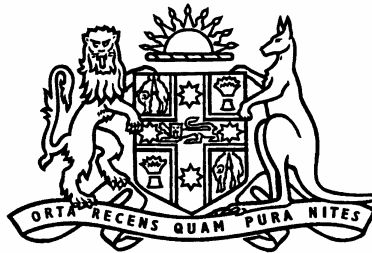


Social Justice Budget Statement

2003-04



New South Wales

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FOREWORD

We are pleased to present the Government's *Social Justice Budget Statement 2003-04*.

The Carr Labor Government has worked hard for a just and fair society. We have no stronger or more enduring commitment.

We want all of the people of this State to have a fair go: a fair chance in life, a fair share of public resources, and a fair say in the decisions that affect their lives.

Our social justice agenda has two foundations: a strong economy to provide jobs and opportunity for all, and social spending for those who need support.

Over the past eight years, we've paid close attention to responsible financial management and economic development to generate the wealth and jobs, which in turn provide opportunities to get ahead. We continue with this in 2003-04.

During the past eight years, we've increased our investment in education, health, housing, disability services, crime prevention, family and youth support, child protection and community development. This is also continued in 2003-04.

Key initiatives of the *Social Justice Budget Statement 2003-04* include:

- ◆ \$9.3 billion to NSW Health – an increase of 11 percent over last year's initial budget allocation;
- ◆ \$28 million to Families First, for early intervention and prevention programs for 0 – 8 year olds;
- ◆ \$803.2 million to the Department of Community Services, an increase of 25 percent.
- ◆ \$8.159 billion to the Department of Education and Training, an increase of 7.1 percent; and
- ◆ \$6 million in recurrent funding and \$18.65 million in capital funding, for class size reductions.

We are continuing to improve the way funds are delivered. We will keep working with communities to devise local solutions and work with non-government organisations and community groups so that we can tackle social problems together.

The structures put in place to assist the Government to develop and implement social justice policies in New South Wales will continue. The Social Justice Reference Group will continue to report and advise on our progress.

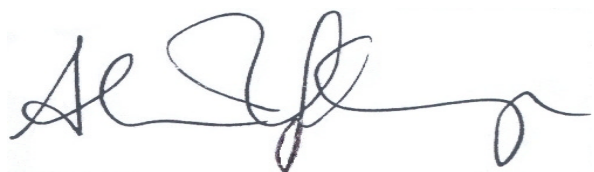
Departmental chief executives from the human services, criminal justice and Aboriginal affairs agencies will track the delivery of Government services. Advisory bodies such as the Aboriginal Advisory Council and the Youth Advisory Council will continue to represent the community's interests to Government.

The programs and initiatives in the *Social Justice Budget Statement 2003-04* provide practical examples of how the Government is working to achieve social justice outcomes for the people of New South Wales.

We proudly present the *Social Justice Budget Statement 2003-04* to you.



Bob Carr
Premier



Andrew Refshauge
Deputy Premier

CHAPTER 1: A DIVERSE AND HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

The New South Wales Government is committed to promoting an inclusive and harmonious society in which the benefits of social and cultural diversity are recognised and valued. Through legislation, policies and programs, the Government is working to prevent racial and sexual discrimination, educate people about their rights and responsibilities, and support people with special needs.

1.1 WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

New South Wales has the largest State population of Aboriginal people in Australia. The Government acknowledges the traditional ownership of land by the Aboriginal people of New South Wales and its spiritual, social, cultural and economic importance. The Government is active in promoting policies and programs in partnership with Aboriginal people, and is committed to economic and social equality for Aboriginal people in New South Wales. The **Department of Aboriginal Affairs** is a key agency in delivering and promoting this objective.

In 2003-04 the Government is committed to introducing further innovative yet practical programs and partnerships. These programs are geared towards recognising and supporting Aboriginal culture, heritage and leadership, and developing Aboriginal communities.

The **Improving Outcomes in Aboriginal Communities** project, is an initiative of the Chief Executive Officers group on Aboriginal Affairs. The project will be implemented through two strategies – the Aboriginal Community Partnerships Strategy and the Aboriginal Child, Youth and Family Strategy.

The **Aboriginal Community Partnerships Strategy**, led by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, will develop new ways for Government to work in partnership with Aboriginal communities with the aim of:

- ◆ improving how the Government responds to critical issues in Aboriginal communities;
- ◆ developing and enhancing community capacity to enable Aboriginal communities to identify and address their own issues;
- ◆ bringing community and service providers together to redevelop services to be more effective; and
- ◆ supporting communities to develop shared goals.

A total of **\$5 million** has been allocated to this program, with **\$1 million** allocated in 2003-04.

The **Aboriginal Child, Youth and Family Strategy**, led by the Office of Children and Young People, will guide service delivery to improve the safety, health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families. It will look at improving the delivery of existing services, inform the development of new services and focus on prevention and early intervention at a regional level. The Strategy will involve Aboriginal communities to ensure that services are tailored and delivered in a culturally appropriate way. Whilst a more comprehensive planning process is undertaken in regions, existing research on community needs and previous community consultations have been used to identify needs that can be responded to on a one-off basis. In total, **\$15.3 million** has been allocated to the Strategy over four years, with **\$3.858 million** being allocated in 2003-04.

The **Aboriginal Grants Program** is administered by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. The total funding of the Grants Program for 2003-04 is **\$800,000**. The program has two components:

- ◆ **major grants** which are distributed through a biannual process that is widely advertised. Grants can include research projects and partnership agreements with other funding authorities and the commercial sector. They are designed to make a major contribution towards addressing the priorities identified by the Government and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs; and
- ◆ **discretionary grants** which are small allocations for Aboriginal people and organisations which help to alleviate social disadvantage, including family issues and other crisis situations. The discretionary fund is a grants program of last resort and applicants must demonstrate that other attempts to access funds have failed.

IMPROVING HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The **Aboriginal Communities Development Program** will be in its fifth year during the financial year 2003-04. Work commenced in preceding years will continue to deliver new housing, environmental health services and primary water and sewerage infrastructure during 2003-04.

In 2003-04 the program expenditure will be **\$29 million**. This program will include the **construction and purchase of 120 new homes, repair and maintenance or renovations/extensions to 180 existing homes**, and additional landscaping, fencing and environmental health improvements in the form of related works.

To date, a total of **43 communities** have benefited from improvements in the water and sewerage infrastructure component of the Program. During 2003-04 an **additional six communities** will benefit from service improvements.

During 2003-04 the **Housing for Health** component of the Program will be finalised in a total of **370 homes in 12 communities**. These communities include Boggabilla, Bowraville, Collarenebri, Coraki, Lightning Ridge, Macksville, Moama (Cummeragunja), Mungindi, Nowra (Orient Point), Toomelah, Walcha and Wollongong (Coomaditchie). The Program involves the repair of "health hardware" such as sewerage, water supply, cooking appliances and other items which otherwise can result in health or safety risks. In 2003-04 the Program will be expanded to **another 260 homes** in New South Wales. NSW Health is managing these projects in partnership with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. Since 1997, more than **1,090** houses have had some form of repair work undertaken as part of the Housing for Health programs. This equates to over 11,000 separate repair jobs.

NSW Health is also delivering similar projects under the **Fixing Houses for Better Health** program in partnership with the Aboriginal Housing Office and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) to another **190 homes in eight communities**, those being: Bega, Bodalla, Eden, Goulburn, Moruya, Narooma, Queanbeyan and Yass. These projects should all be completed in 2003-04.

RECOGNISING ABORIGINAL CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Two hundred and fifty years ago, the area now known as New South Wales hosted 70 Aboriginal languages and dialects. Today many of these languages have fallen into disuse while others have few surviving fluent speakers.

Recognising this, the Government has allocated **\$1.019 million** over four years to establish a **New South Wales Aboriginal Languages Resource and Research Centre**. Funding of **\$257,000** will be allocated to this program in 2003-04. In addition, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in collaboration with the New South Wales Department of Education and Training and the New South Wales Office of the Board of Studies, is coordinating the development of a whole of government **New South Wales Aboriginal Languages Policy**.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs has put forward a successful proposal to increase Aboriginal involvement in the **New South Wales Environmental Trust**. In 2003-04, **\$523,000** will be allocated to this program, which has four elements:

- ◆ an **Aboriginal member** on each of the Environmental Trust's Technical Review Committees;
- ◆ **Protecting our Places**, a grants program targetted specifically at Aboriginal communities and organisations. This program commenced in 2002-03 and the Trust has agreed to continue it for two more years with funding of **\$500,000** per annum in 2003-04 and 2004-05;
- ◆ a specialist **Technical Review Committee** to assess applications under the Protecting Our Places Program; and
- ◆ an identified **Aboriginal position** to work with Aboriginal communities to increase their access to the Environmental Trust and their involvement in land management and environmental education projects.

The **Aboriginal Archives Project** involves the management of records relating to the Aborigines Welfare Board. These records are held at the State Archives, although they are owned and managed by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. This project will assist Aboriginal people to have easier access to files relating to themselves and their families. In the last twelve months, **96 Aboriginal people** have used the files to search for their families. In 2003-04, **\$129,000** will be allocated to this project.

Additional funding of **\$6.5 million** over three years has been allocated to the National Parks and Wildlife Service for cultural heritage programs including the return of the following lands to Aboriginal owners: Mount Grenfell Historic Site, Mt Yarrowick Nature Reserve, Jervis Bay National Park, Biamanga and Gulaga National Parks, Stockton Bight and Warrell Creek. This is being coordinated by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Registrar, *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*. Funding will commence in 2004-05.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service of New South Wales contributes to the Government's social justice objectives through a range of programs and initiatives which helps to meet the needs of Aboriginal communities. Examples of recent significant commitments and programs include:

- ◆ celebrating **Aboriginal Communities Week** (NAIDOC) (**\$30,000** recurrent allocation) to work in partnership with Aboriginal communities to foster awareness and understanding of cultural heritage protection and management issues; and
- ◆ the **Aboriginal Discovery Education Program** which includes walks, talks and tours interpreting Aboriginal cultural heritage (**\$40,000** recurrent allocation), with provision for capacity building and employment of Aboriginal people to interpret their heritage and deliver cultural heritage education to the broader community.

The NSW Heritage Office and the Heritage Council of NSW have a responsibility to ensure that Aboriginal sites are represented on the State Heritage Register. The **Heritage Incentives Program** funds Aboriginal heritage projects such as oral history, heritage site protection, heritage site promotion and heritage site works in New South Wales. Funding of **\$200,000** has been allocated to Aboriginal heritage projects in 2003-04.

The Heritage Council of NSW and the NSW Heritage Office will continue the **Aboriginal Heritage Committee** (**\$50,000** recurrent allocation), with Aboriginal community representation from across the State to advise the Heritage Council about statutory listings, grant applications and other community requirements.

The Office of the Registrar (*Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*) will allocate **\$359,000** during 2003-04 to:

- ◆ assist with the satisfactory operation of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* on behalf of Aboriginal people in New South Wales; and
- ◆ ensure Aboriginal people are registered as Aboriginal owners of land for the purposes of the joint management between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people of conservation estates in New South Wales.

PROMOTING ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

To assist the Aboriginal community in the development of water-based farming and aquaculture enterprises, the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources will allocate **\$5 million** over two years to the **Aboriginal Water Trust**.

The **Aboriginal Business Development Program**, managed by the Department of State and Regional Development, provides a range of initiatives designed to assist Aboriginal people start and develop viable and sustainable businesses and achieve a higher level of economic independence. In 2003-04, **\$530,000** will be allocated to the Program.

The programs and services delivered to Indigenous businesses include:

- ◆ **Indigenous Business Advisory Service** – provides free business guidance and information to start-up and establish Aboriginal businesses throughout New South Wales;
- ◆ **Aboriginal Business Links Program** – provides financial assistance to Aboriginal businesses to access mainstream business development programs. The program also provides assistance for firms to participate in trade fairs, exhibitions and other trade networking and promotion events; and
- ◆ Initiatives under the **Budyari Ngalaya, First Peoples' Business Partnerships Program**, such as:
 - a panel of mentors to advise companies and Aboriginal people on the best ways to work together; and
 - support for Aboriginal enterprises to identify a growth path for their operations and to assist them undertake business development activities.

