

NEW SOUTH WALES

SOCIAL JUSTICE

1996-97

Budget Statement

Preface

This Government has a clear commitment to fairness and equality, a desire to see a decent and dignified life for all people and a goal of attaining a truly civil and just society.

The social justice agenda this Government is setting will be of clear importance for the rest of the country. There is an immense responsibility involved in our being, for a time, the sole Labor Government in Australia. It gives New South Wales the opportunity to demonstrate the importance of a clear social justice strategy in achieving long lasting change and a fairer and richer society.

Our Government will soon be releasing its social justice directions paper. This paper will outline the Government's broad approach and detail reforms to government processes designed to improve social justice outcomes. It will reveal strategies to tackle areas of manifest social injustice.

The directions paper will place an emphasis on promoting the fullest opportunities for people to participate in the community, be consulted on decisions that affect them and enjoy an enhanced quality of life.

The 1996-97 Budget also reflects this emphasis. This Statement outlines new education and training measures so that people from all backgrounds and circumstances will have better access to the knowledge and skills they need to participate fully in the community.

The Budget also provides for increased access to health services, particularly for people with mental illness and for rural and Aboriginal communities. The unequal outcomes experienced by Aboriginal people compared to the general population is of great concern. This Statement details a number of initiatives to help redress this, including the implementation of the Aboriginal Education Policy.

Other new Budget measures will ensure that people with a disability, ethnic groups and older people are more fully included in the life of the community. The Statement also contains further initiatives for women, families and young people, and it adds to the substantial package of measures recently announced to protect children against abuse, with further initiatives to support families and children.

The Statement builds on the commitments made in last year's Budget and includes a report on outcomes to date from these commitments. We commend the Carr Government's second Social Justice Budget Statement to you.

Bob Carr

Andrew Refshauge

Premier

Deputy Premier

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1. INTRODUCTION

THE NSW APPROACH TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social justice is one of the New South Wales Labor Government's four key themes, along with its commitments to economic development, environmental protection and financial responsibility. The Government's objective is to enhance the well-being of the community through developing and implementing all of its policies in line with these four themes, as interdependent and mutually reinforcing policies.

Social justice means the attainment of a fairer society. This requires fairness in the distribution of resources, rights and opportunities in order to foster a society where people enjoy greater equity, freedom and security.

The major aim of the Government's social justice strategy is to enhance equity between individuals and groups in our community. The Government aims to ensure that all people, but especially those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged, have genuine opportunities and the means to make choices in everyday life.

Social justice is relevant to all areas of government. The broad scope of the Government's conception of social justice also means that it is not, and cannot be, a responsibility that only rests with governments. Every member of a society not only has rights, but obligations and responsibilities to help improve our quality of life. Social justice is therefore an issue for the community as a whole, and social justice objectives can only be achieved if the community and government work in partnership.

State governments have a leading role to play in enhancing social justice within the framework of Australia's Federal system. The States are close to their communities and have the major responsibility for the delivery of the nation's public services, including education, health care, housing, urban planning, transport, community and legal services. Through their direction and management of these basic public services, the States are critical to fostering greater equality of opportunity and outcomes for people. The States also have a wider role to play, as many important advancements in social justice can only be achieved through all of Australia's governments entering into co-operative national arrangements.

THE NSW SOCIAL JUSTICE STRATEGY

The Government has instituted a range of measures to ensure that its social justice strategy is clear and coherent, and implemented in a coordinated manner. The main central initiative has been the establishment of the **Cabinet Committee on Social Justice**. The Cabinet Committee oversees and coordinates the development and implementation of the Government's social justice policies and strategies, both in the short and longer

term, and is chaired by the Deputy Premier. The establishment of this Committee was a major step in overcoming past compartmentalised approaches to social policy development and monitoring.

The social justice strategy is based on the application of **four social justice principles** determined by the Cabinet Committee:

- Equity:** there should be fairness in the distribution of resources, particularly for those most in need;
- Rights:** equality of rights should be established and promoted, and there should be improved accountability for decision makers;
- Access:** all people should have fairer access to the economic resources, services and rights essential to improving their quality of life;
- Participation:** all people should have the fullest possible opportunity to genuinely participate in the community and be consulted on decisions which affect their lives.

Through the practical application of these principles, NSW will become a richer society: richer in terms of social cohesiveness, well-being, lifestyles and culture. The application of the principles will also enhance the State's economic performance, as good economic outcomes can not only pay for, but depend upon good social outcomes.

These principles will underpin a major **social justice directions paper** to be released in 1996. The Cabinet Committee on Social Justice is overseeing preparation of this paper, which will present the Government's longer term social justice strategy, including its social justice priorities.

The Government has also established the **Social Justice Reference Group**, which is the first body of its kind in NSW. The Reference Group is serviced by The Cabinet Office and reports to the Premier through the Deputy Premier on matters referred to it by the Government. It is the main source of community advice to the Government on major and strategic social justice issues.

PURPOSE OF THE STATEMENT

The Social Justice Budget Statement is a key part of the Government's social justice strategy. The first New South Wales Social Justice Budget Statement was released with the Budget papers in October 1995. Further Social Justice Budget Statements will be released annually to identify the principal social policy initiatives for the coming year.

Each Budget will be informed by the Government's social justice strategy. The forthcoming release of the Government's social justice directions paper will enable Social Justice Budget Statements to more fully outline how the social justice strategy is linked to the formulation of the year's Budget priorities.

This Statement builds on the initial 1995 Budget Statement by providing an account of the outcomes from the previous year.

Reporting on the achievement of the social justice strategy will also be further refined with each Budget Statement as the Government further develops an outcomes approach to the delivery of its programs and services. The Government will progressively ensure that, where relevant and practical, policy objectives are stated in terms of the measurable outcomes to be achieved.

The Social Justice Reference Group will have an important role to play in the development of the social justice strategy, including the forthcoming social justice directions paper. It will also assist with monitoring the achievement of the objectives and commitments contained within the strategy. It should be noted that the Reference Group has not been involved in the formulation of the 1996-97 Budget Statement. In future years it is anticipated that the Group will have the opportunity to give full consideration to detailed reporting on the strategy.

2. SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES FOR 1996-97

Social justice initiatives for the 1996-97 Budget have been developed to ensure that effective responses to priority social issues are in place. The initiatives are presented in sections focusing on key social justice areas. These areas are not an exhaustive list of all the social justice issues in the community or the Government's initiatives. Rather, they reflect the major social justice components of the 1996-97 Budget.

IMPLEMENTING HEALTH PRIORITIES

Health care is central to our well-being. The total health Budget for 1996-97 (recurrent and capital) is **\$5.616 billion**. Since coming to office the Government has increased the health allocation by approximately \$358 million, which is equivalent to a 6.8 per cent increase.

Major general health initiatives include **approximately \$42 million for major capital projects** to commence in 1996-97, including an upgrade of the Blue Mountains hospital, Broken Hill hospital redevelopment, an upgrade of Calvary hospital to provide new aged and rehabilitation services, rationalisation and redevelopment of infrastructure in the Central Sydney Area and redevelopment of a clinical services block at Manning Base hospital.

Additional funding will be provided to all Areas to ensure hospitals across New South Wales comply with benchmarks on waiting times for elective surgery and in emergency departments.

In addition to general health initiatives, four key health areas have been targeted for 1996-97. These are the health of Aboriginal people, mental health and community and rural health services.

Rural and Community Health

During 1995-96 the Government launched an economic statement for health which outlined new funding arrangements to achieve **a more equitable distribution of health resources around the State**. These new arrangements will begin to be implemented during 1996.

Following on from the Minister's philosophy statement on community health announced in May 1996, New South Wales Health will develop a **policy statement on community health** during 1996-97. There will be extensive community consultation in the development of the policy and subsequent initiatives.

The Government also released its vision for rural health which will allow for the better planning and networking of health services. It will guarantee **\$15 million additional funding during 1996-97 for rural Area Health Services** through new funding arrangements, which will allocate health funds based on the size and composition of local populations.

Over the next three years additional **multipurpose services** will be established in rural centres, including Oberon, Dorrigo, Wentworth, Wilcannia, Tumbarumba, Culcairn, Trangie and Trundle. This will allow for the delivery of better health services in rural areas, with accident and emergency, acute care, community health and aged care services being located together and under the same management.

Enhancement funding of **\$2 million has been allocated to 12 trial tele-medicine pilot projects** which enable remote and rural health services to tap into the resources of the major Sydney teaching hospitals.

Another important initiative is the allocation of **\$2.153 million in 1996-97 as part of a 5 year program to achieve a sustainable reduction in the concentration of lead** in current and future generations of children living in Broken Hill. A range of interventions, such as city greening and rehabilitation programs and incorporating lead reduction programs into established health and environmental services, will be evaluated and refined to effectively reduce blood lead levels.

