

Strengthening the capacity of people with disabilities, their families and carers to maximise control over their lives

Approximately 9.5% of the ACT population need some form of assistance as a result of a disability. Informal networks of families, friends and community provide the majority of support to this group of people. At different times of their lives people with disabilities may need to access information and a range of services and other formal supports from both mainstream and disability specialist services.

This direction aims to strengthen the ability of people with disabilities, their families and carers to easily access relevant information and education, services and supports when they need them.

Aims

Disability ACT will support and promote whole of government and community initiatives which:

- minimise the impact of disability and promote self reliance;
- improve access and referral to formal and informal services and supports;
- improve community and government responses to people with disabilities, their families and carers; and
- increase opportunities to support people with disabilities and their families/carers through education and information, early intervention and community networking.

Objectives	Actions 2002-2004	Priorities for 2005-2008
2.1 Education and information about the range of disabilities, services and supports is available to people with disabilities, their families and carers when needed	<p>Instigated Community Partners Newsletter</p> <p>Funded projects to improve IT access and skills</p> <p>Funded project by peak body to improve self-advocacy and self-representation of people with disabilities</p> <p>Enhanced funding for disability information, education and peer support</p>	<p>Establish a single point of information dissemination for people affected by disability in the ACT</p> <p>Develop and promote a range of education programs to build capacity of individuals and families</p> <p>Develop a range of accessible forums and formats for the dissemination of information</p> <p>Continue to work with generic and specialist disability providers to enhance their ability to provide relevant information</p>
2.2 Timely referral to appropriate formal and informal services and supports	Piloting Disability ACT Information Phonenumber	<p>Pilot several different models of access and referral services</p> <p>Pilot partnership models to support volunteers to engage more extensively with people with disabilities, their families and carers</p> <p>Strengthen and promote advocates and self-advocacy organisations</p>
2.3 Facilitate community networking to foster informal supports	Developed sponsorship policy and distributed funding for organisations and individuals to facilitate and attend conferences and seminars	<p>Implementation of the <i>Caring for Carers Policy</i></p> <p>Develop a community governed sponsorship program that supports the development of skills, knowledge and networks of people with disabilities, their families and carers</p>
2.4 A diverse range of flexible support models is available to meet the changing needs of people with disabilities, their families and carers	<p>Introduced pilots for self-governed support models</p> <p>Allocated the 2003-2004 round of innovation grants for small pilot projects</p>	<p>Continue to fund and support community, consumer and family governed support models</p> <p>Fund a biennial Community Governed Grants program to trial a range of flexible support models and further develop natural supports for people with disabilities, their families and carers</p>