The **Indigenous Fisheries Strategy** has been allocated **\$1.6 million over two years**, commencing in 2002-03, with **\$800,000** being allocated in 2003-04. This Strategy aims to foster greater understanding of Aboriginal cultural issues; acknowledge the importance of traditional cultural fishing; and encourage the involvement of the Indigenous community in the emerging aquaculture industry.

IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The New South Wales Department of Commerce, **Office of Industrial Relations** is committed to delivering a range of relevant industrial relations services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout the State. The Department's **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workplaces Services Unit** was established in August 1999 to coordinate the delivery of these services. In 2003-04, **\$114,500** will be allocated to the Unit.

The Unit works to provide New South Wales Indigenous people with better access to information about their employment rights and responsibilities. The Unit has compiled an **Employment Information Kit** and publishes a quarterly newsletter advising of updates and changes to New South Wales industrial laws.

The **Premier's Department** has a key role in improving employment outcomes for Aboriginal people in New South Wales.

During 2002-03 the Department, through a partnership with the then Federal Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business, established the **Aboriginal Employment in Practice Support Strategy**. During 2001-02 this program assisted in the employment of **217 Aboriginal people** across New South Wales. The extended strategy aims to assist in the employment of a **further 250 Aboriginal people** by December 2003. The Department has allocated **\$55,000** in 2003-04 to conduct the Strategy.

In 2003-04, the Premier's Department will finalise the **Management Development Program for Aboriginal People in the Public Sector** accredited as a Diploma in Management. The **14 management trainees** are finalising major research reports, including a social responsibility framework for a government trading enterprise, a new model for improving Aboriginal community resilience and a proposal to improve employment of Aboriginal people in the corporate sector. In 2003-04, **\$60,000** has been allocated to the Program.

The **Aboriginal Communities Development Program** develops employment and training opportunities in local communities. In 2003-04, existing **employment and training activities** will receive a further **\$1.87 million** and employment and training will commence in an **additional five communities** including Collarenebri, Condobolin, Moree, Lightning Ridge and Toomelah/Boggabilla. This will include an estimated **36 apprenticeship or traineeship places** for a total of **\$360,000**.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service program for **employment of Aboriginal staff**, including Site Officers and Heritage Officers, has been allocated **\$3.3 million** in 2003-04.

NSW Health has extended its **Aboriginal Environmental Health Officer Traineeship Program** for Aboriginal Environmental Health Officers. There are now **nine trainees** in the program. Four people have already graduated from the program with another two expected to graduate in 2003-04.

ENSURING SAFER COMMUNITIES

The **Redfern-Waterloo Partnership Project** is a **\$7 million** plan over three years to prevent crime and improve the quality of life in Redfern and Waterloo. Features of this package include an anti-drug strategy, an Intensive Family Support Service, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Counselling Service, Aboriginal In-Home Family Support Services and community improvement initiatives, including redevelopment of "The Block". In 2003-04, **\$2.5 million** has been allocated to the Project.

Specific projects in 2003-04 include:

- ◆ The **Redfern, Eveleigh and Darlington (RED) Strategy** which will focus on improving the physical environment and strengthening the local economy. It will integrate the development of the area from the Australian Technology Park, the Redfern shops, "the Block", Redfern Station and the TNT Towers. Funding of **\$137,500** has been allocated for the RED Strategy.
- ◆ An **Audit of Human Services** provided by government and non-government agencies will be used to inform any changes to service networks operating in Redfern and Waterloo. Funding of **\$160,000** has been allocated to this program.
- ◆ A **Community Engagement Framework** will increase community participation and leadership, and develop better working relationships between government and the local community. Funding of **\$45,000** has been allocated to this program.
- ◆ The **Redfern/Waterloo Street Team** works with children and young people who are at risk of harm or of getting involved in anti-social behaviour. The Street Team provides advice and support and links young people with other programs such as counselling, recreational and sporting activities in Redfern and Waterloo. Funding of **\$810,000** has been allocated to this program.

The **Aboriginal Community Patrols Program** involve the co-ordination of local volunteers who pick up “people at risk” from public places and accompany or transport them to a safe place. In 2003-04, **14 Aboriginal Community Patrol programs** will operate, and **\$250,000** has been allocated to fund the program.

WORKING TOWARDS A MORE RESPONSIVE JUSTICE SYSTEM

The development of the **NSW Aboriginal Justice Plan** will provide a comprehensive framework for the New South Wales Government and Aboriginal communities to work in partnership to reduce the number of Aboriginal people coming into contact with the criminal justice system, improve the quality of services and help develop safer communities. This plan will provide direction about where resources need to be targeted.

The **Department of Juvenile Justice** has several programs in place to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the juvenile justice system. In 2003-04, **\$1.3 million** has been allocated to these programs, including **Bail Accommodation Support** and **Local Offender** programs.

In addition, the Department’s **Aboriginal Over-Representation Strategic Plan** provides improved coordination and strategic focus to work already being undertaken by the Department. The Department’s Aboriginal Unit is overseeing the implementation of this Plan.

Australia’s first **Circle Sentencing** trial provides an innovative community approach that is reducing offending, supporting victims and building confidence in the justice system. The circle sentencing trial is being expanded to include Dubbo, Brewarrina and Walgett. Circle sentencing is an alternative sentencing court for adult Aboriginal offenders and involves the magistrate, victim, defendant, legal representatives and Aboriginal community representatives. In 2003-04, funding of **\$365,000** has been allocated to this program.

The **Aboriginal Specialist Program** has created 15 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander positions at Local Courts in metropolitan and regional areas with high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations. The program aims to improve access to the services of Local Courts and the Attorney General's Department through the:

- ◆ promotion of services available to assist Aboriginal clients and communities;
- ◆ provision of information and education programs aimed at informing communities of their legal rights and how they can more effectively exercise them; and
- ◆ provision of direct support to Aboriginal persons appearing at Court - whether as defendants, witnesses or victims of crime.

Aboriginal Specialists also work with other agencies to run crime prevention programs and programs to reduce re-offending.

SUPPORTING RECONCILIATION

In 2003-04 an additional **\$100,000** will be provided to the **NSW Reconciliation Council** to support Local Reconciliation Groups in a range of activities including:

- ◆ an **Information Technology Project** for training in Community Technology Centres;
- ◆ a **Small Grants Program** for local reconciliation projects;
- ◆ a **Local History Project** which will be run over four years in one New South Wales community. The project will identify a significant local historic event and seek to commemorate or recognise its significance;
- ◆ a **consultant Field Officer** will be contracted to provide information, training and support to local reconciliation groups; and

- ◆ the New South Wales State Reconciliation Council is working with the Department of Education and Training to develop a **Reconciliation Resource Kit** for distribution to New South Wales schools, local reconciliation groups and community organisations.

1.2 SUPPORTING OLDER PEOPLE AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

New South Wales is home to many people who have special needs due to their age or disability. Thirteen percent of the population of the State is aged over 65 and about one million people have a disability. The Government has initiated a range of programs to help individuals who have difficulties in accessing services and opportunities that are more readily available to other citizens. These include programs to improve employment opportunities, service delivery and accessibility for older people, people with a disability and their carers, and a range of vocational training and education programs.

Accessible and effective service delivery is a Government priority, particularly to meet the needs of those who may require support from a number of agencies or a range of services.

The **Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care** is working towards three main outcomes for older people, people with a disability and their carers:

1. Facilitating community resources and relationships for older people, people with a disability and their carers.
2. Prevention, early intervention and basic support services that enable older people, people with a disability and their carers to live independently. The Department purchases and provides services such as domestic assistance, transport, meal services, learning and life skills development, and early childhood intervention services to achieve this outcome.
3. Equitable and sustainable assistance to older people and people with a disability who have higher support needs. The Department purchases and provides accommodation services and intensive in-home support services, such as personal care and home nursing, to achieve this outcome.

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care's total recurrent funding for 2003-04 is **\$1.18 billion** – an increase of **\$114 million** over the 2002-03 budget estimate.

The **Home and Community Care Program (HACC)** provides a range of services to enable frail older people, people with a disability and their carers to live independently in the community. These services include domestic assistance, personal care, home nursing, allied health, respite care, case management, counselling, social support, home maintenance and modification, food services and transport services.

In 2003-04, expenditure will increase by an estimated **\$46.8 million** to maintain current home and community care services and allow the purchase of additional services that **enable frail older people, people with a disability and their carers to live independently in the community**. The expenditure will assist in:

- ◆ improving the availability of HACC services in response to unmet demand;
- ◆ meeting the continued growth in demand for HACC services as a result of the ageing of the population; and
- ◆ augmenting services for younger people with a disability.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

An additional **\$33.8 million** will be made available in 2003-04 for **support services for people with a disability**. The funding will help meet the growing demand for disability services, ensure that existing access to services is maintained and enable the implementation of reforms to the disability service system.

An additional **\$1.5 million** has been provided in 2003-04 for the **Boarding House Reform Extension** initiative. This program will:

- ◆ allow the relocation of licensed residential centre residents with high support needs to more appropriate community-based supported accommodation;
- ◆ provide additional support services in the form of personal care, health care and recreational and training programs for people remaining in licensed residential care centres; and
- ◆ provide transitional support and accommodation for residents affected by licensed residential care closures.

Additional **personal attendant care services** will be made available for people with physical disabilities to help them perform everyday tasks such as getting out of bed, showering, dressing, eating and drinking, and other personal activities. Additional funding of **\$28.5 million** has been allocated over four years, with **\$2 million** allocated in 2003-04.

A **Transition Rehabilitation Pilot Project** will be set up to assist people with physical disabilities move more quickly from acute care and rehabilitation into the community. The Motor Accidents Authority will contribute **\$1 million** in 2003-04 and \$1 million in 2004-05 to the pilot project, which the Authority is undertaking with the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and NSW Health.

Funding of **\$1.6 million** in 2003-04 rising to \$3.2 million in 2004-05 will be provided for additional **flexible respite care packages** to assist younger people with a disability, their families and carers.

The **Spinal Cord Injury and Conditions Fund** will be set up to promote biomedical research into spinal injury, disorders and neurological conditions. **\$1.7 million** will be allocated to this fund in 2003-04.

Active and Able, a joint initiative between the Motor Accidents Authority of New South Wales and Department of Sport and Recreation is designed to assist people with a disability, particularly those acquired through a motor vehicle accident, to participate in mainstream sport and physical activity. There are several pilot projects being conducted as part of the project with funding of **\$100,000** for 2003-04.

In 2003-04, the **Department of Sport and Recreation** will sponsor the following programs:

- ◆ the **Disabled Athlete Scholarship program**, which enables elite athletes with disabilities to increase their participation in sporting activities (**\$105,000**);
- ◆ the **NSW Sports Council for the Disabled** (approximately **\$230,000**);
- ◆ assisting athletes with disabilities and their escorts – where appropriate – competing in approved **international competitions** (**\$25,000**); and
- ◆ the **New South Wales Sport and Recreation Awards for Athletes with a Disability** (**\$10,000**).

THE TRANSPORT ACTION PLAN

The **State Rail Authority** has undertaken a significant amount of community consultation in the process of acquiring new trains which will be more accessible than the current fleet. In 2003-04 key capital projects will include new easily accessible suburban and inter-urban rolling stock.

CityRail will continue to upgrade railway stations across the network for wheelchair access. There are currently 65 accessible stations which assist seniors, the disabled and parents with prams. In 2003-04, **Easy Access station upgrades** include the completion of **seven locations** currently in progress and the addition of **five new sites**. The upgrades include lifts and/or ramps, tactile tile indicators for the visually impaired, and family accessible toilets.

The **State Transit Authority** is providing new buses with low floors to provide better access for the aged, disabled and children. A total of **\$45 million** will be spent on this program in 2003-04 to purchase an additional **170 low floor buses**.

PROVIDING CONCESSIONS FOR PENSIONERS, SENIORS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The New South Wales Government provides an extensive range of concessions and support services for pensioners, seniors, people with disabilities, and other members of the community who require assistance.

A range of measures have been introduced by the Government to reduce the financial impact of owning and operating motor vehicles for pensioners. These concessions are administered by the **Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA)** and include:

- ◆ a total of **\$117 million** for pensioner motor vehicle tax concessions in 2003-04;
- ◆ a total of **\$29 million** for pensioner concessions on vehicle registration fees; and
- ◆ a total of **\$19 million** for drivers license concessions to pensioners.