Aboriginal Health

The Government fully recognises the inequities faced by Aboriginal people in the delivery of, and access to, health services and is taking a broad, co-ordinated approach to improving their health through New South Wales Health's Partnership Agreement with the Aboriginal Health Resource Co-operative.

An additional **\$1 million** will be provided in 1996-97 to **key areas of Aboriginal health**, resulting in an annual recurrent allocation of \$2 million. The key areas include environmental health, improved services through Aboriginal community controlled health services and the implementation of targeted policies.

\$1.8 million will also be provided in 1996-97 for capital projects, including the development of **community health posts in isolated Aboriginal communities**.

Mental Health

People seriously affected by mental illness comprise one of the most disadvantaged groups in our society. Suicide is one of the major causes of mortality for people seriously affected by mental illness, particularly those experiencing severe depression or schizophrenia.

In 1996-97, **additional funds of \$10 million will be provided to reduce the gaps and inadequacies in services for people with a mental illness** identified in the Federal Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's report on the Human Rights of People with Mental Illness.

The mental health goals and targets process has resulted in the establishment of the Government's **suicide prevention strategy**, which will be completed in 1996.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Families need support to function well and to help provide a nurturing environment for their children. In most instances, support comes from the informal support structures of the extended family or local community. The Government also has a role in supporting families and, where necessary, intervening to protect the interests of children. In addition, the Government is committed to ensuring young people are supported and encouraged.

In April 1996, the Premier announced a **comprehensive package of measures to help overcome the human problems caused by child abuse**.

The Government will install **closed circuit television systems over the next 3 years, at a cost of \$2.5 million**, in courts in all major locations across New South Wales and in the Children's Courts. This will ensure that country children have the same support while giving evidence as city children.

The Government is **establishing the Child Protection Enforcement Agency, within the Police Service**. The Agency's estimated annual Budget is \$3.4 million. At present the agency has 24 staff and by 1 July 1996 it will be at full capacity with 53 staff.

The Government will **expand the Health Department's Physical and/or emotional Abuse and Neglect of Children (PANOC) service by \$300,000 per annum**. Additional PANOC co-ordinators will be appointed to increase access to health services for young people in Broken Hill, Taree, Bourke and Moree. Aboriginal metropolitan PANOC workers will be appointed in the South-West and Central Area Health Services.

Through a **\$3.6 million three-year package, the Government will establish an After-Care Centre and appoint Leaving Care Workers** to provide support, advice and initial follow-up for young people who are leaving care or who have been in care.

The Government will **fund an independent information, referral and counselling service for the six months from May 1996** for people who have experienced abuse

while previously in care. This service will be incorporated into the After-Care Centre once it has been established.

Under the package, an extra **\$300,000 per annum will be provided to the State-wide Network For Young People In Care (SNYPIC)** which will act as an advocate for children in care, run holiday camps, and involve children in decision-making processes which affect them.

The Government will establish a **Substitute Care Ministerial Advisory Committee**, to be chaired by Father John Usher, to provide advice on an appropriate permanent independent monitoring mechanism for substitute care.

In addition, the Government is undertaking a review of the recruitment and screening of staff of the Department of Community Services, its funded services and other agencies involved in the care of children. **The circumstances of all children in foster and residential care will also be reviewed** to ensure that their care is appropriate and that their individual needs are being met. The Government will ensure that all children in care know their right to report any mistreatment.

To assist young people, a **Youth Liaison Officer will be appointed to the Ombudsman's Office (\$60,000 per annum for two years)** to implement programs to improve access to, and awareness of, the Ombudsman's Office among young people.

The Government will provide **\$300,000 annually to provide stronger peer support** and improved information services to the 4,000 approved **foster carers** in New South Wales.

Under the 1996-97 Budget, the Government will increase the Standard Age Related Fostering Allowance for children aged 12 to 17 years. This is in recognition of the fact that, although allowances for children under 12 years of age are comparable to those in other States, New South Wales rates for adolescent children have been low compared to the national average. Allowances for children aged 12-14 years and 16-17 will increase by 26 per cent and 32 per cent respectively. Rates for children aged 15 years of age will now be the same as those for 16-17 year olds, an increase of 54 per cent. As well as establishing fairer fostering allowances, the changes should help to rectify the shortage of foster carers for adolescents. These measures will cost **\$3.2 million per annum.**

Following on from last year's decision to appoint 60 new child protection specialists, in response to increased demand for child protection services, **45 additional field staff** will be appointed during 1996-97 to provide child protection services at the point of notification of abuse. In addition, **51 new District Officer positions** will be created to improve the Department's response to substitute care in line with the strategic directions for the substitute care program. **\$4 million has been allocated in 1996-97 for the 96 new staff (\$6 million per annum in a full year).**

The Government recognises the importance of providing a comprehensive child protection response. This approach is outlined in the draft document *Strategic Directions in Child Protection*. **In light of this, the Government will provide \$2 million per annum for family initiatives to develop individual service packages to strengthen families, thus reducing the risks to children and the likelihood of statutory intervention.** This represents an investment in early intervention for families.

Families will also be supported in their role of caring for children through the provision of **extra child care places**. Under the Commonwealth/State Expanded National Child Care Program, 1,009 long day care places will be provided in 1996-97 at a **recurrent cost of \$1 million and a \$9 million capital cost**. The Government is also developing a new framework for children's services in New South Wales which will focus on achieving greater fairness in the distribution of available places and resources. Using the framework and identified high need areas, additional pre-school, occasional child care, mobile child care and vacation places will be developed.

Further measures to assist children and young people are outlined in other sections.

REBUILDING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Government is building a high quality and fair education and training system so that people from all backgrounds and circumstances will have equal access to the knowledge, skills and understandings they need to participate fully and successfully in the community. The total current and capital payments by the Minister for Education and Training in the 1996-97 Budget is estimated at approximately **\$5.217 billion**, an increase of \$165 million on the previous year's allocation.

An amount of almost **\$167 million will be available over the three years from 1996-97 for the Government's school technology program (\$29.6 million in 1996-97)**. This will supply more computers to schools, provide for more teacher training in the use of computers and linkages to the Internet.

A **major review of the HSC**, involving extensive community consultation, commenced in 1995 and a Green Paper *Their Future: Options for Reform of the HSC* was released in May 1996. A White Paper will be released in 1997.

Language fellowships in foreign countries (\$2.5 million over four years, and over \$500,000 in 1996-97) will provide up to 600 students from all backgrounds with the opportunity to develop enhanced language proficiency by undertaking intensive in-country language study.

To further improve educational outcomes **42 Community Language Teacher Positions** were allocated to schools at the beginning of the 1996 school year. **18 positions will also be allocated each year from 1997 to 1999.** The initiative will allow students to develop literacy skills in their home language. Some of the literacy skills developed in the home language will be transferable to literacy development in English.

The **Aboriginal Education Policy** will be implemented during 1996-97 following its launch in February 1996. The Department of School Education will commit **\$5.7 million** to support the implementation of the policy in 1996-97. This will enable the Department to promote the educational achievement of Aboriginal students, and to educate all students about Aboriginal Australia through initiatives targeting curriculum/Aboriginal staff development, literacy and numeracy, early childhood education, cultural programs, Juvenile Justice Centre education and community education development.

Additional funding is also being provided for **drug and alcohol education programs (\$1 million per year over 5 years)** to strengthen drug education in schools, improve co-ordination of drug education services to schools and improve access to support at school for students at risk of drug abuse.

The Government has instituted a study into the **integration of students with disabilities** in Government Schools, which is due for completion towards mid 1996. The outcomes of the study will inform the development of strategies in this area.

A total of **\$6.862 million** will be provided in 1996-97 to fund **programs which assist disadvantaged young people by improving their literacy, numeracy and self esteem.** These include the *Helping Early School Leavers Program*, the *Circuit Breaker Program*, which assists secondary students of non-English speaking background, and the *Time Out Program*, which assists chronic non-school attenders and students experiencing behaviour problems in Years 7 and 8. It also includes the *Koori Youth Program* which is a response to the low school retention and participation rates in all education and training options and the high unemployment rates of Aboriginal people.

The Government is progressing towards its target of **5,000 additional State funded TAFE student places in 1997.** These places will be allocated to regions experiencing increased student and industry demand to ensure students have access to quality education and training opportunities in the areas of the State where they are needed most.

In addition, the Government is to develop a **charter for equity in education and training** as part of its broader social justice strategy to ensure that resources are

fairly distributed, and that education and training services and programs are responsive to the needs of the full range of learners.

CARING FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The Government has continued to improve programs and services across government for older people through the Ageing and Disability Department. The Government's aged care policies are aimed at maintaining the good health of older people and ensuring adequate living standards and lifestyle choice.

