

## Strategic objective S2:

### Strong relationships with stakeholders

#### *Our clients are involved in policy and legislative developments*



We recognise the importance of engaging with our clients and stakeholders in policy and legislative developments.

During 2007–08, we involved our clients and stakeholders in relation to:

- reforming access to specialist disability services in Queensland (see pages 62–63)
- developing new legislation to safeguard the rights of adults with an intellectual or cognitive disability who exhibit challenging behaviour (see page 52)
- implementing the national action plan on mental health services (see page 41).

#### *Service users influencing service delivery*

As part of achieving certification under the Disability Sector Quality System, we implemented strategies to allow service users, families and carers to engage with us about all aspects of service delivery (see pages 67–68 for more information).

#### *Shared visions with the disability sector*



Our Shared Visions conferences and regional forums have provided a unique opportunity for people with a disability, families, carers and service providers to engage with government and each other on the key issues of concern to the Queensland disability sector.

Building on the success of previous Shared Visions conferences, we held 11 Shared Visions Regional Forums across Queensland between



*The Shared Visions initiative brings people together to network and share their views.*

#### *Shared visions*

What participants had to say about Shared Visions regional forums:

*“Great to see that the forum had an action-oriented focus and that the best outcomes can come from the local community.”*

*Mackay forum participant*

*“More families need to attend gatherings like these — so vital and important.”*

*Toowoomba forum participant*

*“I have learnt a great deal and will take this away with me. I am also encouraged by the passionate people working in the disability sector and the positive initiatives.”*

*Sunshine Coast forum participant*

30 July and 24 October 2007 at a cost of \$0.25 million. A one-day forum was held in each of our department's regions, with more than 1150 people participating in the forums.

The regional forums provided an opportunity to draw on the knowledge of people from throughout the sector and examine issues and opportunities from a range of perspectives. Participants discussed the following themes, which were identified from the 2006 statewide disability conference:

- supporting inclusive communities
- building sustainable informal networks
- enhancing service provision through technology and collaboration.

The outcomes of the Shared Visions regional forums will help us to develop responses through policy and programs.

### ***Engaging with our multicultural clients and stakeholders***

Queensland is fortunate to have one of the most diverse populations in Australia. We strive to develop equitable policies, programs and services that meet the needs of all people with a disability and their families, carers and communities.

*Our client service charter in practice*, launched in November 2007, embodies our commitment. Cultural awareness is one of our core values, supported by equitable access to services and programs regardless of cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds.

The Cultural Diversity Statement and the *Multicultural Action Plan 2005–09* highlight how we will action our commitment. The plan sets the agenda for promoting cultural responsiveness and ensuring Queenslanders



*We are committed to ensuring all Queenslanders, regardless of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, have access to services.*

from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds have fair access to disability services and programs.

Our key achievements during 2007–08 include:

- allocating funding of \$0.6 million for the Interpreting and Translating Assistance Strategy, which assists non-government service providers meet the cultural and linguistically diverse needs of people with a disability
- providing \$0.2 million on a recurrent basis to the community-based organisation, AMPARO Advocacy, to provide both individual advocacy in the Brisbane geographical area and advocacy at a statewide level, to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- spending approximately \$46 700 on translation and interpreter services for departmentally delivered services
- allocating \$1.3 million in additional recurrent funds to establish the culturally and linguistically diverse advisory services under our Home and Community Care Program. The funding also helped to purchase client care coordination services across the state.

### Looking forward

In 2008–09, we will:

- deliver a Shared Visions statewide conference in Brisbane
- implement our new *Multicultural Action Plan 2008–09* to further respond to cultural diversity in our service delivery
- contribute to the whole-of-government Queensland reconciliation action plan to advance reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## Strategic objective S3:

### Partners in service delivery

#### *Coordinated services across government*

We work in partnership with Queensland Government agencies to ensure quality in service delivery for our shared clients. We achieve this through memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with a number of departments.

Our MOU with the **Department of Housing** is focused on coordinating timely service responses for people in need of services from both agencies. In 2007–08, we achieved coordinated service responses for clients exiting the Princess Alexandra Hospital's Spinal Cord Injuries Unit. In addition, we finalised a schedule to assist younger people with a disability residing in aged care facilities move to more appropriate accommodation in the community. Protocols were developed for sharing client information and for engaging with decision-makers.