The RTA also administers a number of new programs aimed at providing access to facilities and assistance with mobility for the aged and disabled. These include:

- ◆ enhanced infrastructure and facilities for pedestrians with physical and vision impairments (**\$610,000** in 2003-04);
- ◆ installation of lifts and **improved access to RTA motor registries** and premises (**\$1.202 million** in 2003-04); and
- ◆ provision of **special parking concessions** to people with certain mobility disabilities (**\$7.8 million** in 2003-04).

The **Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme** provides taxi travel at a half rate subsidy to residents who are unable to use public transport because of a qualifying severe and permanent disability. In 2003-04, **\$15.6 million** has been allocated to this program.

The **Pensioner Excursion Travel Program** provides for unlimited pensioner and seniors travel on all CityRail services and most State Transit Authority services on the day of ticket purchase. A total of **\$178.8 million** has been allocated to support this program in 2003-04.

Funding is allocated to **Countrylink** for the provision of subsidised travel on Countrylink services. A total of **\$44 million** has been allocated to this program in 2003-04.

Private transport operators are provided with concession payments to meet the cost of **subsidised concession travel**. A total of **\$32.5 million** has been allocated to meet these costs in 2003-04.

The Budget provides for concessions to social security beneficiaries and other financial assistance including **\$77.5 million** in 2003-04 for **local council rate rebates**. Under the scheme, eligible pensioners are granted a 50 percent concession on local government rates, with a maximum rebate of \$250. The Government funds 55 percent of this cost to councils, with the other 45 percent being taken up by the councils themselves. Where councils are involved in the provision of water supply or sewerage services, the maximum reductions of \$87.50 in respect of water supply charges and \$87.50 in respect of sewerage charges are also available to eligible pensioners.

The Government funds **half fare concessions** on State Transit Authority services for the unemployed and for others in the community who receive Commonwealth allowances, together with first, second and third year apprentices and tertiary students. The estimated cost of these State Transit concessions is **\$28 million** in 2003-04. People with a visual impairment are provided with free travel on State Transit services.

A **Pensioner Energy Rebate**, currently \$112 per annum, is provided to eligible pensioners through a discount on their energy bills. The energy rebate was introduced on 1 January 2002 and replaced the separate electricity and gas rebates pensioners previously received. In 2003-04, a total of **\$81.668 million** will be allocated to this program.

The Government also provides emergency relief through the **Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) Scheme**. Vouchers are distributed by accredited charities and community welfare organisations to financially disadvantaged households to prevent energy disconnection. The Government will provide around **\$8.2 million** in funding for this program in 2003-04.

The **Life Support Rebate** program ensures that electricity remains affordable and available to users of specific life support equipment, including dialysis machines and oxygen concentrators. In 2003-04, **\$2.05 million** has been allocated to this program.

Concessions for water charges to pensioners will total **\$70.3 million** from Sydney Water and **\$7.6 million** from Hunter Water in 2003-04. Those in receipt of a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card and some holders of Department of Veterans Affairs cards qualify for the concession.

The **Hunter Water Corporation** receives around **\$8.5 million** each year from the New South Wales State Government as **Social Program Funding**. This funds pensioner concessions and water and sewerage charges for exempt properties such as churches and public benevolent organisations.

The **Sydney Water Corporation** administers the **Payment Assistance Scheme (PAS)** worth **\$500,000 annually** to help special needs customers pay their water bills. PAS vouchers, worth \$25 each, are distributed by accredited charities and welfare organisations and are redeemable against Sydney Water bills. From 1 April 2002, the PAS was extended to include special conditions so that in certain circumstances private tenants (as well as home owners) may receive assistance.

From 1 July 2003, Hunter Water will similarly make available a **Payment Assistance Scheme (PAS)** program to assist customers in financial difficulty. Under this program, Hunter Water customers will be able to apply to nominated welfare agencies for assistance. Each voucher has a value of \$25 and the level of assistance will be determined by the participating welfare agency. Its planned budget for 2003-04 is **\$105,000**.

Sydney Water has committed a total of **\$470,000** in funding (\$400,000 available in 2003-04) so that a number of disadvantaged customers can receive **financial assistance for their properties' sewer connection**. Sydney Water will fund all costs of connection to the sewerage system for those customers identified by charity organisations as disadvantaged.

The **Charitable Goods Transport Subsidy Scheme** is administered by the Department of Community Services. The Scheme currently provides reimbursement to 22 charitable organisations for the cost of transporting miscellaneous goods such as donated medicines, trauma teddies, non-perishable food, physiotherapy tables and Recycled Clothing. The budget for 2003-04 is **\$2 million**.

To improve the affordability and accessibility to the Waterways Authority's products and services the Authority issues concession **general boating licences, vessel registrations** and **private mooring licences** to persons in receipt of Commonwealth pensions. This program has been allocated **\$2.5 million** in 2003-04.

1.3 MEETING THE NEEDS OF WOMEN

The New South Wales Government recognises that women want to be safe, healthy and well-educated, that they are interested in applying their skills in their careers and communities, and that time spent with family is highly valued.

The **Department for Women** was established by the New South Wales Government in 1995 to significantly improve opportunities for women and respond to the needs and issues facing women in New South Wales. The Department's purpose is to develop a strategic agenda focusing on women's access to and participation in all aspects of society, particularly economic development. A strong emphasis is on building strategic partnerships and communities.

Working with the whole of government, business and the community, the Department's objectives reflect the issues that women in New South Wales have identified as important. They also incorporate the **New South Wales Government Action Plan for Women 2002-2004** (www.women.nsw.gov.au). The plan reflects the Department's core vision of social justice, a sustainable environment, economic development and fiscal responsibility.

The Department for Women has a budget of **\$5.7 million** in 2003-04.

A significant component of the Department for Women's budget (**\$1 million**) goes to funding its annual **Women's Grants Program** which provides non-recurrent funding for not-for-profit organisations to run a range of projects focusing on achievable improvements for women.

LISTENING TO WOMEN'S VIEWS

Established in 1995, the **Premier's Council for Women** is an effective consultative mechanism for the Government in meeting its social justice objectives. The Premier's Council for Women provides expert advice to the Premier, through the Minister for Women, acting as a permanent forum for exchange of information between the Government and the women of New South Wales on relevant issues.

Since 1997 the Council, in conjunction with the Department for Women, has consulted with women in Albury, Broken Hill, the Central Coast, Clarence Valley, Dubbo, metropolitan Sydney and Taree. Following these consultations, reports have been provided to the Premier detailing the views and interests of women from those communities. The Council has an operating budget of **\$58,000** in 2003-04.

PROVIDING ADVICE TO WOMEN

The **Women's Information and Referral Service** provides advice and referrals on a wide variety of issues and topics of significance for women across New South Wales. Multilingual staff are able to provide culturally appropriate information for women. The service has a budget allocation of **\$280,000** in 2003-04.

IMPROVING WOMEN'S HEALTH

The **Women's Health Program** delivers a range of health services to women including cancer prevention, counselling, sexual health services and anti-violence strategies and support. Funding of **\$5.3 million** will be provided to Area Health Services and non-government organisations to deliver this program in 2003-04.

Continued funding will also be provided to develop community education programs to prevent the occurrence of female genital mutilation and to minimise harm to those girls and women at risk. The program is conducted by the Western Sydney Area Health Service. Funding of **\$200,000** has been allocated to this program in 2003-04.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO LEADERSHIP ROLES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

The Government is taking a leading role in devising and implementing strategies to assist women and girls into more leadership roles in the public and private sectors. It continues to actively encourage more women to nominate for positions on regionally-based economic and community boards, and to take on roles in rural decision-making organisations.

Over its next four year term, **\$25,000** has been allocated to promote strategies such as the **Premier's Register for Women** and the **Getting More Women on Boards** forums that will enable women to occupy 50 percent of all new appointments on Government boards and committees.

A **Diversity and Leadership Foundation** will be established with the private sector to develop new strategies to promote women into senior levels of management and onto boards.

The Government is developing a training and support program for women on local councils. This program has been allocated **\$18,000** in 2003-04. The Government will also continue to encourage women, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from non-English speaking backgrounds, and women with disabilities, to participate in local government.

IMPROVING WORK CONDITIONS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

Five thousand targeted **workplace inspections** will be conducted across the State over the next four years making sure that workers receive their just entitlements, particularly in those industries where most workers are women, migrants or the young. The cost of these inspections is estimated at **\$3.6 million** in 2003-04.

In 2003-04, **\$100,000** has been allocated to develop promotional material for retailers who have adopted the **Ethical Clothing Code** to assist consumers in choosing ethically-made clothing.

Over the next four years, the Government will provide more than 550 extra training places for outworkers in **Recognition of Prior Learning Programs** in clothing production, English language courses and vocational skills in childcare, food preparation and computing. An additional **\$600,000** in funding has been provided for these programs over and above existing budgetary allocations.

In 2003-04, **\$100,000** has been allocated to the **Working Women's Centre** to provide women with information, advice and support on work-related issues.

The **Mature Workers Program** assists women over 40 years of age who are disengaged from the workforce.

The **Lucy Program**, currently being developed by the Department for Women, is designed to mentor female university students who aspire to corporate careers in the private or public sectors. The program will be implemented in 2003-04, with a budget allocation of **\$10,000**.

EMPOWERING INDIGENOUS WOMEN

A **NSW Action Plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women** has been developed through the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Unit within the Department for Women to achieve lasting advances in the status of indigenous women. Approximately **\$50,000** has been allocated to the development of this program in 2003-04.

The NSW Ministry for the Arts will conduct two projects in Bourke and Brewarrina with young Aboriginal mothers – **Healthy mothers, healthy families**. The projects will be funded by a **\$100,000** grant from the Department of Health.

The Casino Community Benefit Fund will provide **\$23,842** to the **Women's Legal Resource Centre** to assist with the improvement of young Aboriginal women's understanding of their legal rights.

SUPPORTING BUSINESS WOMEN

Women business owners make up a significant part of the small business sector and contribute to business growth and employment. At the same time, women business owners have the challenge of balancing business and family commitments. In order to support women to start, manage and grow small businesses, **\$220,000** will be allocated in 2003-04 to the **Women in Business Program**.

Under the Women in Business Program, businesswomen are offered business mentor programs, growth strategy workshops and customised initiatives for regionally based businesswomen.

The **Women in Business Mentor Program** assists emerging women business owners to grow their business by linking them with experienced business mentors. The **Women in Business Workshop** series provides practical training on a range of business management and growth topics. The **Women in Business Regional Program** assists participants to improve their business management skills, identify business growth strategies and extend their local business networks.

IMPROVING THE BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND FAMILY LIFE

An allocation of **\$20,000** in 2003-04 will be provided to publish a new edition of the successful *Maternity at Work*. It will contain comprehensive information on occupational health and safety issues for pregnant women.

A dedicated **Work and Family Website** will also be developed over the coming year. It will provide information on how to balance work and family responsibilities, for example by organising job-sharing or setting up home-based work arrangements. Funding of **\$6,000** has been allocated to developing the website in 2003-04.

The Government will seek to identify the barriers to implementing **family friendly workplaces** in the children's services sector and develop an easy-to-read guidebook to help the industry establish successful work and family practices. These programs have been allocated **\$40,000** in 2003-04. **Increasing leave entitlements for parents who adopt children** is another goal that the Government is working towards.

SUPPORTING WOMEN IN RURAL AND REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

The Department for Women has an ongoing commitment to promoting and supporting the participation of women in the economic, social, cultural and environmental development of rural and regional New South Wales.

Business Workshops for Women in Industry is a joint venture between the Department for Women, the Office of Western Sydney, and the Macarthur Business Enterprise Centre to pilot a series of workshops for women working in industry in the Western Sydney area to develop skills in information technology, marketing, human resources and networking/mentoring. This project aims to build and extend women's skills base and build the capacity of working women in the region. Funding of **\$10,000** has been allocated to this program in 2003-04.

The Department for Women's highly successful **Women on Wheels Project** will be offered to communities throughout the Far South Coast, Snowy Mountains, South West Slopes and Southern Tablelands regions in late 2003, bringing information and increased access to government and community services to women and their families. More than **\$70,000** has been allocated to this project in 2003-04.