The Ageing and Disability Department is developing a comprehensive policy, primarily in conjunction with the Department of Health, to promote the health and well-being of older people. The policy will build on the Government's *Vision for Health* and will focus on improved access to health services, equitable distribution of resources and improving the health status of older people.

In addition, **\$4 million** has been allocated over 3 years from 1996-97 for a range of **aged care initiatives**. These include transport projects, which seek to improve the access of older people to public transport, which in turn enables them to reach health and other services, and to enjoy an active lifestyle. Other initiatives are community care demonstration projects which attempt to improve the links between health and community services, and community education. There is also an on-going commitment to deal with the problem of elder abuse, particularly the training of professionals. A further important component is implementation of the Government's dementia action plan.

\$350,000 will be provided for the Seniors' Information Line in 1996-97. It is anticipated that the service will commence in July 1996. The line will enable people to obtain details over the telephone of services available for older people. It will be of particular benefit to older people in rural and remote areas who may otherwise have difficulty gaining access to this information.

In order to enhance the independence of frail older people, and people with a disability, and to avoid their premature or inappropriate admission into residential care, funding for the **Home and Community Care (HACC) program will be increased by \$7.3 million in 1996-97.**

Another initiative that will assist older people is the **Accommodation Taskforce**, which has been jointly established by the Minister for Housing and the Minister for Community Services, Aged Services and Disability Services to review all options and make recommendations on a long term plan for accommodating older people, as well as people with a disability.

IMPROVING ACCOMMODATION

The Government will continue to develop a greater range of housing options to provide affordable and appropriate social housing for those in greatest need. Its *Green Paper* includes proposals for a diverse and comprehensive approach to housing and outlines specific initiatives.

The renegotiated **Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement (CSHA), under which New South Wales will be required to contribute an estimated \$142.4 million in 1996-97**, will enhance the delivery of housing services in New South Wales by focussing on consumer outcomes rather than program inputs, emphasising accountability and performance management, and by more clearly separating the Commonwealth and State roles and responsibilities. A range of initiatives, including head-leasing of privately owned dwellings, the expansion of the community housing sector, and the development of partnerships with non-government organisations, the private sector and local government, will enable New South Wales public tenants to exercise more effective housing choice.

The **New South Wales Housing Assistance Plan for 1996-97 to 1998-99** provides the strategic framework for housing assistance in accordance with the CSHA. The Plan will be delivered through public and community housing, assistance to private renters, and assistance to special needs groups, including Aboriginal people, older people and people with a disability.

The capital works program for public housing in 1996-97 will include:-

- **\$237.4 million** to be spent on works in progress and new works for the Department of Housing, involving commencement of 1,787 units of accommodation, including 103 for supported housing, and **\$87 million** on upgrading of stock and estate improvement;
- **\$122.7 million** to be spent on works in progress and new works in the community housing sector, involving commencement of 823 new dwellings and the commencement of 246 dwellings targeted mainly at young people through the Social Housing Subsidy Program; and
- **\$25.7 million** to be spent on works in progress and new works for Aboriginal housing, involving commencement of 122 dwellings, mainly through community-based organisations.

The **Supported Housing Initiatives Program**, which provides supported accommodation for people with high needs who also require public housing, will be allocated at least 5 per cent of the total Department of Housing capital works funds. In addition, a further **\$10 million is being made available for the Mental Health Supported Housing Initiatives Program over the next three financial years.**

The Government will expand the size and nature of the social housing stock through **head-leasing from the private sector: a target of 1,800 new rental properties has been established for 1996-97**. In total, it is expected that in 1996-97, **\$12.5 million** will be devoted to properties head-leased by the Department of Housing, and a further **\$17.2 million** will be provided to community housing associations for head leasing.

To address the needs of residents in large public housing estates, the Government has committed **\$25 million in 1996-97 and \$45 million in 1997-98 to the Neighbourhood Improvement Program**. This program aims to improve both the standard of housing and the living environment of large estates by giving tenants more control of their housing and neighbourhoods and improving access to community facilities and employment opportunities.

The **Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), which provides accommodation assistance for people in crisis**, was renegotiated soon after the Government came to office in 1995. Funding of **\$81.3 million** will be available for the program in 1996-97.

INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

Effective disability access strategies will help ensure that people with a disability are included in, and can contribute to, the life of the community. To properly realise these goals, the Government will focus on broad, long term strategies.

The Government will also continue to ensure that improved access to health services for people with a disability is given a high priority.

Funding for the **State-wide enhancement of disability services for children (\$3.5 million in 1996-97 and \$4.5 million recurrent from 1997-98, plus capital grants of \$2 million in 1996-97 and \$1.6 million in 1997-98)** will be used to expand respite care services focussing on children with a disability, early intervention services, out-of-school-hours projects for children with a disability, and therapy services. This provides for a total increase of 1,020 places across these services. The disability services infrastructure will be further developed through the provision of extra places within various service categories.

The **Centre for Developmental Disability Studies has been allocated funding of \$200,000 per annum, indexed over 5 years**. This Centre will provide a State-wide service aimed at promoting community support for people with developmental disabilities.

In addition, **\$1 million** has been allocated in 1996-97 for the program of appliances for people with a disability.

The Government is playing a leading role in the development of national **accessible public transport standards** by the Australian Transport Council (ATC). This will provide for the progressive implementation of accessibility measures over twenty years. The Government is funding the project team which services the national taskforce (\$120,000 to date).

In addition, a charter of rights for people with a disability is being developed by the Ministerial Local Government Reform Taskforce.

The increased funding for the **Home and Community Care (HACC) program in 1996-97 of \$7.3 million** will also assist people with a disability.

IMPROVING THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

The Government is committed to improving the productivity of the judicial system and to extending court sitting hours to enhance access to justice and to effectively promote and protect rights.

Funding of **\$934,000** per annum has been allocated for 1996-97 and 1997-98 for a **trial of variable vacations in the District Court (Civil Jurisdiction) to reduce the backlog of civil cases**. Additional weeks will be allocated to disposing of the backlog of pre-1996 cases and the Chief Judge will redistribute sittings to utilise spare court room capacity in the District Court Civil Jurisdiction.

In addition, four Acting Judges and support staff will be appointed for a 5 month period to run a **Special Program for the disposal of backlog matters in the Civil Division of the Supreme Court (\$1 million over the next two years)**, so that the Court can concentrate on new matters within the adopted 18 month timeframe.

\$1.3 million has been allocated over the next two years to enable the appointment of three Judges and support staff to a third Court of Appeal bench in the Supreme Court in 1996-97 to eliminate old matters. Also, three Acting Magistrates and support staff will be appointed to alleviate delays in Special Fixture matters in Local Courts (**\$645,000 in 1996-97**).

Prior to the implementation of additional extended services, such as night courts, consultation will be undertaken to determine the needs of the community and the legal profession.

The Government recognises that police, legal, justice and post-release services must be provided in an accessible and relevant way for everyone in the community. An additional **\$200,000** was provided to **Community Legal Centres** last year and an extra **\$100,000** will be provided in 1996-97, resulting in a total recurrent increase of **\$300,000**. These Centres provide legal and community advice to their clients, many of whom are disadvantaged.

Funding of **\$4.5 million will be provided over the next three years** to expand and improve the **Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Program**. The purpose of the funding is to encourage women experiencing domestic violence to access the legal system by providing support, legal representation, information and referrals. Priority areas include groups offering services to Aboriginal women, women from non-English speaking backgrounds and women in isolated and rural areas.

The **Aboriginal Women's Legal and Advocacy Centre** will focus on representing women who are victims of violence and sexual assault. The Centre will also provide community education, training, and resources to community groups to increase understanding of the impact of legal issues on Aboriginal women and children. The

Centre's inner city base will be fully operational by the end of June 1996, and over the next year satellite centres staffed by field and case workers will be established in rural areas.

Building on the 10 additional **Aboriginal-Police Liaison Officers** appointed last year, a further four Officers will be appointed in 1996-97.

The Department of Juvenile Justice's 1996-97 capital program (\$11.5 million) provides for the construction of new juvenile justice centres and the upgrading and replacement of existing juvenile justice centres. New juvenile justice centres are to be built at Dubbo, and in the northern area of the State. Centres at St Marys and Mount Penang and in metropolitan Sydney are to be upgraded. A capital works strategic plan has been developed to raise the standards of accommodation for juveniles who are held in detention. A review by the Ombudsman of accommodation standards and the administration of centres will assist with the planning of the reconstruction program. Centres will be better distributed around the State so that young offenders can live closer to home, thereby increasing community integration and making family visits easier.

The **Nardoola Project** is a co-operative undertaking of the Departments of Juvenile Justice and Housing, and Technical and Further Education and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (**\$250,000 in 1996-97**). It is aimed at providing a culturally appropriate, local community based intervention and rehabilitation program for young Aboriginal offenders in the Moree area.