In addition, through the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program, a separate MOU with the Department of Housing allows for the contracting and delivery of major home modification services through councils and non-government organisations. In 2007–08, HACC allocated a recurrent increase of \$0.46 million per year to purchase additional major home modifications. This took the recurrent funding allocated by HACC for major home modifications to \$5.7 million.

We work closely with **Queensland Health** under an MOU to improve services to: younger people at risk of entering, or inappropriately placed in, residential aged care facilities; people with acquired brain injuries; people with spinal injuries; and people with a disability residing in Queensland Health facilities. A key initiative for 2007–08 included conducting research into the needs of people with disabilities residing in eight non-acute Queensland Health facilities. The research was a first step in exploring community access and accommodation and support options.

Our MOU with Queensland Health's service districts includes direct HACC services such as allied health care, domestic assistance, nursing care and social support. In 2007–08, more than \$65 million was allocated to the health service districts of Queensland Health.

We worked with the **Department of Corrective Services** to provide a better managed joint response to offenders who have an intellectual disability and/or cognitive impairment.

In line with the government's priority of protecting the safety of children and young people, our MOU with the **Department of Child Safety** supports effective collaboration to achieve quality services for children and young people with a disability who are at risk of entering, or are in, the child protection system. A focus in 2007–08 was to establish a process to support young people with a disability who are in the care of the state to receive appropriate disability services on reaching adulthood.

Our MOU with the **Department of Education, Training and the Arts** aims to develop a skilled workforce in the non-government sector to deal with disability sector demands. In 2007–08, the two agencies developed and implemented the Disability Services Skilling Plan. Initiatives under this plan included an Indigenous mentoring program, a training assistance grant and a professional development scholarship. We will contribute \$4.5 million over three years to continue implementing the plan.

### *Disability service plans embedded across the Queensland Government*

The *Disability Services Act 2006* requires all state government departments to have a disability service plan.

In 2007–08, we led the coordination of disability service plans across 24 government departments to ensure a whole-of-government



*Our partnerships deliver real outcomes for Queenslanders.*

approach to strengthening services to people with a disability. Actions from the plans include:

- Queensland Transport continuing the implementation of wheelchair accessible taxis for regional Queenslanders
- the Department of Emergency Services' strategies to increase the participation of people with a disability in safety education and awareness initiatives.

Departments report annually to us on the implementation of their disability service plans. The plans express the intention for continuous action to ensure equitable access to government services. We will collate the reports into a single document to report to the Queensland Government.

Our department's disability service plan commits us to delivering quality services and building supportive communities for people with a disability, their families and carers. Our key achievements from implementing our disability service plan in 2007–08 include:

- expanding early intervention services for adults with a disability and their families
- strengthening the capacity of local communities to welcome and include people with a disability in everyday life through the Building Supportive Communities Grants initiative
- supporting the implementation of the *Disability Services Act 2006* through stakeholder information, awareness raising and training strategies and resources
- developing and implementing memoranda of understanding with relevant government agencies to support cross-departmental activities that affect people with a disability.

### ***Service delivery through funded non-government service providers***

Non-government service providers are our partners in service delivery. We are committed to strengthening their performance and accountability. Pages 56–58 outlines our achievement in improving funding, acquisition, allocation and accountability for non-government service providers.

## Looking forward

In 2008–09, we will:

- work with other Queensland Government departments on targeted initiatives such as:
  - improving services and protocols for clients and potential clients of our department and Queensland Health who may have a mental illness and psychiatric disability or have challenging behaviour with a mental health condition
  - enabling appropriate case management of offenders with challenging behaviour under the MOU with the Department of Corrective Services
- develop the first annual report for the disability service plans in conjunction with all Queensland Government departments. The report will identify the outcomes achieved for people with a disability and inform the development of future plans for government
- work in partnership with Queensland Government agencies including Queensland Health, the Department of Housing and other stakeholders to explore alternative accommodation, support and community access options for people with a disability
- develop a Home and Community Care schedule in conjunction with the Department of Housing under the MOU
- contribute to the development of a compact between the Queensland Government and non-government service providers — an agreement that will guide how the government and not-for-profit human services sector work together
- continue to develop early intervention responses.

## Strategic objective S4:

### Supportive communities

#### *Rural and regional Queensland supported*

Our department is committed to supporting all Queenslanders with a disability, including those who live in rural and regional Queensland. We deliver and fund services to people through 18 service centres across 10 regions.