IMPROVING HOUSING OPTIONS FOR WOMEN

The **Department of Housing** provides a range of services for women clients. Of those clients using the Department's services, 63 percent of tenanted households are run by women, 56 percent of waiting list applicants are women, 50 percent of priority applicants are women and 56 percent of elderly applicants are women. Within the community housing sector, women and girls make up 57 percent of residents in long-term accommodation. Of households in long-term accommodation, almost half are families with children, including sole parents (35 percent) and couples with children (13 percent).

In 2003-04, the Department will continue the program begun in 2002-03 to **upgrade women's refuges**. The program will improve the safety of refuges, provide a more appropriate standard of accommodation, and better meet occupational health and safety standards.

An **After Hours Temporary Accommodation Line** is operated by the Department of Housing. Temporary accommodation is provided in low-cost hotels, motels and similar accommodation, to people who are in housing crisis or homeless while they make longer term arrangements. This service extends to the Sydney Metropolitan area, Central Coast, the Hunter, Nowra and Wollongong. During 2003-04 over **800 women** are expected to use this service, with the majority receiving temporary accommodation or being referred to more appropriate options.

The Department for Women is developing a **Rental Housing for Aboriginal Women Project** with funding of **\$5,000** in 2003-04. It will examine the barriers to Aboriginal women securing housing through the private rental market in Western Sydney, and will provide one of the case studies for Partnerships Against Homelessness.

IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG WOMEN

The Department for Women's **GirlSavvy Workshops** will be run at high schools in at least 40 towns across NSW during 2003-04. These workshops promote job readiness and encourage girls and young women to think about the benefits of achieving financial independence and economic empowerment. Provision will also be made to assist with follow-up mentoring for participants in areas of high need, especially Aboriginal girls. The funding for this program in 2003-04 is **\$40,000**.

The number of **Summer Schools for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds** will be expanded in 2004 and will encourage young women to explore career options in traditionally male-dominated industries. Approximately **\$1.1 million** has been allocated to this program in 2003-04.

A representative from the NSW Youth Advisory Council will be appointed to the **Premier's Council for Women** to enhance its work with young women.

1.4 PROMOTING CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

New South Wales is a culturally diverse society with a quarter of its population born overseas. Citizens of New South Wales come from 200 nations and speak more than 80 languages. About half of those born overseas are from Europe and close to a third from Asia. The largest migrant groups are people of Chinese, Arabic, Italian, Greek and Vietnamese descent. Cultural diversity is one of New South Wales' greatest strengths, and the New South Wales Government is committed to promoting its value.

The **Community Relations Commission for a multicultural NSW** (the Commission) actively contributes to the New South Wales Government's social justice objectives. The principles of multiculturalism which were enshrined in legislation in March 2001 ensure that all individuals in New South Wales have the greatest possible opportunity to participate in all aspects of public life. These principles incorporate the concepts of equity, access, participation and rights, which form the basis of the Government's social justice strategy. The Commission's total expenses in 2003-04 are **\$15.5 million**.

The Commission's role as lead agency in ensuring the advancement of community relations throughout New South Wales has meant that innovative and progressive projects have been implemented that either work closely with particular communities or delve into issues pertaining to a broad cross section of communities. The concept that New South Wales is a community of communities underpins each project undertaken or initiated by the Commission.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Access to government services relies on the ability of the service provider and the client to be able to communicate effectively. The Commission provides **interpreting and translating services** in over 75 languages to all Government departments and agencies, private and commercial organisations, community groups and individuals. In 2003-04, **\$6.5 million** will be allocated for language services to facilitate communication and the effective delivery of services by agencies to all their clients.

The Commission's **Online Services Project** provides a common entry point for the community to obtain information about relevant community groups and the government, as well as being able to interact with each other. The Project also allows Internet booking of interpreting services and the provision of the whole range of translation services. In 2003-04 the Online Services will receive funding of **\$458,000**.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

The **Youth Partnership Initiative with Arabic-Speaking Communities** is a cross-departmental project that is working towards strengthening community relations in New South Wales. This partnership seeks to provide young people with better learning opportunities, sport and recreational activities and parental support for long-term personal development. In 2003-04, **\$1.434 million** will be allocated to the Youth Partnership initiative.

The Partnership is led by the NSW Premier's Department and includes the Community Relations Commission, Department for Education and Training, Department of Community Services, Department of Sport and Recreation, Bankstown Health and the University of Western Sydney.

The Youth Partnership Initiative with Arabic Speaking Communities runs a number of programs, including:

- ◆ **Youth liaison teams**, which are located in Bankstown, Parramatta, Liverpool, Auburn and Darling Harbour. In 2003-04 a youth liaison team will be established in Rockdale. These teams make contact with young Arabic people in public places and provide support and information for young people who may be at risk of harm and/or of risk-taking behaviour. The Community Relations Commission will also implement a **community liaison strategy** between members of the Partnership and the Arabic speaking community. Funding of **\$179,000** will be allocated to these programs in 2003-04.
- ◆ **Homework Plus Primary**, which is a new program which will operate for four centres and will target Arabic speaking students in Years 4 to 6 who would benefit from additional support after school hours, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Arabic speaking parents from the local school communities will also be offered courses related to the school-work being undertaken by their children. Funding of **\$114,000** has been allocated to this program in 2003-04.
- ◆ The **Intensive Family/Parent Support Service**, which is an intensive support and counselling service for families with complex needs who are in crisis. It aims to reduce the risk of abuse and neglect that can lead to children being removed from their families. Funding of **\$375,000** has been allocated to this program in 2003-04.
- ◆ **School Based Family Support**, which provides a service to students who have been identified as being at risk from disconnection from education, and develops innovative strategies in identified schools to support students to continue with their education. Funding of **\$150,000** has been allocated to this program in 2003-04.

The **Youth Partnership with Pacific Islander Communities** will receive funding of **\$1.1 million** over three years to build the state wide partnership and deliver community strengthening initiatives. In 2003-04, more than **\$440,000** has been allocated from Community Solutions to strengthen Pacific Islander communities in Canterbury-Bankstown and Mt Druitt.

The Commission will establish a **Community Harmony Round Table** for the Canterbury Bankstown area to promote community harmony across cultures and generations, and build the capacity for the local community and government agencies to develop and sustain harmony. Funding of **\$224,000** has been allocated to this initiative in 2003-04.

Regional advisory councils identify and provide advice to the Commission on multicultural issues affecting people in regional areas. The councils monitor and report on the implementation, value and effectiveness of Commission initiatives in regional areas and facilitate communication with relevant community groups. In 2003-04, **\$460,000** will be allocated to the Regional Advisory Council program. There are ten regional advisory councils, covering the Albury, the Central West, Griffith and Leeton, Hornsby-Wyong, Hunter, Illawarra, New England, Northern, and Macarthur-Liverpool and Penrith-Blacktown regions.

GRANTS TO COMMUNITY GROUPS

Government funding to communities through the grants process allows for community-based organisations to undertake projects for the benefit of our multicultural community.

The Commission's **Community Development Grants Program** is an inclusive grants and subsidies program that encourages participation of people from culturally diverse communities in all aspects of life in New South Wales. In 2003-04, **\$1.5 million** will be allocated under the Program.

Multicultural street festivals promote community harmony and diversity in local government areas. In 2003-04, **\$55,000** will be allocated to local councils for multicultural street festivals.

The **Community Partnerships Scheme** is a funding program of the Commission that funds projects responsive to emerging community needs. In 2003-04, the Commission will allocate **\$150,000** to the scheme.

PROMOTING THE ARTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The Ministry for Arts provides funding for a range of arts organisations and projects which benefit local communities and populations under its **Cultural Grants Program**. Within the program there are a number of other initiatives which address social justice priorities.

The **Community Cultural Development Program** will provide **\$2 million** in 2003-04 to encourage artists and communities to develop and participate in a variety of activities that reflect cultural diversity.

The Ministry for the Arts also supports **Carnivale**, a festival to assist the New South Wales community to celebrate its cultural diversity, by providing **\$755,000** in 2003-04.

The **Powerhouse Museum** has a long history of researching, documenting and exhibiting materials of importance to the migration history and community heritage of New South Wales. The **Movable Heritage Research Centre** will expand thematic work in migrant heritage and facilitate the development of linkages and partnerships with communities and institutions throughout the State. One of the main focuses of the Centre's research is on preserving collections and holdings in regional and rural communities.

The **Migration Heritage Centre NSW** is an initiative of the New South Wales Government led by the Premier's Department. The Centre is now located at the **Powerhouse Museum**. The aim of the Centre is to promote projects with community groups and the cultural, education, government and business sectors to increase the recognition of the historic and contemporary contribution made by migrant communities to cultural heritage.

PROMOTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS

A **Multicultural Campaign** to promote New South Wales as a tourism destination will be allocated **\$200,000** in 2003-04 by Tourism NSW.

Business migration makes a significant contribution to the business growth of New South Wales. The Government supports business migrants through the **Business Migrant Information and Referral Service** which is run by the Department of State and Regional Development. An allocation of **\$25,000** will be provided in 2003-04 for this service to provide one-on-one business guidance, business seminars, information on investment opportunities and referrals to government departments and services.

CHAPTER 2: STRONG, SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The New South Wales Government is taking a multi-pronged approach to building strong, safe and sustainable communities. The Government is working to build on community strengths, emphasise prevention and early intervention, and achieve genuine cross-agency collaboration.

2.1 SUPPORTING FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Strong and caring families are an important foundation for a healthy functioning society. To give young children the best start in life the Government is committed to paying particular attention to children in families where there is economic or social disadvantage. Specific programs are aimed at helping young people, supporting vulnerable people and strengthening communities.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN 0 - 8 YEARS

Families First is a coordinated State Government strategy to support families with children aged 0-8 years. Families First links early intervention and prevention services and community development programs. These form a comprehensive service network providing wide-ranging supports to help families raise healthy, well-adjusted children, connect with each other for support and prevent problems before families find themselves in crisis. The Families First service networks are planned at the local level to ensure that services are relevant to local families and can be adapted to their changing needs.

Families First is an inter-agency strategy that is delivered by five departments, including: the Departments of Community Services, Education and Training, Ageing, Disability and Homecare, Housing and NSW Health, with The Cabinet Office coordinating the program. In 2003-04, **\$28 million** will be allocated across NSW Health (Area Health Services), The Cabinet Office and the Department of Community Services.

Over the next four years, **\$117.5 million** is being spent on Families First.

By July 2004, Families First will be operating in all areas of New South Wales. Families First is improving support for families in a variety of ways:

- ◆ by providing extra early childhood nurses who are able to contact more families with newborn babies and support them in their home;
- ◆ through volunteers providing practical help and advice to families with very young children in many communities;
- ◆ by employing Family Workers to help parents increase their parenting skills;
- ◆ by providing more playgroups for families which are run by early childhood trained staff;
- ◆ by improving access to information on parenting;
- ◆ through more community projects where families have improved access to the services they need and more opportunities to be supported by other families;
- ◆ by providing services for Aboriginal, non-English speaking and young parents; and
- ◆ by improving communication between services that support families, particularly those families with more complex needs.

The **Alternative Birthing Program** is a community based model of care aimed at improving maternal and perinatal outcomes for Aboriginal women and their children. In 2003-04, **\$700,000** will be allocated to this program.

The Department of Sport and Recreation has allocated **\$79,000** towards the ongoing operation of the **NSW Playground Advisory Service**. The Advisory Service will provide advice and support to local councils, schools, childcare facilities and other organisations responsible for children's play areas regarding appropriate design and construction to ensure safe and welcoming play environments for young children.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN 9 - 18 YEARS

The **Office of Children and Young People** in The Cabinet Office coordinates the development of policies and programs which affect the lives of children and young people in New South Wales.

In July 2001 the New South Wales Government launched **Better Futures: An Action Framework for Vulnerable Young People in New South Wales**. Its central messages are that all young people should have the opportunity to lead rewarding and positive lives, and that there are practical things that government, families and communities can do, working together, that can be helpful in minimising risk for vulnerable young people and in building resilience.

Part of this Strategy, the **Better Futures Regional Strategy**, has received **\$2.6 million** funding under the 2003-04 budget. The Strategy will focus on communities where young people are more vulnerable, helping these communities to reduce risk factors for young people and better meet their needs. In 2003-04 the program will be rolled out in Broken Hill, Cessnock, Gosford, Menai, Penrith and Wollongong.