The Government will continue to fund programs designed to reduce the rate of recidivism among offenders. In 1996-97 an additional **\$266,000 has been set aside for post release programs**. This will give the Department an annual allocation of \$1 million for programs specifically designed to meet the needs of people released from gaol and enhance their chances of successfully adjusting to crime-free lives.

The Corrective Services Department recently announced a major overhaul of the correctional system, which will place particular emphasis on programs to alter the behaviour of sexual and violent offenders, and to rehabilitate drug and alcohol dependent inmates. The Long Bay Correctional Complex will be redeveloped to offer special therapeutic treatment units for inmates with such problems, with particular emphasis on the issue of paedophilia. These programs will assist in reducing the rate of re-offence, and help to create a safer community. The 1996-97 Budget provides **\$1.2 million for sex offenders programs**.

Specially designed programs for women inmates will allow low security inmates to be held at the Parramatta Transitional Centre and the Emu Plains Correctional Centre, which will provide for some women to keep their young children with them. A total of \$5.7 million in capital funding will be allocated to construct a **70-bed**

minimum security facility at Emu Plains over two years, with **\$1 million** committed in 1996-97.

The Government is also developing major initiatives to deal with the disproportionate level of incarceration of the State's Aboriginal population, including the provision of alternatives to full time imprisonment. **Periodic detention centres** will be built in Bathurst (**\$1 million in 1996-97**) and Broken Hill (**\$1.1 million in 1996-97**) to provide more acceptable means of dealing with relatively minor offences. In addition, the 1996-97 Budget will provide **\$2 million to implement programs for Aboriginal offenders**, and **\$200,000 to create full-time indigenous teaching positions** within the correctional system.

The Government is committed to ensuring access to effective complaints and redress systems. In line with the interim report of the Royal Commission into the New South Wales Police Service, **\$225,000** has been allocated for the establishment of an **Aboriginal Complaints Unit** within the Ombudsman's Office to focus on complaints of police misconduct, monitor the relations between the police and Aboriginal communities and establish better liaison in remote areas.

A **Police Complaints System will also be established in the Ombudsman's Office (\$175,000 for 1996-97)** to provide additional resources for direct investigations and to audit the achievements of the Police Service in better serving Aboriginal, ethnic and other minority groups.

In addition, the Government is in the process of establishing an **Administrative Appeals Tribunal** to provide people complaining about decisions of Government agencies with a quick, accessible and relatively inexpensive forum in which to seek review of these decisions. Existing tribunals will be amalgamated to provide people with better quality decision making and more accessible justice.

SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL, ETHNIC, RURAL AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Government will introduce a range of initiatives during 1996-97 that will further improve community life.

To help improve the physical local environment in western Sydney, **\$2.5 million** has been allocated in 1996-97 for the new **1,000 hectare Western Sydney Regional Park at Horsley Park and for the new 150 hectare Rouse Hill Regional Park**. These parks will provide essential open space and recreation areas for residents of western Sydney.

In line with the recommendations of the New South Wales Lead Management Action Plan, the Government has established a **Lead Reference Centre (\$841,000 in 1996-97)**

to co-ordinate a cross-government response to managing lead hazards, as well as designing and implementing a range of education and research activities.

The Government is also in the process of implementing a number of **major social justice initiatives at the local government level to improve outcomes for communities**. The proposed amendment of the **Local Government (General) Regulation** will require local government authorities to prepare and publish statements of their Access and Equity Policies within their annual reports (from 1996-97) and within their management plans (from 1997-98). A related amendment will require councils to publish community profiles, providing comprehensive statistics including the socio-economic mix of each local government area and the services provided, so that the extent of any inequalities between communities and within communities can be assessed by both councillors and residents.

In recognition of the fact that a safe environment is necessary if people are to fully participate in the community, the Government committed itself in the 1995-96 Budget to providing **650 police over four years in locations of highest need (\$32 million per annum)**.

\$200,000 will be provided for additional staff and other purposes to develop a **Strategic Crime Prevention framework for the State**. In addition, the Government will also establish a **Victims of Crime Bureau** by the end of 1996 (**estimated at \$600,000 per annum**) to co-ordinate the delivery of support services to victims, assist victims in preparing victim impact statements and oversee agencies' implementation of the proposed Charter of Victims Rights.

The Government has also allocated **\$67,000 to support Local Domestic Violence Committees** over the 1996-97 financial year. These Committees provide and co-ordinate a range of services at the local level for women who have suffered violence. For the first time, key Government Departments such as the Attorney General's Department, the Police Service and the Departments of Health, Community Services and Housing, have contributed to resourcing Local Domestic Violence Committees.

The support for the Domestic Violence Committees will complement new legislative initiatives. The **Crimes Amendment (Apprehended Violence Orders) Bill** will improve the protection available to women in domestic violence situations through strategies such as: requiring police to automatically seek apprehended violence orders on behalf of all victims of stalking and intimidation; requiring magistrates to justify their decisions not to exclude violent offenders from the family home; and strengthening the force of telephone interim apprehended violence orders.

\$1.2 million in recurrent funds has been provided to improve rail security, which is in addition to a **\$3 million capital allocation to improve station security**. Also in **public transport, \$1.6 million** has been allocated for 1996-97 to improve the

frequency of off-peak train services along a range of major train lines. **\$1.8 million** has been provided for new services on the Western suburbs Y-link line which are due to commence by the end of 1996.

In addition to initiatives for Aboriginal people announced in previous sections, a full account of the Government's approach and commitments to **Aboriginal people** is being developed for release as a separate **landmark statement**.

Also, **\$13.5 million** has been allocated over three years from 1995-96 to ensure a **co-ordinated and staged approach to improving infrastructure in Aboriginal communities**. The project is being overseen by the Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal Affairs.

In recognition of the diversity of the New South Wales community, the Government will release a report on the **review of the Ethnic Affairs Commission Act** which will include a plan of action to respond to the disadvantage experienced by many people of ethnic background, encourage community harmony and assist the development of economic and cultural opportunities.

The Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000 will focus on providing whole-of-government service delivery and program development for people from culturally diverse backgrounds. It will ensure that government departments are responsive to the needs of all people in our community and will highlight the Government's recognition of the contribution that cultural richness makes to the prosperity and harmony of the State.

To help support women in ethnic communities, the **Women's Information and Referral Service** is undertaking a special promotional campaign aimed at raising the awareness of the Service and the Department for Women with women of non-English speaking background.

The needs of rural communities are a particular concern for the Government, especially in relation to access to major State services. The Government will establish an **Office of Rural Communities** within New South Wales Agriculture to assist rural policy development and cross-government co-ordination of rural service planning. **A Rural Communities Consultative Council** will also be established later in 1996 to provide a consultative mechanism through which the Office will consult on the broad spectrum of interests in rural communities.

To further assist rural communities, the Government will provide **\$2.8 million** in 1996-97 for **regional drought initiatives** under the joint Commonwealth-State Rural Partnership Program. The regional drought initiatives will focus on four main areas: improvement of farm water supplies; encouraging the conservation of feed and conservation farming; research on improving the viability of saltbush as a permanent drought feed; and climatology research to assist New South Wales farmers in risk management decision making.

The **Regional Co-ordination Pilot Program** has been designed to improve access to government services for the rural and regional areas of Western Division and the North Coast by co-ordinating service delivery in a way that meets the needs of the individual clients and communities. The Program aims to tackle pressing social issues while making the best use of available resources. It is being evaluated on a continuous basis and will be completed by the end of 1996.

3. OUTCOMES OF THE 1995-96 BUDGET INITIATIVES

Reporting on the achievement of the Government's social justice strategy will be a function of each Social Justice Budget Statement.

Since coming to office in April 1995, the Government has introduced a substantial range of policy, program, service and machinery initiatives in line with its commitment to social justice. Many of these were announced in the 1995-96 Budget Statement. In keeping with the reporting function of the Budget Statement, this section outlines outcomes to date from the major commitments in the last Statement.

Over the past year the Government has implemented many of the initiatives outlined in the 1995-96 Budget Statement.

The Government's Hospital Waiting List Reduction Program resulted in a 56.2 per cent reduction in elective surgery waiting lists by December 1995, and significant reductions in waiting times for all elective surgery. A major review of the Higher School Certificate has resulted in the launch of a Discussion Paper, with public consultations to occur up until August 1996. The Aboriginal Education Policy has been launched to improve the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students and ensure that Aboriginal students have high quality, culturally appropriate education. Major statements have been released on the new directions in health care and a Green Paper on housing policy was released in December 1995, setting out five key strategies to enable more housing choices and ensure quality housing outcomes for people in NSW.

