



Katy Gallagher MLA

DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

MINISTER FOR HEALTH

MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

MINISTER FOR DISABILITY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

MEMBER FOR MOLONGLO

Mr Elton Humphery
Committee Secretary
Community Affairs Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Mr Humphery,

On Friday, 13 October 2006, I presented a verbal submission to the Senate *Inquiry into the funding and operation of the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement*.

Please find enclosed my response to three questions taken on notice as requested by the Inquiry. I have also asked my Department to forward you the same electronically.

I also take this opportunity to clarify my response to Senator Adams' question (transcript page: CA 64) concerning whether the Australian Capital Territory has signed the Commonwealth/ACT Bilateral Agreement for Helping Younger People with disability in Residential Aged Care. This Agreement has been considered by the ACT Cabinet and is expected to be signed presently.

Yours sincerely

Katy Gallagher MLA
Minister for Disability and Community Services

9/11/06

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

Phone (02) 6205 0840 Fax (02) 6205 3030 Email: gallagher@act.gov.au

Can the Australian Capital Territory please confirm the analysis in the table on page 23 of the Western Australia Government's submission (Submission 3)?

Western Australia's submission contains a transposition error in the table on page 23: the Commonwealth's *Actual Contributions for 2006-07* to the Northern Territory should read \$6,470,000 and to the ACT should read \$8,686,000 (as per Schedule A1).

Can the Australian Capital Territory please confirm that information on Local Area Coordination is on the DHCS website?

Information on Local Area Coordination is available on the DHCS website at:

- LAC Consultations Summary Report: [http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/Publications/LAC Consultations Summary Report.doc](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/Publications/LAC%20Consultations%20Summary%20Report.doc)
- LAC Consultations Final Report: [http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/Publications/LAC Consultations Final Report.doc](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/Publications/LAC%20Consultations%20Final%20Report.doc)

Can the Australian Capital Territory please confirm that the \$1 million in the 2000-01 Budget on autism has been spent and in what areas/programs?

The Australian Capital Territory confirms that it has spent the 2000-01 Budget commitment of \$1 million over four years to provide integrated clinical and community services for children with complex and behaviour and support issues, particularly for children with autism and cerebral palsy. A summary of this expenditure is as follows:

- In 2001, **\$125,000** recurrent (half the commitment over four years) was transferred to the Community Health and Disability Services (now part of Therapy ACT) to development of the Behavioural Management Program. The Behavioural Management Program consisted of a .8 FTE psychologist and a .8 FTE social worker. Funding for the Program covered staff and administration costs. The Program worked in schools with children with autism spectrum disorder and cerebral palsy who have severe behaviour problems.
- Another **\$125,000** (the other half of the 2000-01 Budget commitment) was used as recurrent funding over four years to increase the number of Therapy ACT therapy staff that provide services to specialist schools.

In addition to the 2000-01 Budget commitment, the ACT Government has invested further funds into the provision of disability services to children with autism:

- In 2000-01, **\$50,000** recurrent for the provision of therapy services commenced for children with autism within primary schools;
- In 2002-03, **\$500,000** recurrent for the provision of early diagnosis and assessment of autism and expansion to the early intervention programs.
With the transfer of these therapy services from the Department of Education and Training (DET) to the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services and the establishment of Therapy ACT:
 - o **\$305,000** recurrent stayed with DET to increase the staffing for autism specific early intervention programs; and
 - o **\$195,000** recurrent was transferred to Therapy ACT to fund the provision of staff, resources and training for the autism diagnosis service;

- In 2004-05, **\$318,000** was allocated to increase psychology staff for autism assessment and diagnosis; and
- Current government initiatives include **\$1.7 million** over four years (2005-09) to assist families with children who have intensive support needs, including those children with challenging behaviours, in particular autism; and
- In 2005-06, **\$200,000** recurrent was provided to Therapy ACT to provide an assessment and short-term trial of equipment services for people with high and complex needs. A range of Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) devices are included in this equipment pool and some of them may be of use to children with autism.