The Strategy will be implemented through joint regional planning by a wide range of agencies to identify needs, current services and gaps in the provision of services for young people. To facilitate this process, **\$10.8 million** in funding has been allocated over four years from 2002-03.

PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The **Department of Community Services'** main role is providing support and protection for children and young people in our community, and to provide responsive services to help families and communities within New South Wales. The activities of the Department include child protection, assisting families to protect and care for their children, providing accommodation and support services for young people who live away from their families, providing support and accommodation for people who are homeless and in crisis, supporting vulnerable people, regulating childcare, and co-ordinating services for people affected by disasters.

In December 2002, the Government announced an additional **\$1.2 billion over five years** would be provided to the Department of Community Services. This will fund **875 new caseworker positions**, and is in addition to 130 newly funded positions announced in mid-2002. The aim of the package is to improve outcomes for children and young people in child protection and out-of-home care, and to provide prevention and early intervention assistance so that high risk families do not come into the statutory care system. A **capital injection** of over **\$60 million** will also be provided in the same period.

In 2003-04, the Department of Community Services' total expenses to meet the Government's commitment to provide support and protection to children, and to help families will be **\$803.2 million**. This is an increase of **\$162.1 million**, or **25.3 percent**, on the 2002-03 Budget.

The **Prevention Services** program will be allocated a total of **\$183 million** (an increase of **\$12.7 million**, or **7.4 percent**) incorporating Children's Services, Family Services, Parenting Services, Youth Development, Community Development and Support Services, Essential Concessions, and Families First – Connecting Families and Community. Key objectives of these services include:

- ◆ Planning and provision of funds towards the delivery of early childhood and related services for children. The Department's **early childhood services program** will contribute over **\$97.3 million** in 2003-04 to over 1800 services, including preschools, day care centres and vacation care services. This includes funding to assist families on low incomes with the cost of fees and to provide services for children with special needs.
- ◆ Provision of support for **community development and support services** through Neighbourhood Centres, effective prevention services, family education and assistance to communities to build their capacity for life management. This support will be provided via funding from the Community Services Grants Program as well as administration of essential concessions to assist families in times of temporary need.
- ◆ **Support and assistance to children, adolescents and families under stress or in crisis.** This support is intended to enable parents and carers to be better able to care for themselves and their children, to provide young people with opportunities for self-development, and to reduce the isolation of people in communities by increasing their ability to engage in community activities.

In 2003-04, **\$187.9 million** (an increase of **\$34.3 million**, or **22.3 percent**) will be allocated to **Early Intervention**, incorporating Family and Personal Support Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, Supported Accommodation Assistance, Domestic Violence Support Services, and Disaster Recovery Assistance. Key objectives of these services are the provision of:

- ◆ early intervention services to support families, children and young people who are at risk of abuse, family breakdown, or involvement with alcohol and drugs;
- ◆ a range of support services to women and children escaping domestic violence;
- ◆ transitional support and accommodation services to families, children, young people, men and women experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness;
- ◆ support and funding to non-government agencies; and
- ◆ statewide coordination and provision of immediate and long-term disaster recovery assistance to families and communities that have experienced disadvantage due to natural and other disasters.

A total of **\$181.7 million** (an increase of **\$50.4 million**, or **34.9 percent**) will be allocated to **Intensive and Statutory Intervention Services**, including Child Protection Services. The key objectives of these services are:

- ◆ to provide intensive intervention and statutory services to protect children from risk and harm;
- ◆ to implement a range of child protection initiatives that comply with requirements of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* for the care and protection of children;
- ◆ to support families in the care of their children; and
- ◆ assessment/investigation and intervention with respect to children in need of protection or at risk of harm.

A total of **\$250.5 million** (an increase of **\$64.7 million**, or **34.8 percent**) will be allocated to **Out-of-Home Care and Adoption Services**, incorporating Out-of-Home Care and Adoption Services. The key objectives of these services are:

- ◆ to provide alternative care options for children unable to live at home;
- ◆ to ensure that young people have the support and skills they need for independent living following a period in care;
- ◆ to plan and provide funding to non-government agencies to deliver a range of accommodation and support services to children and young people across New South Wales;
- ◆ to assist people to adopt children, and young people from within and outside Australia; and
- ◆ to provide information and assistance to people wishing to contact their natural parents.

These services also provide a range of out-of-home care options, such as:

- ◆ foster care and residential care for children separated from their parents;
- ◆ the monitoring and review of placements;
- ◆ the authorising and management of carers; and
- ◆ support for young people who are leaving or who have left care.

The **NSW Attorney General's Department** funds and supports three "**Streetbeats**", which provide outreach support, transport, advocacy and referral for young people on the streets at night.

The **Office of the Children's Guardian** works with children and young people, families and carers, community based organisations and government departments to improve out-of-home care for children and young people in New South Wales. Proclamation of the remaining sections of Chapter 10 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*, which sets out the functions of the Children's Guardian, is scheduled for 2003-04. This will enable the Children's Guardian to conduct up to 1,000 case file audits of children and young people in care. The Office will be allocated **\$3.026 million** in 2003-04.

The Commission for Children and Young People is an independent organisation that reports directly to the New South Wales Parliament. It acts as an advocate for the children and young people of New South Wales and promotes their participation in decisions that affect them. The Commission brings about positive changes that improve the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the State's children and young people by:

- ◆ researching and monitoring trends into children's welfare, safety and wellbeing;
- ◆ advising government and non-government agencies;
- ◆ informing and educating children, young people, the community and professionals; and
- ◆ conducting inquiries into issues important to children and young people.

The Commission is also responsible for implementing and monitoring laws that affect all people working with children and young people in New South Wales. The Commission will be allocated **\$6.5 million** in 2003-04.

SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

The Government is committed to improving out-of-home care services for Aboriginal children and young people and to ensuring that out-of-home care arrangements are culturally sensitive.

Enhanced funding of up to **\$1 million** will be allocated to **Aboriginal out-of-home care service providers** in 2003-04 to improve arrangements for Aboriginal children and young people in need of out-of-home care services. More than **\$200,000** in additional funding will be allocated in 2003-04 to improve services and support for **Aboriginal children and young people leaving out-of-home care**.

In 2003-04, DoCS will spend an additional **\$800,000** to establish **two new intensive support services** for Aboriginal families based in Bourke and Wollongong. Funding will increase to \$1.3 million from 2004-05. These services expand on the success of Malanee Bugilmah, an Aboriginal family preservation service established by DoCS in Casino in 1994. The new services will work with Aboriginal families, and in particular, carers, to address safety and welfare concerns for Aboriginal children who are reported to DoCS.

To provide improved focus for its work with Aboriginal clients, families and communities, and enable it to provide better support for its Aboriginal staff, DoCS will establish a specialist **Aboriginal Services Branch** at an annual cost of **\$1.6 million**. The Branch will provide expert input to ensure that DoCS' policy-making and program-management activities are culturally appropriate and effective.

SUPPORTING RURAL FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES IN NEED

The **Rural Financial Counselling Service** operated by NSW Agriculture aims to strengthen rural families, businesses and communities. The Department will provide approximately **\$1.02 million** to 25 rural community groups to assist the employment of 33 rural financial counsellors throughout New South Wales in 2003-04. The Rural Financial Counsellors provide confidential financial counselling advice and support to farm families experiencing financial difficulty and who are unable to afford such services from commercial providers. The cost of operating each Service is met jointly by the Commonwealth and New South Wales Government as well as the local community in a ratio of 50:25:25. In response to the drought, an **additional \$825,000 million** will be provided by NSW Agriculture to enhance this service during 2003-04.

NSW Agriculture employs 9 **drought support workers** located throughout rural New South Wales. They operate as a primary line of assistance to farmers affected by the drought to inform them of the assistance available to them, refer them to the appropriate agencies, liaise with those agencies and to report back to government on situations that may need further attention. The Department will provide approximately **\$425,000** to maintain this service during 2003-04.

A key activity of the Drought Support Workers has been to facilitate **Farm Family Gatherings** for drought affected families. These provide a family friendly opportunity for support agencies to disseminate information and for farmers and their families to share experiences and take a break from the day to day emotional stress of living with drought. Approximately 75 Gatherings were held in drought affected regions of the state during 2002-03. Several people from each meeting have been found to be in urgent need of assistance and have been referred to appropriate agencies. NSW Agriculture will provide **\$274,000** to promote further Gatherings during 2003-04.

2.2 IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The Government's social justice agenda is underpinned by responsible financial management and economic development, which are necessary for achieving better social outcomes. Economic growth generates wealth and jobs, which in turn provides opportunities to improve the lives of citizens.

The Government is committed to improving service and employment opportunities, developing community assets and promoting active participation in community life.

2.2.1 DEVELOPING OPPORTUNITIES IN RURAL AND REGIONAL AREAS

Since 1995, the New South Wales Government's business and community economic development programs have created and retained more than **35,800 jobs** and stimulated private investment of more than **\$6.5 billion** into country communities.

The **Department of State and Regional Development** administers a number of programs that are targeted at support for rural and regional communities. This includes the provision of export advice and quality services to advance the State's economic development. Fundamental to the Department's activities is the Government's goal of providing a high and improving standard of living for the people of the State. The Department adopts a whole-of-government perspective in approaching this undertaking and actively encourages and supports the interests of the business sector and the community in its work.

In 2003-04, **\$1 million** will be allocated to the **Community Economic Development Programs** administered by the Department. These programs include the **Main Street/Small Towns** and the **Developing Regional Resources Programs**. The programs are designed to help communities in regional New South Wales to take a strategic and pro-active approach to their economic future and to explore opportunities to diversify from the traditional economic base and add value to local resources.

An allocation of **\$300,000** has been provided for the **Townlife and Village Futures Program** in 2003-04. This program is aimed at assisting small regional communities facing hardship with populations of less than 2,500, and will help these communities to develop products, services and markets that will lead to new economic activity.

The **New Market Expansion Program** assists country businesses to enter new domestic and international markets. In 2003-04, **\$500,000** has been allocated to this program.

The **New Export Opportunities** program assists small to medium sized enterprises, large companies and existing exporters. One in four regional jobs is dependent on exporters. **\$800,000** will be allocated to this program in 2003-04. Regional Export Advisers are located in Bathurst, Coffs Harbour, Gosford, Nowra, Parramatta, Tamworth and Wagga Wagga. They provide export advice and assistance to regional companies to help them expand and grow their export business. In addition, **Business Missions** and **Market Visit Programs** will be offered to regionally based exporters to develop markets in overseas countries.

In 2003-04, **\$3.243 million** will be allocated to the Premier's Department for the **Regional Coordination Program**. The Program now covers all of rural, regional and metropolitan New South Wales.

Under the Regional Coordination Program, Regional Coordinators and government agencies are working with communities to address issues impacting on their quality of life. A particular strength of the Program has been its capacity to lead and support initiatives that address local issues. The participation of Local and Commonwealth Government agencies, non-government organisations and business and other community stakeholders is actively promoted.

Specific initiatives include:

- ◆ The **River Towns Project** in Western New South Wales, which is assisting the Brewarrina, Bourke, Walgett and Wilcannia communities to become more resilient and robust by strengthening their capacity to respond to social and economic change and where able resolve issues locally.
- ◆ The development of a protocol for government co-ordination of significant new plans and developments in the **Western NSW Region**. The protocol will spell out general principles for state and local government co-operation and procedures for development applications, which must be referred to one or more state agencies.
- ◆ The **Myimbarr Family Youth Project** (Shellharbour and Wollongong), which is developing an innovative cross-agency, multi-disciplinary approach to care management and support for Aboriginal families with multiple support needs.
- ◆ The **Small Community Service Initiative** (Gunning-Crookwell), which is developing a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to service delivery for this rural town.
- ◆ The **Aboriginal Youth Program** (Eurobodalla), which is providing young Aboriginal people with access to supportive services and activities. It has demonstrated the benefits of bringing agencies together to plan and implement innovative programs and activities.