The Social Justice Reference Group, the Premier's Council for Women and the Council for Crime Prevention have all been established. More child protection specialists, nurses, teachers and police have been recruited. The Women's Domestic Violence Assistance Program, the Women's Equity Bureau and the Aboriginal Women's Legal Advisory Service have been established.

Funding for community services has been boosted, new rural health services have been introduced, access for people with a disability has been improved, programs to support young people have been implemented, and many new child care places have been created. The Child Protection Council has been restructured, a Child Death Review Team has been established, corporal punishment has been abolished in schools, and in April 1996 the Premier announced the most substantial package of child abuse prevention reforms seen in this State for many years.

These outcomes show the Government is committed to achieving its social justice aims. The following tables provide information on progress in the implementation of many other measures.

Initiatives in the 1995-96 Budget Statement were reported largely according to portfolio areas and population groups, and the outcome information in this Statement on the major commitments has been organised within the same categories.

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<u>HEALTH CARE</u>	
<p>Hospital waiting lists: to meet the goal of halving elective surgery waiting lists, the Waiting List Reduction Program was introduced, with particular emphasis placed on people who had been waiting more than six months for surgery. Long waiting items in areas such as cataract extraction/lens insertion, total hip or knee replacement, and ear, nose and throat procedures to be reduced.</p> <p>Hospital and community health services staff: more staff to be employed in the public hospital system and in community health services, including additional community nurses and more ambulance officers.</p> <p>Health service planning and delivery for people living in rural and remote areas to be improved.</p>	<p>\$75 million was provided (at December 1995). By 31 December 1995 the elective surgery waiting lists decreased by 25,118 patients, a reduction of 56.2 per cent. Nearly all Area Health Services exceeded their 50 per cent target. The number of people waiting longer than six months for surgery decreased by 6,297, a drop of 71 per cent. The number of people waiting for cataract extraction/lens insertion dropped by 80 per cent, total hip replacement by 50 per cent, total knee replacement by 35 per cent and ear, nose and throat surgery by 52 per cent. There were also significant reductions in other waiting times.</p> <p>Enhancement funding of \$500,000 was provided towards employing additional community nurses allocated to high need areas of the State, including South Western Sydney Area Health Services and the Wentworth Health Services. Ambulance Service Budget increased by \$500,000 in 1995-96 to employ additional ambulance officers.</p> <p>Four multipurpose services have been established at Baradine, Braidwood, Urana and Urbenville. Twelve more services are currently in development with more to follow. Announced the Government's Vision for Rural Health.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Community Health Accreditation and Standards Program: funding to be allocated to ensure community health services are accredited for the provision of quality services. Community health policies to be developed which give clear directions about the future role and potential for community based services.</p> <p>Injection of funds into programs with high demand from disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>Access to health services: the disparities in access to health services between different groups in the community will be redressed through better matching the needs of these groups with resources. Additional funding for:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal health • women's health services • services for people of non English speaking background. 	<p>Funding of \$120,000 allocated for a Community Health Accreditation and Standards Program. The Program will complete 31 reviews of Community Health Centres, including Women's Health Services, during 1995-96, as well as three pilot reviews of non-Government organisations. NSW Health has employed a principal policy adviser for community health. This officer will consult widely and be the Department's link with the community health sector.</p> <p>More funds allocated to the Isolated Patient Travelling Allowance Scheme (\$500,000 per annum); \$500,000 additional funds for the program of aids and appliances for people with a disability (\$50,000 of which was allocated to the Corrections Health Service) to enhance service delivery to people with a disability.</p> <p>A key aspect of improving the health status of Aboriginal people is self-determination by Aboriginal people. NSW Health's Partnership Agreement with the Aboriginal Health Resource Co-operative will ensure that Aboriginal people are joint decision makers in the planning and researching of health services to Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal Family Health Strategy was launched in December 1995.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Access to health services (continued)</p>	<p>Resources for women's health have increased. Health service provision continues to be expanded to women throughout NSW, particularly to groups of women who for either cultural, economic, social or geographic reasons find it difficult to access mainstream health services.</p> <p>In 1995-96 an additional \$500,000 was allocated to services for victims of sexual and domestic violence, including a significant allocation for training and education of health service providers on sexual assault and domestic violence issues specific to women of non-English speaking background. A senior policy analyst in NSW Health has been appointed with responsibility for sexual assault services.</p> <p>Multicultural health: \$200,000 has been committed to improve health literacy; \$150,000 for rural interpreters. \$100,000 has been allocated to research programs and service improvement projects targeting people of non-English speaking background and \$50,000 to the Transcultural Mental Health Centre. Existing services such as the Health Literacy Programs and <i>back to basics</i> health access programs are being expanded into rural NSW.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Extensive capital works program to be undertaken.</p> <p>Implement a suicide prevention strategy.</p> <p>Provide funding to research and improve the health of people with mental illness.</p>	<p>In 1995-96 over \$488 million was allocated for capital works, including allocations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liverpool Hospital (\$45.8 million) • Bankstown Hospital (\$37 million) • New Children's Hospital (\$24.5 million) • Prince of Wales Hospital (\$25.8 million) • Royal Women's Hospital (\$19.2 million) • Sydney and Sydney Eye Hospital (\$7.5 million) • Nepean Hospital (\$6.8 million) • St George Hospital (\$7.8 million) • Maitland Hospital (\$9 million) • Walgett Hospital (\$7 million) • commencement of redevelopments at Blacktown, Dubbo, Lithgow, and West Wyalong Hospitals. <p>The Health Department has appointed a suicide prevention coordinator. The mental health goals and targets process has resulted in the establishment of a suicide prevention strategy. The strategy will be completed in 1996.</p> <p>\$12 million provided in 1995-96 to Areas to address the inadequacies of care in the Burdekin Report and to increase community mental health services for those with serious mental illness.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<u>EDUCATION AND TRAINING</u>	
<p>HSC Advice Line to be established to enable students to obtain advice on a wide range of HSC subjects.</p> <p>Major review of the HSC to be undertaken.</p> <p>The Reading Recovery program to be expanded and access to targeted schools increased.</p> <p>Additional teaching positions over four years.</p>	<p>The HSC Advice Line was open from 16 October, through the examination period, until 20 November 1995. The line operated seven days a week and took 23,849 calls from students in all metropolitan and country regions. This initiative provided students across NSW with access to expert advice during the critical period before their HSC examinations.</p> <p>The HSC Review <i>Their Future: Options for the reform of the Higher School Certificate</i> was released by the Premier and the Minister for Education and Training on 1 May 1996. Consultations on the Review paper will run until 30 August 1996.</p> <p>400 new Reading Recovery teaching positions over the next four years announced. Reading Recovery produces significantly improved literacy outcomes for students and reduces the number of students with reading problems in schools. An additional 100 teaching positions across the State will be allocated each year. In the first half of 1996 teaching positions were established in 205 schools, representing 37 districts across NSW.</p> <p>126 additional teachers will be appointed in 1996-97, resulting in a total of 464 additional teachers since 1995-96.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<u>YOUTH</u>	
<p>Funding to be aimed at directing minor offenders away from the court system towards alternative community based programs such as community youth conferencing.</p> <p>Programs to be funded to address the social and economic inequities faced by some young people. The programs target disadvantaged young people (aged 12-24) at risk of leaving school early or who have left school early.</p> <p>A Youth Crisis Service at Murwillumbah to be established.</p>	<p>Community youth conferencing is operating in six pilot areas (Wagga Wagga, Moree, Bourke, Marrickville, Campbelltown and Castle Hill) around NSW. Approximately 180 conferences have taken place since the pilot began. An evaluation of the scheme has recently been completed by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to assess and indicate the extent to which the scheme is meeting its stated targets. The report of the evaluation is currently being considered by the Minor Offenders Punishment Scheme Working Party.</p> <p>Over 1995-96 the Government allocated \$6.8 million to programs including Helping Early School Leavers Program (\$3.27 million), Time Out (\$874,000), Circuit Breaker (\$1.58 million), and Koori Youth Program (\$296,000). These initiatives provided literacy, numeracy, and self-esteem assistance which resulted in 4,800 people either remaining in school, returning to school or moving on to further education.</p> <p>Negotiations with St Joseph's Futcher House have been completed and an agreement to proceed signed. An integrated Case Management Service for homeless youth in Murwillumbah and Tweed Valley will aim for either the return of young persons to their family home or the establishment of independent accommodation with a stable income. There will be two medium-to-long term houses, and support workers based in</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
	offices located in Murwillumbah.

