



Warren Pitt MP
Member for Mulgrave



**Queensland
Government**

Our reference: DSQ 00873-2006

**Minister for Communities,
Disability Services, Seniors and Youth**

- 5 DEC 2006

Committee Secretary
Community Affairs Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretariat

Inquiry into funding and operation of the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement

The Queensland Government appeared as a witness before the Senate Community Affairs Committee regarding an inquiry into the funding and operation of the Commonwealth-State/Territory Disability Agreement on Friday 17 November 2006.

During the course of the Queensland Government giving evidence before the Senate Committee, Queensland was asked two questions which were taken on notice. Please find these responses attached.

Queensland would like to request a correction to the transcript of proceedings from the Queensland public hearing. The very minor change to the transcript is also attached.

If you require any further information in relation to this matter, please contact Ms Carolyn Honeywill, Director, Governmental Relations Branch, Strategic Policy, Disability Services Queensland on (07) 3247 5112.

Yours sincerely

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Minister for Communities, Disability Services, Seniors and Youth

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Question on Notice

Asked on 17 November 2006

Senate Committee inquiring into the funding and operation of the Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement asked the Queensland Government -

How far below the national benchmark is Queensland in relation to funding of Disability Services?

ANSWER

The Queensland Government has made significant injections of funds to disability services across the five-year term of the Agreement. The State has increased its contribution from \$238 million in 2002-03 to \$516 million in 2006-07, an increase of \$277 million or 116%.

Queensland had the third highest percentage growth in real expenditure (10.2%) between the period 2003-04 and 2004-05, behind SA (18.6%) and NT (12.9%) and ahead of ACT (7.4%), Tas (6.3%), Vic (4.8%), WA (3.4%) and NSW (1.9%)¹.

Percentage growth in real expenditure between 2001-02 and 2004-05 Queensland (29.2%) is greater than the growth rates for Victoria (17.4%) and NSW (14.3%) for the same period.

In 2004-2005, Queensland had the second lowest amount of funding available per capita of the potential population (\$2,878), second only to the Northern Territory (\$2,794). All other states had a minimum of \$4,000 per capita of the potential population, with Victoria having the most (\$5,555). *Source: CSTDA Schedule A1 and CSTDA Annual Public Report 2004-2005.* The "potential population" is a broad estimate of the number of people with the potential to require specialist disability services at some time. There is considerable variation in the amount of government expenditure (which can be equated to "amount of funding available") per capita of the potential population across jurisdictions.

The average amount spent per service user varies across jurisdictions and impacts on the number of people able to access services (and hence the number of total service users). For example, Victoria had a relatively low average cost (or amount spent) per service user (\$16,931). This means that Victoria was able to provide services to a relatively large number of service users. In contrast, Queensland had a relatively high cost per service user (\$26,594), meaning that Queensland was able to service a lower number of service users.

The 2006 Report on Government Services illustrates Queensland's continued support of people with disabilities, their families and carers within Queensland.

¹ The Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision publishes the Report on Government Services (ROGS) annually to provide information on the effectiveness and efficiency of Commonwealth, State and Territory government services. ROGS includes a chapter relating to the provision of services for people with a disability (excluding specialist psychiatric services) and includes data collected through the redeveloped Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement National Minimum Data Set. ROGS 2006, released on 31 January 2006, includes government funding data and government expenditure for the periods 2000 – 2001 through to 2004-2005 (where available).

Question on Notice

Asked on 17 November 2006

Senate Committee inquiring into the funding and operation of the Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement asked the Queensland Government -

Does Queensland have a scheme to assist people with a disability meet hospital and medical appointments such as the Patient Assisted Transport Scheme (PATS) in Western Australia?

ANSWER:

Transport is essential for people to access services and facilities, within and beyond their local community, especially given Queensland's regionalised population distribution. Without appropriate and affordable transport the quality of life for people with a disability can be seriously reduced.

While Queensland does not operate a Patient Assisted Transport Scheme, there are a number of similar schemes which address the needs of people with a disability reaching their desired destination. The St John Ambulance Australia (Queensland) Transport Access Project and the Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS) Transport Options Project have pooled their transport knowledge and produced the *2004 Transport Options and Access Guide*. This guide, which can be downloaded at www.translink.qld.gov.au/AccessibleTransport, brings together a wealth of transport related information in a handy booklet format.

Details of the various schemes which are in place in Queensland to assist people with a disability meet hospital and medical appointments are listed in the *2004 Transport Options and Access Guide*. Some of these schemes are:

- the *Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme (PTSS)* operated by Queensland Health, provides direct assistance to patients and in some cases their carers to enable patients to access specialist medical services that are not available within 50 kms of the patient's nearest public hospital. The scheme subsidises travel and accommodation costs (after 4 nights) to eligible patients and their carers (escorts). The patient must meet eligibility criteria and be a permanent resident of Queensland.
- the Queensland Ambulance Service provides a fully assisted, door to door non-urgent health transport service to individuals who meet the eligibility criteria. The eligibility criteria make specific reference to people with a disability.
- the Department of Veterans' Affairs provides door to door transport or a reimbursement of travel costs between home and an approved health care provider.
- Queensland Transport operates the *Taxi Subsidy Scheme* and the *Travel Pass for the Visually Impaired* to assist people with disabilities reach their destination.

There are also a number of community groups throughout Queensland which provide community transport services for people with a disability to reach medical and hospital facilities and social and recreational activities. Details of these services are also listed in the *2004 Transport Options and Access Guide*.