The Government policy of **relocating Government jobs to regional and rural NSW** will continue, with a further 636 jobs relocated and 475 new positions created in rural and regional New South Wales before the end of 2005 including:

- ◆ completing the establishment of the Centre of Excellence in Land and Water Management at Dubbo during 2003 (100 jobs);
- ◆ relocating the Department of Mineral Resources to Maitland by the end of 2004 (200 jobs);
- ◆ relocating the State Debt Recovery Office to Lithgow during 2004 (132 jobs);
- ◆ creating new Corrective Services positions at the new Kempsey prison due to open in 2004 (180 jobs);
- ◆ creating new Corrective Services positions at the new Wellington prison due to open in 2005 (200 jobs); and
- ◆ relocating Department of Corrective Services jobs from Sydney to Goulburn in 2005 (109 jobs).

These initiatives not only reduce overall rental expenditure, they provide thousands of new regional employment opportunities and, in most cases, millions of dollars of investment in new infrastructure. They also provide an economic boost to regional centres through increased spending.

The **Petroleum Products Subsidy Scheme** administered by the Office of State Revenue assists businesses in northern New South Wales by ensuring that they are able to compete with sellers of petroleum products in Queensland. In 2003-04, a total of **\$38 million** will be provided to fund the Petroleum Products Subsidy Scheme in Northern New South Wales.

A total of **\$18 million** in 2003-04 has been allocated to provide **motor vehicle tax concessions** to primary producers. This will reduce the impact of owning a motor vehicle for primary producers.

The Government is also continuing to work towards providing easier access to Government information and services for people living in rural New South Wales through the creation of **67 “one stop shops”** for the provision of such services as car registration renewals, boating licence renewals and applications for birth certificates. **\$1.2 million** has been allocated to this program in 2003-04.

2.2.2 IMPROVING ACCESS TO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

In 2003-04 the Office of Information Technology will spend **\$340,000** managing the *ReConnect.nsw Computer Reuse Program*, which will distribute unwanted Government computers to socially disadvantaged individuals and community groups, as well as ongoing development of resources for the ICT Skills Community Education Program to encourage individuals to develop computer skills.

In 2000 the New South Wales Government established the four year Community Technology Centre Program. The Program is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments. By June 2004 the Program will have established **55 Community Technology Centres (CTCs)** facilities providing services to over 100 regional and rural towns in NSW.

In 2003-04 the [CTC@NSW](#) Program will continue to provide support for communities in managing and operating programs focussing on the needs of the community including seniors, young people, Aboriginal communities, people with disabilities and women. The [CTC@NSW](#) Program will also continue to work with NSW Government Agencies to facilitate government program delivery to regional and rural NSW communities through CTCs.

New South Wales' 48 **Rural Lands Protection Boards** will have new information technology systems installed over the next three years. This will be a major part of a new disease surveillance and response network capable of minimising the effects of a disease outbreak. Improved stock identification will also reduce theft. The Government has allocated **\$3.5 million** in funds to this program over three years, of which **\$1.4 million** is allocated for 2003-04, plus an additional **\$522,000** from Rural Lands Protection Board funds.

The **Women's Gateway**, located at www.womens.gateway.nsw.gov.au is the first population portal online under the *connect.NSW* strategy. It makes available a single entry point to a wealth of information and resources on topics of interest and importance to women in New South Wales. The Women's Gateway is funded **\$110,000** in 2003-04.

Through the existing **Women's Gateway** site, a **Life Events** pathway to information and services on the Internet is currently being developed. It will provide online access to services and information regarding important life events such as having a baby or going back to work. This project has been allocated **\$40,000** in 2003-04.

An **Aboriginal Portal** is now being developed, based on the Department of Women's concept. The portal will seek to provide the Aboriginal community with information about services, contacts or events that are relevant to their needs. Funding of **\$165,000** has been allocated to this program in 2003-04.

2.2.3 IMPROVING MARINE INFRASTRUCTURE

The **Waterways Asset Development and Management Program** provides infrastructure for the benefit of the boating community. Infrastructure projects include new and upgraded public wharves and boat ramps, and additional sewage pump-out facilities. The initiative is funded by the Waterways Authority, usually as a 50:50 subsidy with Local Government. In 2003-04 **\$2 million** has been allocated to this program.

2.2.4 INCREASING ACCESS TO THE ARTS AND LIBRARIES

The State's **eight cultural institutions** all provide programs which develop community capacity and promote active participation. The exhibitions and public programs of the Australian Museum, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, the Powerhouse Museum, the State Library of New South Wales and State Records NSW reach into communities across the State.

New initiatives by the **Ministry for the Arts** in 2003-04 include:

- ◆ Regional museums and galleries **volunteers training (\$50,000)**;
- ◆ **Cultural planning assistance** to assist local councils develop cultural plans (**\$50,000**);
- ◆ **Contemporary Dance** to provide support and promote the small to medium dance sector in New South Wales (**\$125,000** in 2003-04 and \$250,000 a year thereafter).

The **Western Sydney Arts Strategy** will provide **\$250,000** in 2003-04 for the Western Sydney Capital Infrastructure Program to improve cultural facilities and the Western Sydney Local Government Arts Incentive Fund which assists local councils to undertake various arts projects as part of their cultural planning.

In addition to significant funding provided to Indigenous arts, the Ministry for the Arts' **Indigenous Arts Fund** provides small, quick response assistance to subsidise Indigenous artists for various projects. The Fund receives recurrent funding of **\$30,000** a year.

The **State Library of NSW** will be distributing **\$21.998 million** in 2003-04, an increase of more than \$1 million from last year, to the State's public libraries network to enable the purchase of more books, replacement of old stock and meet increasing demands for new technology through the NSW.net project.

2.3 DEVELOPING COMMUNITY CAPACITY AND PROMOTING ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

In some areas of New South Wales strong, energetic, participatory and vibrant communities exist without government assistance or facilitation. In other areas, building communities requires government to bring people, businesses and Government together. Community building seeks to create communities that find their own solutions to issues within their communities. Coming up with their own solutions to problems that affect them, adapting what has worked elsewhere and enlisting support from government or other partners, gives people a sense of achievement and empowerment. Community building is based on people participating, individually and as a community, to create change.

2.3.1 STRENGTHENING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The **Strengthening Local Communities Strategy** is a **\$1.52 million** strategy over four years (2000-04) co-ordinated by the Premier's Department. The Strategy contributes to community renewal and capacity building projects across New South Wales including community financing initiatives, neighbourhood development activities, not for profit sector organisation development initiatives and project evaluations. The Strengthening Local Communities Strategy specifically targets support to the non-government sector and has an emphasis on 'sustainability' through balancing and integrating social, environmental and economic concerns in particular locations. The Strategy will have **\$330,000** to allocate in 2003-04.

The New South Wales Government's **Community Builders** web site (www.communitybuilders.nsw.au) aims to help local communities across the State share ideas on how to enhance and strengthen their community. The Premier's Department coordinates communitybuilders.nsw as a joint Government and community project in partnership with a wide range of people involved in community building. **\$238,000** will be allocated to the website in 2003-04.

The **Area Assistance Scheme** (AAS) involves a partnership between the New South Wales Government, local councils and the community in developing, funding and managing community projects. The Scheme focuses on areas that are experiencing significant social and economic stress and change, and aims to build stronger communities and community infrastructure. During 2003-04, commitments to **284 projects** will account for the funding allocation to the value of **\$9.9 million**.

The **Casino Community Benefit Fund** is forecast to spend approximately **\$9 million** on services or programs with a significant social justice component during 2003-04. This money will fund projects that are directed at alleviating gambling-related harm. This is consistent with legislative and policy harm minimisation initiatives that have been introduced over recent years.

Programs funded in 2003-04 include:

- ◆ **Wagga Wagga Family Support Service** to assist with the provision of a centre based and outreach service to problem gamblers and their families, including financial counselling and early intervention and community education, **\$251,459**;
- ◆ **Wesley Gambling Counselling Service, Surry Hills** to assist with the provision of a counselling and treatment service for problem gamblers and their families, **\$477,663**;
- ◆ **Lifeline Western Sydney** to assist with the provision of bi-lingual counselling services for problem gamblers and their families, **\$199,941**;
- ◆ **Mission Australia, Nowra** to assist with the provision of a comprehensive counselling and treatment service for problem gamblers and their families, **\$230,407**;
- ◆ **Multicultural Problem Gambling Service** to assist with the provision of a multicultural problem gambling counselling and treatment service and specialised training programs for bilingual counsellors working with people from non-English speaking backgrounds who have gambling problems, **\$521,963**; and
- ◆ **G-line (NSW)** 24 hour telephone counselling helpline for persons affected by gambling problems, **\$892,690**.

The **Department of Local Government** encourages local councils to embrace social justice principles and practices through initiatives such as the Social/Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines and Manual. These initiatives have minimal impact on the Department's budget and are accommodated within general operating costs.

2.3.2 STRENGTHENING RURAL COMMUNITIES

In 2003-04, **\$1 million** will be allocated to the **Rural and Regional and Miscellaneous Grants Fund**. The Fund was established in 1999 to support local initiatives across rural and regional New South Wales. Since then funds have been allocated to **over 80 communities**. Towns which have received grants vary widely in size, location and economic capacity, for example: Bulli, Clarence Town, Clunes, Dungog, Evans Head, Geurie, Glen Innes, Gunbar, Humula, Murrurundi, Nimbin, Oberon and White Cliffs.

In 2003-04, **\$150,000** will be provided to support the work of the **Regional Communities Consultative Council** (the RCCC). The Council advises on rural and regional policies and services; recommends initiatives to advance social, economic and environmental development; and consults with rural and regional communities regarding community issues, solutions and opportunities.

2.3.3 WORKING WITH NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

Capacity Building for Non-Government Organisations administered by the Premier's Department, is identifying the key organisational development challenges which the State's non-government organisation sector will have to address over the next 5 years. Proposals are being developed in the areas of information technology and management, financial management and fundraising, pooled purchasing of goods and services, governance, management support and organisational change. This project will be allocated **\$50,000** in 2003-04 from the Strengthening Communities core budget.

Beginning in 2001, the Government commenced the **\$17.7 million Human Services Agencies Better Service Delivery Program** to enhance communication and improve client referral services between government agencies providing community support services and non-government organisations. In 2003-04, **\$5.6 million** will be provided to commence the installation of computers and communications links in non-government organisations and implementation of the client referral and service directory tools in government and non-government organisations.

2.4 IMPROVING COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELLBEING

The New South Wales Government is committed to improving the safety and wellbeing of the citizen's of New South Wales. This is being done by focussing on the causes of crime across the State, and significantly increasing funding for crime prevention and community building.

2.4.1 WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES TO FIND SOLUTIONS

The **Community Solutions and Crime Prevention Strategy** is a five year program that was established to directly address the causes of crime in local communities. It provides packages of multi-agency responses to crime and social issues facing communities, including family violence and the needs of young people and children at risk, allocating funding over and above that already provided for crime prevention and capacity building. The development of strategies for dealing with crime on a local level occur through partnerships between residents, community workers, police, local councils and State Government agencies.

The program has been allocated **\$50 million** between 2002 and 2006. It operates in 19 locations across NSW with the following allocation of funds in 2003-04 (total allocated funding for these locations to 2005-06 are provided in brackets). These are **Bankstown/Canterbury - \$1.555 million** (\$3.139 million), **Bourke - \$165,000** (\$540,000), **Bellambi/Corrimal - \$231,000** (\$575,000), **Brewarrina - \$178,936** (\$324,000), **Cessnock - \$560,000** (\$1.13 million), **Gosford Peninsula - \$256,876** (\$533,752), **Gunnedah - \$80,000** (\$190,000), **Kempsey - \$525,000** (\$1.105 million), **Kings Cross/Woolloomooloo - \$587,710** (\$1.238 million), **Miller - \$310,000** (\$2.428 million), **Mount Druitt - \$5.343 million** (\$13.95 million), **Nimbin - \$206,000** (\$478,000), **Nowra - \$352,500** (\$1.157 million), **Redfern/Waterloo - \$1.25 million** (\$2.22 million), **Taree - \$385,000** (\$850,000), **Walgett - \$148,000** (\$443,000), **Warilla - \$790,000** (\$1.349 million), **Warrawong/Berkeley - \$480,000** (\$1.029 million), and **Wyong - \$881,842** (\$1.808 million).