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<u>INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN</u>	
<p>A Premier's Council for Women to be appointed to enhance women's involvement in decision-making at the highest level.</p> <p>Recurrent funding (\$320,000 pa) to be allocated for the Women's Information and Referral Service (WIRS) run by the Department for Women, which had previously operated as a pilot project. This service is to ensure that women throughout NSW have access to information and advice on a wide range of government and non-government services and community support networks.</p> <p>The Women's Court Assistance Scheme Network (\$1.5 million per annum) to be established to provide legal representation, advice, non-legal assistance and support to women appealing for apprehended domestic violence orders.</p>	<p>The twelve members of the Council for Women were appointed on 3 October 1995, and have since held three full Council meetings. The Council is overseeing a whole-of-government strategy (under development by the Minister and the Department for Women) and has set six broad objectives. Sub-committees have been established to address these objectives and action plans are being developed for each objective which will be presented to the Premier in mid 1996.</p> <p>Recruitment action for the five full time positions has nearly been completed and it is intended that the Service will be at full strength by the end of the 1995-96 financial year. Special arrangements exist to service women who are deaf or hearing impaired, live in rural or remote areas, or are of non-English speaking background.</p> <p>The Department for Women has also established a complementary fax-based information service, offering up to 100 sets of information on services for women in NSW.</p> <p>The NSW Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Program was officially announced by the Minister for Women and the Attorney General on 31 January 1996, with funding to be administered by the Legal Aid Commission.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

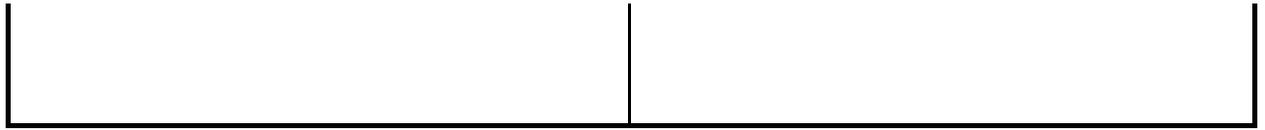
1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>\$100,000 to be allocated to the Sport Administration and Travel Scholarship for Women.</p> <p>A Women's Equity Bureau to be established within the Department of Industrial Relations to monitor and advise on equity aspects of enterprise bargaining, to promote incorporation of equal opportunity, occupational health and safety, and fair pay clauses into awards and enterprise agreements.</p>	<p>Under the program 50 special scholarships will be awarded to women to enable them to gain accreditation in sports administration, and two travel scholarships of \$25,000 will be granted for women to become senior sports administrators. Some of the scholarships will be targeted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from non-English speaking background, women with a disability and women in rural and remote areas.</p> <p>Following an extensive consultation process with key Government and community stake-holders, the Bureau was established to develop industrial relations policy which progresses the interests of women. The Director of the Bureau has been appointed, and a total of 10 staff will be appointed to the Unit by June 1996.</p>
<p><u>CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES</u></p>	
<p>Additional funding of \$2.5 million per annum for the Community Service Grants Program.</p> <p>The Child Protection Council to be restructured.</p>	<p>Additional funds for Community Services Grants Program projects across the State provided to strengthen the ability of services to reduce disadvantage and provide less intrusive services to families in need.</p> <p>The NSW Child Protection Council has been restructured to broaden its emphasis on prevention and was allocated an increase of \$100,000 in 1995-96 for prevention activities.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

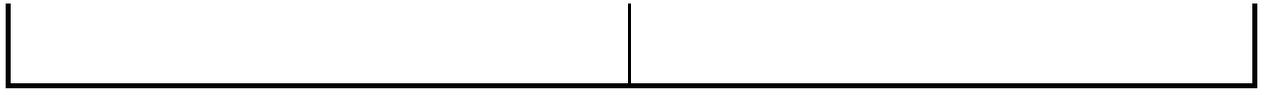
1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Sixty new child protection specialists to be employed.</p>	<p>Approximately two-thirds of these positions have been filled, with the remaining positions in the process of being recruited. These positions are intended to improve the quality of assessment and casework undertaken by the Department, and enable better coordination of departmental and non-government child protection services. They are located in Community Services Centres to support District Officers in the provision of child protection services. The primary outcome for this initiative will be to improve the quality of assessment and casework undertaken by District Officers.</p>
<p>Culturally appropriate substitute care service models to be developed to assist Aboriginal people.</p>	<p>An Aboriginal Coordinator has been appointed to the Department of Community Services to coordinate the consultation with Aboriginal communities and planning of substitute care services for Aboriginal children and young people.</p>
<p>Extra child care places to be provided. Sign Expanded National Child Care Agreement. Provision for pre-school, occasional child care, mobile child care, vacation care and access measures.</p>	<p>\$22 million has been provided for this initiative over three years, together with \$2 million carried over from 1994-95. 398 new long day care places have been approved for 1995-96. Under the Expanded National Child Care Strategy, \$2.85 million recurrent funding over three years for 1,988 long day care places has been allocated. The target group is families with dependent children under 12 years of age, especially working families with child care needs. This strategy has improved access to child care, and improved equity in the distribution of child care places. Protocols between the State and the Commonwealth on implementing the commitment for child care places for children at risk are nearing</p>

finalisation. 100 pre-school places have
been approved

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<u>AGEING INITIATIVES</u>	
<p>Ageing and Disability Department to be established, combining the former Office on Ageing, the Office on Disability, and the Ageing and Disability Directorate.</p> <p>Ageing and Disability Department to assume responsibility for the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program, with \$239 million allocated in 1995-96.</p> <p>The \$10 charge on two intrastate rail services per annum to be abolished for pensioners (\$3.3 million per annum).</p> <p>The entry fee to be removed from the Powerhouse Museum and the Australian Museum for seniors and pensioners.</p> <p>The proportion of dwelling units to be increased for aged people in the public housing construction program (1346 units to be acquired or constructed in 1995-96 at a cost of \$53.7 million).</p>	<p>The new Department has been established.</p> <p>Major work has commenced in the following areas: the rationalisation of HACC resources across Government; implementation of recommendations arising from the efficiency and effectiveness review; the introduction of brokerage services; the establishment of a Home Care Review; and better distribution of resources according to need.</p> <p>This charge was abolished on 1 January 1996.</p> <p>This commitment was implemented on 1 July 1995 under the Seniors Card Scheme. It ensures older people have greater access to, and are able to benefit from, the full range of exhibitions and activities of the State's two major museums.</p> <p>To date, arrangements have commenced for 1276 pensioner units at a total cost of \$45.9 million.</p>



1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Priority to be given to improving older people's access to surgery and geriatric services.</p> <p>Establish a Seniors' Information Line.</p>	<p>Aged care services are a priority for the strategic planning processes undertaken by Area Health Services. Where residential care services are provided, the priority is to improve dementia services. Older people have benefited from the reductions to waiting times for elective surgery.</p> <p>The tender process for providing the Seniors' Information Line has been finalised. It is expected that the line will be able to receive calls in July 1996, depending on confirmation of arrangements for the launch.</p>
<p><u>DISABILITY INITIATIVES</u></p>	
<p>Ageing and Disability Department to be established.</p> <p>Accommodation for people with a disability to be boosted through the establishment of 300 new supported accommodation places (\$24 million per annum, as well as \$26 million for the purchase of suitable group homes) in the community.</p> <p>An individually designed education program to be developed for each child with a disability.</p>	<p>Department established, with responsibility for strategic policy and planning for ageing and disability; funding of the Home and Community Care Program; the Disability Services Program; and quality assurance, monitoring and review of these programs.</p> <p>These places address outstanding accommodation needs, and are aimed at providing accommodation for people with high support needs, people at home with ageing parents, and those with an urgent need for accommodation. Most of the 300 places have been allocated and provided to people in need.</p> <p>Kindergarten to Year 6 Curriculum Pilot Project in Special Education established to develop support materials across all primary Key Learning Areas.</p>



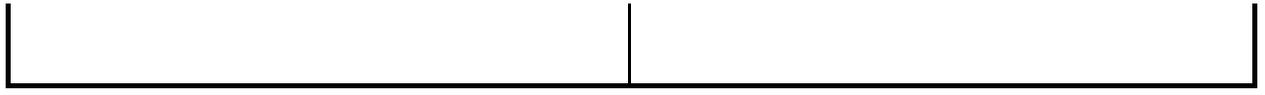
1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Access to transport for people with a disability to be improved.</p> <p>\$200,000 to be provided for elite disabled athletes under the Elite Sports Grant Scheme.</p> <p>\$150,000 to be provided to support the work of the Sports Council for the Disabled.</p>	<p>Measures include: improvements to driver training; a staged expansion of ramps and audio devices at traffic intersections; the expansion of the Disabled Persons Parking Scheme; and the broadening of the eligibility criteria for the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme (at a cost of \$2.7 million). Benefits flowing from these measures include increased road safety and accident prevention, better access to the transport system for all people with a disability, and more parking facilities for people with disabilities.</p> <p>The Department of Sport and Recreation has allocated \$140,000 per annum for a new High Performance Disabled Sport Support Program which provides scholarships of either \$2000 or \$1000 to 34 athletes with a disability. A further \$60,000 per annum was allocated to support a new Disabled Talented Athlete Program. Under this program funding is provided to five sports (track and field, swimming, cycling, rowing and weight-lifting).</p> <p>Funding from last year's Budget enabled increased participation in sport by sports-persons with a disability. During 1995-96 the number of competitors with a disability increased from 2,500 to 3,200. The Council acts as an umbrella organisation for the development of sport for people with a disability in NSW and currently provides assistance to competitors participating in 40 different sports. The Council provides a wide range of services to all member sports associations, and also designs and implements regular sports programs, annual</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
	championships and special events.

