



Family &
Community
Services

Ready Together

Annual Report 2014



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Introduction

Ready Together was recast from the final three years of *Stronger Together 2* (ST2).

It implements the *Living Life My Way* Framework to expand individualised support and provide people with more flexibility and control.

It ties together key initiatives to facilitate the full implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in NSW such as:

- *Living Life My Way* Framework – giving people choice and control over their supports and funding arrangements,
- *Stronger Together 2* – investing \$2 billion in growth and reform of services,
- *Disability Inclusion Act* – providing safeguards, protecting people's rights and promoting community inclusion, and
- *NDIS (NSW Enabling) Act* – supporting the transition to the NDIS and enabling the transfer of services to the non-government sector.

Ready Together continues the ST2 growth and reform to 2015-16, an investment of \$2 billion over five years. This follows on from *Stronger Together*, a five year investment increase of \$1.2 billion, which commenced in 2006-07. Over the ten years from 2006-07 the *Stronger Together* and *Ready Together* reforms will have more than doubled funding for disability services in NSW.

Support to make decisions

In 2014, over \$30M was invested in decision support services, helping people build their capacity to plan for the future and use individualised funding arrangements.

The Ability Links program, a local area coordination service, supported 1,327 clients directly and made over 44,500 community contacts. The program was fully operational from 1 July 2014, with 268 Linkers funded including 47 Aboriginal Linkers.

The Early Linkers program (formerly Diagnosis Support Worker program) has been consolidated under the Decision Support banner under the administration of Ability Links. The program provides diagnosis support and local area coordination for young children and contributes to the Agency's 0-8 strategy. About \$1.5M was expended to provide over 1,400 places in 2014, with full implementation planned for 2015 to provide over 3,600 places for children and their families.

Support planning and case management services received over \$7.7M in funding including:

- Direct allocations to NGOs for the provision of support planning services,
- Extension and expansion of capacity building within the NGO case management sector, and
- Funding for Agency support planners in FACS districts.

Expanding individual supports

The *Living Life My Way* consultations affirmed the need for individualised support options to prepare people for the transition to the NDIS. In 2014, \$61M was expended across individual support programs to support over 2,800 people with accommodation in the community, community engagement and day programs, flexible respite and tailored support packages for Aboriginal people.

Investment was redirected towards increasing the number of individualised arrangements and enabling consolidation of funding for multiple supports into a single funding arrangement, including:

- 29 clients supported with a combination of a Community Support Program and Day Program funding,
- 80 clients supported with a combination of Respite and Day Program funding, and
- 382 clients supported with Supported Living Fund packages – exceeding the target of 300.

Over 1,900 places were provided to support young people with disability leaving school, through the Community Participation and Transition to Work programs, and 525 Life Choices and Active Ageing programs were delivered to support adults with disability to engage with the community.

Individual support for Aboriginal people was expanded with an investment of \$1.7M directed towards *Services Our Way*, Aboriginal Home Care service improvement, *Yarn Up* consultations and an Aboriginal employment program focussing on training assistants in nursing. 41 Aboriginal people received packaged assistance from the *Services Our Way* programs.

Supporting people in the community – across the lifespan

Provision of supports across the lifespan, focussing on key transition points, has been identified as a significant area requiring investment. Over \$75M was invested in 2014.

Over \$4M was expended on behaviour support services, funding research and development in academia, agency behaviour support staff and specialised behaviour intervention units.

The Community Justice Program provided over 100 places for people exiting the criminal justice system, expending over \$9.5M to provide a range of individualised accommodation support packages and transition to work support.

Supported accommodation was provided for over 350 people in the community with over \$46M expended across a range of accommodation support models. This included nearly \$4M in emergency response funding which provided support for over 20 people in immediate need.

A range of respite initiatives were funded at over \$13.5M, providing over 2,700 respite places for people and their families. The 2014 growth focussed on increasing individual support and recreation places and providing over 700 additional places for clients of large residential centres. Individual support packages were combined with individual day program packages with 80 respite places provided for this initiative.

Over \$1M was expended to support National Disability Strategy implementation in NSW with funding provided to:

- Trade & Investment, Arts NSW to increase the participation of people with disability in the arts sector,
- Local Government NSW to engage with the community and inform local governments of their responsibilities under the *Disability Inclusion Act*, and
- Spinal Cord Injuries Australia to continue the improvement of NSW data, specifically in relation to accessible toilets, held in the National Public Toilet Map.

Large residential centre redevelopment

The large residential centre redevelopment program continued in 2014 with over \$5M expended to fund the redevelopment of large residential centres and metro residences, including project and staffing costs. To date, 16 clients have been transitioned from NGO large residences.

Sector readiness and capacity

The non-government sector requires preparation and capacity building to ensure it, and the workforce, is ready for the full implementation of the NDIS. A number of projects are underway, with over \$8.5M expended on data development and research and over \$16M expended on workforce and industry development projects.

Supporting the transition to the NDIS

Enabling project expenditure totalled over \$2M and includes staffing and project costs associated with Person Centred Planning, the Operational Policy Governance project and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Compliance projects.

Program management, staffing and other operational overheads equated to over \$5M. This includes staffing costs associated with NDIS policy and design and program management.

Capital

Capital expenditure totalled over \$78M in 2014, expended towards accommodation infrastructure to support clients of the community justice, leaving care, community living, metro residences and large residential centre programs. Depreciation of completed *Ready Together* infrastructure and *Ready Together* funded accommodation maintenance is a recurrent expense and is included above, in the section on 'Supporting the transition to the NDIS.'

NDIS funding transition

The NDIS is being trialled in the Hunter district. Some *Ready Together* growth funding that would have been spent through *Ready Together* programs in the trial site was reallocated to support trial site NDIS participants. The amount transferred in 2014 totalled \$0.8M, which increases to \$1.4M in future years. These funds form part of the NSW Government's contribution to the NDIS.

Conclusion

The reshaped *Ready Together* targets were 19,720 places delivered within a budget of \$442.6M; actual expenditure totalled \$443M and delivered:

- Over 19,350 places across service delivery areas excluding Ability Links,
- Over 1,300 clients assisted by Ability Linkers, and
- Over 44,600 community contacts made by Ability Linkers.

Planned growth for the final two years of *Ready Together* will:

- Consolidate growth funding to date and continue to support capacity building in the NGO sector while working towards individualising and packaging funding,
- Supporting people across the lifespan,
- Supporting people to make decisions about their futures, and
- Preparing for the implementation of the full roll out of the NDIS in NSW by July 2018.