In addition, Community Solutions funding is used to enhance place management projects. Three place management projects will receive funding in 2003-04. These are **Booragul/Bolton Point - \$165,500** (\$376,000), **Wentworth - \$200,000** (\$405,000), and **Moree - \$160,000** (\$408,000).

In 2003-2004 the **Safer Communities Development Fund**, managed by the Attorney General's Department, will provide over **\$1.5 million** to support locally based and developed initiatives to address the causes of crime. The Fund supports a diverse range of prevention and intervention programs, including:

- ◆ **Rural Crime Fact Sheets**, which provide best practice farm crime prevention advice for rural communities;

- ◆ the **U-Turn Project**, which aims to nurture cross-cultural understanding and harmony among young people in Miller by building a canoe using traditional Aboriginal and Maori carving techniques; and
- ◆ the **Young People and Shopping Centres Protocol**, which aims to reduce the rapidly growing number of young people who enter the criminal justice system due to conflicts with security guards in public spaces.

The Attorney General's Department also supports Councils to develop **local community crime prevention plans**. These plans recognise and address the factors that increase the risk of unlawful and anti-social behaviour in a local setting. Thirty-nine councils have had crime prevention plans endorsed as Safer Community Compacts and have subsequently been awarded a Safer Community Compact grant to implement key initiatives within their plans.

The Aboriginal Justice Advisory Council is establishing **Aboriginal Community Justice Groups** throughout New South Wales. Aboriginal Community Justice Groups are representative groups of Aboriginal people who come together to examine crime and offending problems in their communities and develop solutions to those problems in cooperation with police, the Departments of Juvenile Justice and Corrective Services and Local Courts.

Police Accountability Community Teams provide a forum where community views about police visibility, police deployment and crime hotspots can be considered by the Local Area Command when making decisions about the deployment and tasking of resources. Each Command is accountable to the local community for those decisions. Local Members of Parliament, local Mayors, and the heads of the local State Chambers of Commerce are invited to attend meetings. The Commander may also invite other community representatives at his/her discretion. Police Accountability Community Teams aim to develop local solutions to local problems in partnership with local stakeholders. This initiative is funded by NSW Police from within its existing budget.

The NSW Fire Brigades has committed **\$25,000** for the **Smoke Alarm Battery Replacement for the Elderly and Disabled (SABRE)** program. The local fire station forms a partnership with councils and community carer organisations to maintain battery operated smoke alarms in the homes of the aged and disabled. Fire fighters at local fire stations maintain a register for the regular maintenance of the smoke alarms of the aged and disabled. SABRE also involves carers who regularly have contact with the aged and disabled. This is a state wide program.

2.4.2 REDUCING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The **NSW Strategy to Reduce Violence Against Women** is funded by the NSW Attorney General's Department, NSW Health, NSW Police, the Department of Community Services and the Department of Housing in partnership with the Department for Women and the Department of Education and Training to a total of **\$1.9 million** in 2003-04.

The Strategy aims to prevent all forms of violence against women, recognising the needs of diverse groups in the community. Activities of the strategy include prevention and early intervention, at both a state-wide and regional level. The strategy works in partnership with other government agencies, non-government organisations and communities. Over the next three years, the strategy will be focussing on prevention of sexual assault, working with Aboriginal communities and young people, and criminal justice responses.

The Violence Breeds Violence project will conduct research on the extent of domestic violence in newly arrived refugee communities settling within the Greater Western Sydney area. It will devise training resources for agencies working with these groups and develop innovative models of service delivery to better address the needs of these newly arrived refugee women and children who are experiencing domestic/family violence. In 2003-04, \$97,000 has been allocated to this project.

2.4.3 IMPROVING SAFETY ON OUR ROADS

Additional funding of **\$13 million** over four years, commencing in 2003-04, has been provided to accelerate the **upgrading of railway level crossings** on 114 high speed rail corridors. The proposal assists people in regional and rural New South Wales.

A total of **\$350,000** has been allocated in 2003-04 to provide **audio-tactile push buttons at traffic lights** to assist people with visual impairment.

2.4.4 INCREASING SAFETY AT WORK

WorkCover NSW contributes to the New South Wales Government's priority of improving community safety and wellbeing by promoting safe and secure workplaces. It works in partnership with the New South Wales community to achieve safe workplaces, effective recovery and return to work for injured workers.

Following the **NSW Workplace Safety Summit** in July 2002 the Government has committed over **\$13 million** over four years to help implement the 132 recommendations put forward by conference delegates. Funding of **\$4.6 million** has been allocated in 2003-04.

A **Community Awareness Campaign** costing **\$5.5 million** in 2003-04 will focus on assisting small businesses to comply with the new occupational health and safety regime, which will commence on 1 September 2003. The media budget includes specific targets in the regional and ethnic media, and will include closed captioning to assist people with hearing impairments.

WorkCover has allocated a further **\$5 million** in 2003-04 to its **WorkCover Assist Program** to support registered trade unions and employer associations to help their members understand and adopt new requirements arising from new legislation. This will ultimately translate into a reduction in the incidence of occupational illness and injury as well as the costs of workers compensation claims in New South Wales.

As part of its **Small Business Strategy**, WorkCover will provide **\$28,000** in 2003-04 to implement a three year **Information Strategy to engage Aboriginal communities**. This program aims to increase Aboriginal communities' understanding of the new Occupational Health and Safety legislation, and includes culturally appropriate information and education activities.

An allocation of **\$200,000** has been made to **Targetsafe 100** which will work in partnership with industry to improve occupational health and safety and injury management performance for workers and workplaces in most need.

The **Paralympian Sponsorship Program** currently sponsors five Paralympic athletes, who were injured in the workplace, to help promote workplace safety. Participating athletes attend workplaces, industry groups, conferences, media events or dinners to give first-hand accounts of how their accidents occurred. They also discuss measures that could have been taken to prevent such accidents occurring and outline their efforts to return to the workplace. In 2003-04, **\$100,000** has been allocated to this program.

2.4.5 ENSURING SAFETY AT SEA

Waterways provides a range of services and funding to ensure the safety of the boating public and broader community in New South Wales.

Waterways provides funding to **volunteer marine rescue organisations** to assist them in meeting the cost of rescue units, upgrading rescue coordination centres and marine radio bases and purchasing new rescue vessels. A total of **\$622,000** has been allocated to this program in 2003-04.

To improve the awareness of boat operators of weather conditions prior to departure, Waterways provides subsidised boating weather forecasts. Approximately **26,000 calls** to the **Weather Service telephone line** were made during the 2003-03 summer period. Waterways has allocated **\$82,000** to subsidise this service in 2003-04.

To improve outcomes for **volunteer rescue organisations** in terms of safety, Waterways provides free products and services to volunteer rescue organisations such as Surf Life Saving NSW and the State Emergency Service. Included in the program are free licences, moorings and vessel registrations, which total **\$93,000** in 2003-04.

CHAPTER 3: STRENGTHENING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Government is committed to providing high quality school and vocational education and training options for all citizens of New South Wales. Overall expenditure on education in this year's budget is **\$8.159 billion**, and increase of **\$542 million** or **7.1 percent** over last year's budget.

A high quality public education system is a key pillar of the Government's social justice strategy. The public education system is critical in securing a democratic, egalitarian and well-educated community for our children and succeeding generations. Education provides students with the knowledge, skills and capabilities to live productive and fulfilling lives. The **Department of Education and Training** supports the Government's commitment to public education by ensuring that all public school and TAFE students can reach the highest educational standards.

REDUCING CLASS SIZES

By 2007 there will be a reduction in class sizes in Kindergarten classes to statewide averages of 20, in Year 1 classes to statewide averages of 22, and in Year 2 classes to statewide averages of 24.

In 2004 all Kindergarten classes in the 425 schools that are currently part of the **Priority Schools Funding Program** will be reduced to an average of 20. To implement this program **14,074 new teachers** will be employed over the next four years.

Recurrent funding of **\$222 million** and capital funding of **\$107 million** over four years is being provided. In 2003-04 recurrent funding of **\$6 million** and capital funding of **\$18.65 million** has been allocated.

IMPROVING LITERACY AND NUMERACY STANDARDS

The Government's **Literacy and Numeracy Strategy** focuses on new teaching programs and provides a framework of statewide testing at key stages. Testing includes English Language and Literacy Assessment, Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program, the Primary Writing Assessment Program, Count Me In Too and Counting On. This strategy improves the literacy and numeracy achievements of all groups of students as has been demonstrated by the performance of New South Wales in national and international benchmarking exercises.

As part of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, the Government will allocate approximately **\$25 million** in 2003-04 for **Reading Recovery** to enable more teachers to be trained, additional schools to join the program and more young students to be helped with literacy. In 2003, the program is **available in 837 schools** and is taught by **924 teachers**. By the end of 2003, **more than 2,150 teachers** will have been trained in **specialist Reading Recovery techniques** that can also be used in general classroom teaching. Reading Recovery provides targeted and intensive support to students experiencing reading and writing difficulties after one year of school.

The **Priority Schools Funding Program** provides additional support to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for students in schools with high concentrations of students from low socio-economic status backgrounds and increase their participation in schooling. 541 schools are part of this program.

The **Premier's Reading Challenge** is an initiative to encourage reading and a love of quality literature which is designed for students in the middle years of schooling. From the beginning of 2004 the Premier's Reading Challenge will be expanding to Kindergarten to Year 4 students.

HELPING SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS OVERCOME DISADVANTAGE

Funding of **\$1.9 million** in 2003-04 for the **TAFE Youth at Risk Program** will provide support for disadvantaged young people in the community by providing pathways for further education and employment.

The successful **Summer Schools** program, which allows students from years 9, 10 and 11 from disadvantaged areas to attend specialist vocational courses during their summer holidays to get a head start, will continue in 2003-04. **Approximately \$1.1 million** has been allocated to this program in 2003-04.

Programs which promote and develop **access to education and training** for groups in the community which are under-represented in vocational education and training will be allocated **\$3 million** in 2003-04. Programs include the **NSW Apprenticeships for People with Disabilities and the Mature Workers Program**. The **Group Training (Joint Policy) Program** assists a large number of disadvantaged groups to gain access to the labour market through apprenticeships and traineeships.

The **Plan-It-Youth community mentoring program** matches trained adult mentors from the local community with students at risk of leaving school early. The community mentors support these young people to plan their education, training and employment pathways. The program operates in the Central Coast, Campbelltown, Shellharbour, Lake Macquarie, Taree and Wagga Wagga School Districts.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY IN SCHOOLS

Since 1995, the Government has embarked on a massive investment in information and communication technologies in schools, to ensure that all young people develop the skills required for the jobs of the future.

The successful **Computers in Schools** plan will be continued in 2003-04. Computers in Schools consists of a number of programs that include:

- ◆ **Increasing Network Bandwidth**, which is an ongoing initiative that will continue to progressively upgrade bandwidth in schools and TAFE colleges. Total recurrent and capital funding in 2003-04 is **\$73.1 million**.
- ◆ **E-learning for staff and students in schools and TAFE**, which is an ongoing project that will provide e-mail accounts for teachers and students, filtered access to the Internet, and discussion forums and Web-hosting facilities for schools and colleges. Remote access will be available from locations such as homes and libraries.
- ◆ The **Computer Skills Assessment Program**, which has been allocated **\$3.9 million** in 2003-04 for all **Year 6 students** in Government schools. This was introduced in 2001 to ensure students have the necessary computing skills for secondary school.
- ◆ The **Technology in Learning and Teaching** program, which is continuing to provide teacher training in schools in the use of the latest computer technology. The program funds will be used to increase the level of professional development funding for schools. It will receive **\$4.4 million** in 2003-04.

SAFE AND SECURE SCHOOLS

The **School Watch Program** will be expanded into more schools. The program currently operates in 79 schools and will be increased to 100 in 2003-04.

INCREASING ACCESS TO EDUCATION

An allocation of **\$446.8 million** in 2003-04 will be made to the **School Student Transport Scheme** administered by the Ministry of Transport. This provides free travel to and from school for eligible students on Government and private bus, rail, and ferry services, school charter services, long distance coaches, and in private vehicles where no public transport services exist.

Over \$290 million in targeted funding will be allocated over four years, for **rural students in Government schools**. This includes funding to support nineteen Distance Education Centres, staffing betterments to smaller schools, isolated schools grants and staffing supplements for central schools.