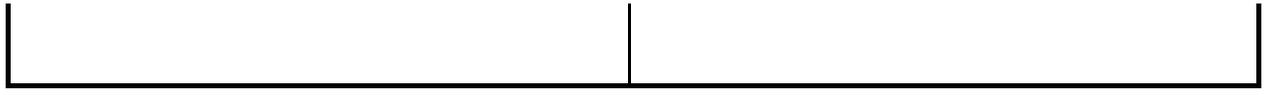
1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Access to National Parks to be improved for people using wheelchairs, people with a visual impairment, families with prams and strollers and older members of the community.</p>	<p>The Minister for the Environment has released the Access for All booklet, providing a clear guide and easy reference for people with disabilities, and in particular people using wheelchairs, to those national parks, nature reserves and historic sites around NSW which provide facilities for people with a disability, allowing them to enjoy the natural experience which these areas provide.</p>
<p><u>JUSTICE</u></p>	
<p>The Council on Crime Prevention to be established.</p> <p>Introduce legislation incorporating greater penalties for peddling drugs that reach school age young people and home invasions.</p>	<p>The Council has been convened. It is chaired by the Premier, includes ten Ministers, and has significant non-Ministerial memberships, including the Director of the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, several criminologists, a former Children's Court Magistrate and representatives of local government, the insurance industry and victims' groups.</p> <p>Both these initiatives have been achieved pursuant to the Criminal Legislation Amendment Act which commenced in July 1995. Penalties for home invasions have been increased for a break and enter offence from 14 years to 20 years where the occupants are at home at the time of the offence. Penalties for drug dealers have been increased where the sale has been to a school age young person.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

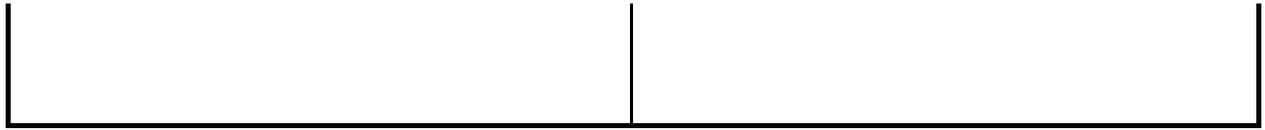
1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>\$250,000 to be directed to financial counselling.</p> <p>Additional assistance to be provided for Community Justice Centres for family mediation services.</p> <p>Additional assistance to be provided to the Legal Aid Commission (\$1 million) for backlog funding.</p> <p>Provision of an extra 650 police (an additional \$32 million per annum when all officers are appointed) over the next four years in locations of highest need.</p>	<p>Funding for financial counselling was increased to a total of \$971,000 in 1995-96 including \$815,000 for the Credit Counselling Program. A total of 25 financial counselling services and community legal centres, together with a toll free helpline, have been funded. Over 2,500 contacts have been made with financial counselling services in the first quarter of the programs.</p> <p>The Family Mediation Program initiated by the Community Justice Centres is now in a pilot stage. Additional funding of \$170,000 has been allocated.</p> <p>This funding has assisted in increasing the separate representation of children's matters in the Family Court and the recent expansion of guidelines in civil law matters.</p> <p>The authorised strength was increased by 100 to a record 13,107 in August 1995. This initiative also included increasing the effective number of operational police by 150 through recruitment of 100 General Support Officers to relieve police of administrative work, and the transfer of prisoner escort and court security duties in rural areas to the Department of Corrective Services. This transfer has been affected, and the majority of General Support Officer positions have been filled.</p>



1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<u>ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS</u>	
<p>Over the next five years, the backlog of outstanding Aboriginal land claims to be cleared (1571 claims extant in September 1995). The Department of Land and Water Conservation to process new claims within 12 months of being lodged.</p> <p>Additional Aboriginal-Police Liaison officers to be employed in 1995-96.</p> <p>An Aboriginal Women's Legal Advisory Service to be established.</p> <p>Greater educational opportunities for Aboriginal children to be provided.</p>	<p>The Department of Land and Water Conservation is on target to deal with the backlog of 1500 land claims within the five year period, with 103 of these having been processed. The allocation of additional resources in the Department of Land and Water Conservation means that the 12 month turnaround for new claims lodged will be able to be met in the majority of cases.</p> <p>Ten additional Aboriginal Police Liaison Officers have been appointed.</p> <p>The Core Centre for the Aboriginal Women's Legal and Advocacy Centre is expected to be established in Sydney by the end of June 1996.</p> <p>The Aboriginal Education Policy was released by the Minister for Education and Training in February 1996. The broad goals of the policy are: to improve educational outcomes of Aboriginal students to a level comparable with those of the population generally; ensure that Aboriginal students have high quality, culturally appropriate education; and, target resources and programs to provide for the educational needs of Aboriginal students. Schools will be provided with training and development materials to implement the policy.</p>



1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<u>ETHNIC AFFAIRS</u>	
<p>Government advertising and information to better reflect the cultural diversity of the population. A proportion of this expenditure (7.5 per cent) to be allocated specifically to ethnic media for the provision of community information.</p> <p>The 24 hour emergency interpreter/translation service to the Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Department of Health and the Police Service to be improved and extended to include the Attorney General's Department, the Department of Corrective Services, and the Department of Juvenile Justice.</p> <p>As part of the Multicultural Education Plan, the first 42 of 96 extra community language teachers to be appointed (a commitment of \$8.7 million over three years) during the year.</p>	<p>In December 1995 the Premier and Minister for Ethnic Affairs issued a Memorandum to Ministers to ensure that from 1 February 1996 a minimum of 7.5 per cent of the campaign advertising budget allocated to newspaper advertising by Government agencies will be allocated to the placement of advertisements in non-English language newspapers. Similar targets are also to be met in electronic advertising expenditure. The NSW Government Advertising Agency has responsibility for monitoring and implementing this policy.</p> <p>The 24 hour emergency interpreter/translation service will be piloted at the Ethnic Affairs Commission in May/June and will be operational within a few months. To facilitate the provision of interpreter services, the Department of Juvenile Justice has produced two "Plain English" <i>Streetwise</i> comics aimed at improving understanding of the law; translated information pamphlets for departmental clients and their carers; and trained staff on cross cultural communication skills and the use of interpreters.</p> <p>The first 42 teachers commenced duties at the beginning of the 1996 school year. This will enable students to develop literacy skills in their home language. Some of the literacy skills developed in the home language will be transferable to literacy development in English.</p>



1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<u>REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES</u>	
<p>Additional drought assistance to be negotiated with the Commonwealth to maximise support to various sections of the rural community.</p> <p>Improvements to rural rail transport.</p>	<p>The Government is spending approximately \$800,000 per month in stock and fodder transport subsidies and welfare payments. Overall the Government allocated \$20 million for expenditure on drought in 1995-96, of which \$13 million has been spent to date.</p> <p>Services to Broken Hill and Griffith recommenced in March 1996. They have improved the access of rural communities to regular rail services and the re-introduction of regular services was welcomed by local communities. These services also demonstrate the Government's commitment to preserving the integrity of country towns and communities fearful of possible decline.</p>
<u>URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT</u>	
<p>An Urban Strategy Group to examine the options for a radical and coordinated approach to solving Sydney's growth problems.</p>	<p>The Urban Strategy Group has submitted its working Report to the Government.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

