How long will this take?

People who are receiving non-recurrent funding will have their funding continued while the assessment process is undertaken. In this way people's services will not be disrupted.

Disability ACT will provide individuals with advice about their funding and what will be happening. We will engage with individuals and the community providers over a six to eight month period to allocate these new resources. For some people with whom Disability ACT has been working and their arrangements are confirmed the provision of new services will be prompt.

Will you provide services for people with disabilities leaving school at the end of 2007?

Yes. Approximately 10 new places will be purchased for 2007 graduates. Also 10 new places in the three-year transitional service will be available from 1 February 2008.

Disability ACT is working closely with the ACT Department of Education to improve the transition of young people from the education system into their adult life. This work will continue.

The circumstances of future graduates will be included annually in the proposed access and priority system. This will enable new funding/potential growth funding/vacancies to be allocated to school leavers in a planned and equitable manner.

Please contact the Disability ACT Information Service if you have any comments or questions by:

- Telephone –(02) 6207 1086 - we have a message bank service and will return your call if we are busy when you ring or you call outside business hours.
- TTY – (02) 6205 0888
- Email – disabilityact@act.gov.au