Our Local Area Coordination program has been specifically designed to help families and people with a disability living in locations where access to support and services can be limited. During 2007–08, our 50 local area coordinators and supervisors — who are located in 35 regional, rural and remote locations across Queensland — supported 880 people with a disability and their families to access information and mainstream services such as education, health, housing and transport. This represented an increase of 30 people compared to last year. Where services were not available, our coordinators worked with the community to develop ways in which people with a disability could be supported.



*Our local area coordination services provide local support for people with a disability and their families.*

Our total budget for this program was \$6.5 million in 2007–08. In recent years we received additional funding, which enabled us to expand the number of local area coordinators and support more people with a disability. Local area coordinators are now based in a diverse range of communities, including Moa and Thursday Islands, Goondiwindi and Longreach.

### *Fast fact*

The Local Area Coordination program provides significant support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a disability, with approximately 23 per cent of all people registered with the program identifying as Indigenous.

Other support provided specifically for people in regional and rural areas in 2007–08 includes:

- the outreach services of Family and Early Childhood Services teams
- continued funding of respite services, such as \$1.2 million to continue providing respite services for older parent carers
- \$1.7 million to support an additional 53 families through our Family Support Program, as well as providing more than 330 families with one-off funding to purchase aids and equipment and receive time-limited therapy interventions
- opportunities for seeking and receiving advice on disability issues through the Regional Disability Councils that provide an important link between government and community stakeholders on the development of key disability policy and legislation.

### ***Community awareness of disability issues increased***

Raising community awareness of disability issues and improving the public's perception of disability are priorities for the Queensland Government. Our department works to improve the community's understanding of physical, intellectual and other disabilities. We also work with people with a disability to help them break down barriers to community inclusion and participation.

A major annual community awareness activity is Disability Action Week. The 2007–08 theme, *See beyond the disability*, encouraged the community to focus on a person's achievements and abilities.

With a budget of \$0.35 million in 2007–08, we funded the state's Disability Action Week events, which included promoting more than 126 community events.

### ***The 2007 Disability Action Week celebrated diversity in communities and recognised that people with a disability have much to contribute to their local communities.***

Our *Share Your Story* calendar is one of our most popular communication tools. The calendar provides an opportunity for people with a disability, as well as their families, carers and service providers, to tell their stories in their own words. The unique stories empower people with a disability to provide insights into, and increase understanding of, the experience of disability.

Our *Connect* magazine aimed to bring our disability community together with information, news, events and developments on a wide range of subjects. The magazine examined disability issues, profiled people with a disability and provided information about departmental activities. The magazine had more than 15 000 subscribers.



### ***Kathy's story***

Kathy, a young woman whose life is filled with study, work and friends, is featured in the 2008 *Share Your Story* calendar through which Queenslanders share their experience of living with a disability.

"I think that people with a disability have the same capacity to have a fulfilling life as everyone else," Kathy said.

"I don't let my disability stand in the way of furthering my skills and abilities so that I can work to my best."

We also promote inclusive communities through the Building Supportive Communities Grants initiative. During 2007–08, we provided grants to support 36 community events and initiatives across Queensland. We provided six grants totalling \$80 000 for activities statewide. Many initiatives funded in 2007–08 will be rolled out during Disability Action Week in September 2008 or on International Day of People with a Disability in December 2008. In this way, the grants encourage widespread community involvement in events that highlight the contribution of people with a disability to our community.

## Looking forward

In 2008–09, we will host a disability conference in Brisbane to provide a forum for the sector to contribute to policy setting. The conference will also allow for discussion of interest to the disability sector.



*The former Queensland Governor, Quentin Bryce (right), officially opened Disability Action Week at the state launch in Hervey Bay, where renowned local photographer Mark Farrell (left) held a workshop on photographic skills.*

## Making a difference through grants to build supportive communities

Access Arts, an organisation that provides training and tutorial workshops in a wide range of performance and graphic arts, received funding of \$14 850 to develop and host 30 workshops and exhibitions.

The project aims to provide accessible workshops to increase the skills of artists with a disability and display the art works in a series of exhibitions at Brisbane Powerhouse, Metro Gallery and in participating communities throughout Queensland.

*An example of the type of initiative funded through our Building Supportive Communities Grants initiative in 2007–08 is the Crossing Divides State of the Arts initiative, coordinated by Access Arts.*