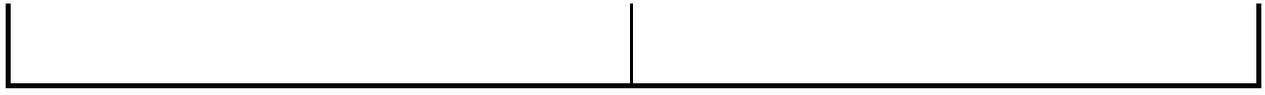
1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Transport problems associated with urban sprawl to be redressed through the further development, of inner and middle ring urban renewal and redevelopment programs.</p> <p>Rail lines in West and South West Sydney to be improved and work to begin on pilot cross regional rail links.</p> <p>Extra funding for Community Transport Schemes (\$200,000 per annum) to assist older people to be mobile in their communities.</p>	<p>The Ultimo-Pyrmont Light Rail system is being developed in concert with the City West urban renewal process. The 3.8 km route will link key residential, employment and recreational areas with quality, high frequency services. The project, at a total cost of \$84 million, is being developed jointly by the Government, and the private sector. Construction commenced in January 1996 and it is expected to open by mid 1997.</p> <p>The Harris Park - Merrylands "Y" link is due for completion towards the end of 1996, and preparations have been made to improve the East Hills line and for the Richmond line amplification. In addition, 3am and 4am services were introduced in September 1995 between the City and Blacktown via Sydenham, Bankstown, and Parramatta. These initiatives will improve the public transport services in these areas by providing an improved and more equitable rail service.</p> <p>Through this program, an average of 5,000 clients each month receive transport related assistance. It has increased the level and range of transport options for people identified as transport disadvantaged, and provided them with increased access to, and participation in, the community. Examples of the kind of assistance provided are the transport of isolated families to regional centres for their everyday needs, while other people may be assisted with travel to after school care, youth groups and senior citizens centres.</p>

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>The air quality monitoring program (\$1.4 million per annum) to be continued with a particular focus in West and South West Sydney.</p> <p>Improve rail safety for commuters.</p>	<p>The South West station (at Bargo) is operational, and the station for the West (in the Blue Mountains) is expected to be fully operational by early April. The rest of the funding augments the maintenance budget for the Statewide Air Quality Monitoring Network, and is ongoing. The two new stations extend the coverage of the network to where data is most needed, thereby improving access to representative air quality data and the knowledge available for refining current understanding of processes determining air quality. This initiative enhances existing programs and will maintain increased access to air quality information via annual ongoing support.</p> <p>The additional Nightsafe services, increased transit police numbers and the deployment of contract security officers on trains demonstrate the Government's commitment to implementing measures which have improved the security of passengers on the rail system.</p>
<u>HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS</u>	
<p>Priority to be given to obtaining a more appropriate mix of housing assistance measures and to focusing on the performance of housing providers and outcomes for housing consumers.</p>	<p>Considerable progress has been made in shifting the composition of housing stock to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of small households seeking public housing. In addition, there has been growth in community housing, assistance to private renters, and assistance to special needs groups including Aboriginals, older people and people with a disability. In 1995-96 in addition to over 138,000 households in</p>

	public rental housing, nearly 60,000 low
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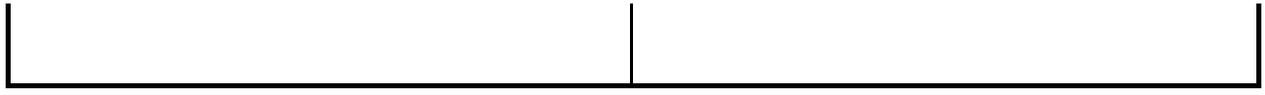
1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p data-bbox="183 398 783 472">Obtaining a more appropriate mix of housing assistance (continued).</p> <p data-bbox="183 719 549 752">Living in Harmony Policy.</p> <p data-bbox="183 1357 783 1581">Major reforms to be made to the Department of Housing's allocation policies: families and individuals with urgent housing needs to have an improved range of immediate housing options available to them.</p>	<p data-bbox="810 398 1390 674">and moderate income households received some form of assistance from the State Government to meet their housing needs, including 37,800 receiving rent assistance to obtain private rental housing and 15,500 accessing new social housing tenancies.</p> <p data-bbox="810 719 1414 1267">To date, the following action has been taken to implement the Good Neighbour (Living in Harmony) Policy: standardisation of documentation of nuisance and annoyance cases using a witness incident form; training in the presentation of cases in the Residential Tenancies Tribunal; a revision of the Department's Residential Tenancies Agreement; and development of a memorandum of understanding between the Police and the Department of Housing, which provides for structured collaboration between the agencies to deal with such matters.</p> <p data-bbox="810 1357 1390 1783">The clearer housing needs assessment criteria developed under the new allocation system (introduced in 1995) ensures greater consistency and equity in deciding who is assisted. A more streamlined allocation procedure has increased the timeliness of service delivery. Housing needs are assessed more comprehensively and the assistance provided is tailored to a household's specific needs.</p>



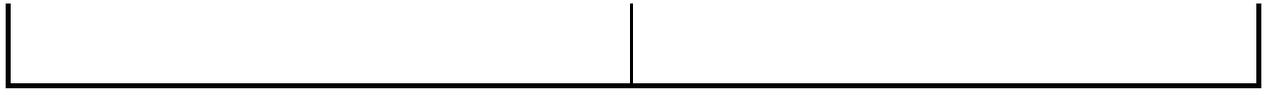
1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>A review to develop a full range of housing options for people with HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>The proportion of dwellings linked to support services for people with disabilities to be increased.</p> <p>Substantial capital works program to be carried out for public housing.</p>	<p>Funding for the Special Needs Subsidy which assists people with HIV/AIDS to meet their rental costs was increased by \$1.1 million to \$3.5 million in 1995-96. In addition, nine community housing projects targeted to people with HIV/AIDS have been established or are under development and a HIV/AIDS Housing Forum has been established in central Sydney to advise on access issues, service delivery models and to promote integration of services.</p> <p>Approximately \$12 million will be expended in 1995-96 on the Supported Housing Initiatives Program, with the commencement of around 80 dwellings. This initiative is enabling people with disabilities, particularly those with high level needs, to live successfully and independently in the community by ensuring that both accommodation and support are delivered in a flexible and coordinated way in accordance with the recipient's need for assistance. The provision of this service has also brought about a closer collaboration of effort at local and regional levels between the Departments of Housing, Health, Community Services and participating community organisations.</p> <p>The Budget specified the commencement of 3309 units of accommodation. While the specific breakdown of units of accommodation has changed slightly from last year's estimates, the Department of Housing has implemented a number of major construction and acquisition programs. Below are the outcomes for the</p>

past year.

1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>888 general housing units to be constructed or acquired at a cost of \$82.97 million.</p> <p>A further \$53.7 million to be set aside for the construction or acquisition of 1346 units for the aged.</p> <p>\$22.9 million to be provided for the redevelopment of sites to provide 301 units for general housing and 740 site units for pensioners.</p> <p>\$23.6 million to be allocated for the purchase of properties for Housing Associations.</p> <p>\$48.5 million to be set aside for community housing programs.</p> <p>34 Units of accommodation to be provided for people with mental illness at a cost of \$4 million.</p>	<p>This figure increased during the year, and work has commenced on 1010 general housing units, at a cost of \$106.87 million.</p> <p>To date, arrangements have commenced for 1276 pensioner housing units in this program area.</p> <p>For an increased expenditure of \$31.6 million, site redevelopment to date has yielded 250 units of general housing and 508 units of pensioner housing.</p> <p>Over the past year, 187 properties have been purchased for Housing Associations at a cost of \$31.6 million.</p> <p>To date, 331 community housing units have been commenced at a cost of \$49 million (this includes Aboriginal Housing, the Community Housing Program, and the Crisis Accommodation Program).</p> <p>There has been a slight reduction into the units of accommodation to be built, with work commencing on 27 units for people with a mental illness.</p>



1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>Neighbourhood Improvement Program to be boosted (\$8.1 million) and public housing to be improved (\$73.4 million).</p>	<p>Expenditure under the Neighbourhood Improvement Program of \$2.12 million to the end of February has been largely on planning activities. Work is now fully underway and all of the \$8.1 million will be expended this financial year. Commitment to this program will increase to \$25 million in 1996-97 and \$45 million in 1997-98. The program aims to improve both the standard of housing and the living environment of large estates by giving tenants more control of their housing and neighbourhoods, improving the standard of housing, addressing safety issues and improving access to community facilities. The total commitment to both the Neighbourhood Improvement Program and public housing improvements in general will increase from \$81.5 million in 1995-96 to \$87 million in 1996-97 and \$115 million in 1997-98.</p>
<p>Stock to be leased to selected community housing associations under the Social Housing Subsidy Program (\$44.3 million).</p>	<p>The improvements to public housing allocation has been spent on upgrading existing housing stock, for instance, upgrading of kitchens (\$60 million), and on a range of special initiatives including conversion of bedsits to one and two bedroom units, fire safety, and estate security. To date, some 260 housing units have been acquired for lease to selected community housing associations under this Program at a total cost of \$40.27 million.</p>



1995-96 Initiative	Outcome
<p>A new 5 year agreement with the Commonwealth Government to be implemented for the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP).</p>	<p>\$81.4 million was allocated in 1995-96, including \$3.3 million carried over from 1994-95. 477 services were funded under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program in 1995-96. The delivery of SAAP strategies and initiatives is dependant on the commitment of the Commonwealth over the next three years to the funding of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement.</p>