The **Living Away From Home Allowance** with a total expenditure of **\$836,000** will enable support for students who are required to live away from home to access a secondary school. The Allowance in 2003 is **\$1,052** per student.

An **independent learning strategy for women from non-English speaking backgrounds** studying through the TAFE Open Training and Education Network will be implemented in 2003-04.

Arts Access is a new program which will give teachers and students in remote and disadvantaged schools access to performance and education programs by leading performing and visual arts companies. In 2003-04, this program has been allocated **\$100,000**.

NSW Agriculture will provide **\$175,000** in 2003-04 for Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture's **Aboriginal Rural Training Program**. This program develops and delivers accredited training for rural and remote Aboriginal communities as well as correctional centres and schools.

MEETING THE DEMAND FOR CASUAL TEACHERS

A statewide **Casual Teacher Call Centre** is being established at a cost of **\$5.2 million** over four years. This will streamline the process for finding casual teachers and mean that school principals right across NSW only have to make one call or send one e-mail to find a casual teacher. The Casual Teacher Call Centre will be rolled out progressively during 2003 with all schools and casual teachers being on line by the end of Term Three. The program has been allocated **\$1 million** in 2003-04.

Primary school flying squads will be trialled for primary schools in the areas around Campbelltown, Minto and Green Valley, and another established in Moree. The squad will be on top of other initiatives, such as the teacher relief scheme. Twenty teachers will be available for the western/south western Sydney trial and four for the Moree squad. Funding of **\$375,000** has been allocated until the end of term 3, 2003.

Specialist teacher flying squads will be established and trialled in the Penrith, Parramatta and Fairfield areas. Fifteen teachers will be permanently appointed to provide relief for specialist teachers in the areas of special education and English-as-a-second-language (ESL). Funding of **\$225,000** has been allocated until the end of term three, 2003.

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

The Government will continue to work to maintain New South Wales' high quality education system by promoting professional teacher development, creating quality learning environments, providing educational leadership and emphasising whole-of-life learning.

To **improve teaching quality**, additional recurrent funding of **\$39 million** over four years is being provided for professional development at the school level, with **\$6 million** being provided in 2003-04.

Funding of **\$3 million** has been allocated in 2003-04 for **teacher training scholarships**. The number of scholarships offered each year will be increased from 150 to 200 from 2004 until 2007 to attract more teaching students to hard-to-staff schools in rural and regional areas.

THE GOVERNMENT'S SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Government's **School Improvement Program** has total funding of **\$1.18 billion** from 2003-04 to 2006-07. This will not only provide for a significant upgrade of school accommodation, but will also provide for a major thrust in the expansion of Internet services for staff and students.

The 2003-04 program provides for the commencement of **27 new major building projects** with an estimated total cost of **\$200 million** and **information and communication technology projects** with an estimated total cost of **\$47 million**. The new construction projects include the upgrading of schools at Bega, Bulahdelah, Chatswood, Jesmond, Jindabyne, Maroubra Junction, Fairfield West and Westmead and the construction of the second stage of a new high school at Banora Point.

Using a Privately Financed Project (PFP) arrangement, **\$34 million** has been allocated to the construction of **nine new schools** in new urban release areas of the State. Six new primary schools are to be constructed at Horsley, Kellyville, Mungerie Park, Shell Cove, Stanhope Gardens, and Wongarah, two new high schools at Glenwood and Horningsea Park and a special needs school at Kellyville.

A further **\$45 million** will be spent in 2003-04 on the **Revitalisation of Inner Sydney Schools program**. Major projects being undertaken under this program include the redevelopment of facilities for Alexandria Park Community School, Cleveland Street Intensive English High School, Rose Bay Secondary College and the Sydney Secondary College Campuses at Balmain, Blackwattle Bay and Leichhardt.

TAFE NSW capital programs will receive **\$72 million** for 2003-04. This program provides for the commencement of **14 new major projects** in 2003-04 including new works at Belmont, Blue Mountains, Grafton, Meadowbank, Mount Druitt, Mudgee, Ultimo and Wollongong TAFE campuses.

CHAPTER 4: A BALANCED AND EFFECTIVE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Community safety is a high priority for the New South Wales Government. The Government's strong law enforcement measures are balanced by early intervention and prevention programs aimed at treating drug addiction and providing support for families, children and young people at risk.

The New South Wales Government is committed to improving the administration of justice and improving community access to the justice system for the people of New South Wales.

4.1 JUSTICE POLICY AND PLANNING

To ensure that the New South Wales Government responds to changing social needs, the **Attorney General's Department** funds ongoing justice policy and planning. Sound legislation, help in accessing the legal system, and the pursuit of strategies for conflict resolution outside the court system are all part of the Government's approach. The development of improved justice options, anti-crime interventions, initiatives to provide for safer communities and increasing support for victims of crime are other key issues.

The Attorney General's Department assists the NSW Government, Judiciary, Parliament and the community to promote social harmony through programs that reduce crime and protect human rights and community standards.

Law Access NSW is designed to deliver whole of government legal information, assistance and referral services to the people of New South Wales. A total of **\$600,000** funding is being provided in 2003-04 to enable the Attorney General's Department to continue this service.

The **Community Justice Centre Program** within the Attorney General's Department provides quality mediation and conflict management services to communities across New South Wales. The Community Justice Centre Program provides conflict resolution strategies outside the court system and contributes to the safety and harmony of communities by improving individual, group and community responses to the resolution of conflict. Recurrent funding for the Program in 2003-04 is approximately **\$3 million**.

In 2003, the Community Justice Centre Program recruited and trained 15 **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mediators** in recognition of the special needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in New South Wales. These mediators will provide a mediation service specific to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Northern New South Wales. The recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mediators will expand in 2003-04 to provide the same service in the Sydney region and in Southern and Western New South Wales.

The **NSW Sentencing Council** is an independent public body established under the *Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999*. The Council commenced operation in March 2003. The Council will give the community, in particular victims of crime, a stronger voice in the sentencing of criminals. The Council will monitor sentences handed out by the courts, making sure they meet community expectations. Recurrent funding of **\$280,000** has been allocated for the Council in 2003-04.

Improvements will be made to a number of courthouses to modernise facilities, provide a “single counter” facility and seamless access to the Supreme, District and Local Courts, as well as other courts and tribunals. These include:

- ◆ **Courthouse at Blacktown:** During 2002-03 a three-year program of works to upgrade and enhance the Blacktown Courthouse commenced. The total cost of the project is estimated at **\$4 million**, of which **\$2.35 million** will be allocated in 2003-04.
- ◆ **Courthouse at Nowra:** Funding is being provided for the construction of a new District (Criminal) Court and associated infrastructure at Nowra. It is expected the project, which has an estimated total cost of **\$4.8 million**, will be completed in the 2004-05 financial year. In 2003-04, **\$2.424 million** will be allocated to this initiative.
- ◆ **Courthouse at Mt Druitt:** Planning for the construction of a new courthouse at Mt Druitt commenced in 2001-02. The three-year project is estimated to cost **\$10.341 million** in total, with **\$3 million** being allocated in 2003-04.
- ◆ **Metropolitan Children’s Court:** Funding is being provided for the continuation of planning for the construction of a new Metropolitan Children’s Court at Parramatta. A total of **\$4.362 million** will be allocated to this project in 2003-04.
- ◆ **Children’s Court at Worimi:** Funding is being provided for the continuation of the construction of a new Children’s Court at Worimi in the Hunter District. A total of **\$2.5 million** will be allocated to this project in 2003-04.
- ◆ **Child Sexual Assault Court Pilot:** The Court is designed to deal only with offences of child sexual assault, and will be located in metropolitan Sydney and at Campbelltown, Dubbo, Parramatta, Penrith. It will feature a child-friendly remote witness facility to protect children from further trauma and victimisation, allowing their evidence to be received through pre-recording and through the use of Closed Circuit TV. Recurrent funding of **\$244,000** has been allocated in 2003-04, with additional capital funding of **\$390,000** in 2003-04 for the refurbishment of court premises and the purchase and installation of equipment at the Sydney and Dubbo sites.

The **Local Court Security Strategy** is to commence in 2003-04 with a funding allocation of **\$964,000** for this financial year. The delivery of this program over the next four years will result in enhanced security in local courts as well as the Supreme Court of NSW. A total of **41 new Sheriff’s Officers** will be recruited, with all new and existing officers to be trained and equipped with capsicum spray. Over the next four years, funding of **\$7.1 million** will be provided to upgrade security in the State’s courts.

4.2 JUVENILE JUSTICE AND CRIME PREVENTION

The **Department of Juvenile Justice** provides quality services to young people who have committed criminal offences, and gives them support and opportunities to choose positive alternatives to offending behaviour. These young people include those who are placed in a juvenile detention centre pending appearance at court and those sentenced by a court to community based supervision or to a period of custody in a juvenile detention centre. The Department’s total budget allocation for the 2003-04 financial year is **\$122.7 million**.

The provision of juvenile justice services in New South Wales is focused on diversionary and community based services. However, those juveniles who become repeat offenders or commit serious offences are sentenced to detention in juvenile justice centres. The Department’s estimated expenses for running the centres in the 2003-04 financial year are **\$61.5 million**.

The Department is also responsible for the operation of **youth justice conferences** under the *Young Offenders Act 1997*. In addition to police warnings and formal cautions, youth justice conferences ensure that a significant number of young offenders can remain in their communities. In 2003-04, the Youth Justice Conferencing budget is approximately **\$4.2 million**.

The 2003-04 budget maintains **Youth Justice Initiatives**, including accommodation support services, sessional supervision, a graffiti project and the programs outlined below. A total of **\$6.8 million** will be allocated to Youth Justice Initiatives including:

- ◆ **Post Release Support Program:** Ten services provide post release support throughout metropolitan, regional and rural New South Wales. Three new Post Release Support Services commenced in 2002 - one in Western Sydney and two others supporting clients exiting detention in Grafton and Dubbo. The new model for Post Release Support includes a brokerage component designed to address the needs of clients from rural and remote areas. A total of **\$960,000** will be allocated to this program in 2003-04.
- ◆ **Pre-employment Skills Training:** The Pre-employment Skills Training and Mentor Support Program is designed to increase the employment prospects of Juvenile Justice clients by linking them with providers of employment, education and training services. A total of **\$800,000** will be allocated to this program in 2003-04.
- ◆ **Mentor Program:** The Mentor Program aims to support clients on community supervision through matching them with an adult who has the personal and/or cultural skills to address their support needs. A total of **\$400,000** will be allocated to this Program in 2003-04.

A regionally based community residential centre is to be established for Aboriginal young people at risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system, for young people who have been through the criminal justice system, and for those with histories of family violence and substance and alcohol abuse. The **Aboriginal Outstation** will offer rehabilitation, life skills, health and cultural education programs and is expected to play an integral part in crime prevention. Capital funding of **\$2.1 million** will be provided in 2003-04 to establish the necessary infrastructure and equipment to permit the facility to commence operation in 2004-05.

The **Aboriginal Youth Grants Program** is run by the NSW Attorney General's Department through the Safer Communities Development Fund. The grants encourage Aboriginal community-owned and implemented programs that aim to reduce the over-representation of young Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system.

The **Department of Sport and Recreation** has allocated **\$300,000** to the **Youth in Sport** program for 2003-04. The Youth in Sport program is a partnership between Police and Community Youth Clubs and the Department of Sport and Recreation. The program includes sport and recreation programs in 16 areas throughout the state with a strong focus on crime prevention.

The **Beat Graffiti Program** is funded under the **Justice Policy and Planning Program** of the Attorney General's Department. Funding of **\$365,000** in 2003-04 has been provided to increase graffiti prevention activities. Up to **50 additional projects** will be funded in high priority areas across New South Wales. In addition, vocational skills development and training opportunities will be provided to young people through councils and community organisations to address local crime and community safety concerns associated with graffiti.

A total of **\$24.9 million** has been budgeted over four years (2001-02 to 2004-05) for the construction of a new **Young Women's Juvenile Justice Centre** to be located at Lidcombe.

A total of **\$38.9 million** has been budgeted over four years (2001-02 to 2004-05) for the redevelopment of the existing **Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre** (**\$23.6 million**) located at Campbelltown, and for upgrading of **Cobham Juvenile Justice Centre** located at St Mary's (**\$15.3 million**).

4.3 WORKING WITH ADULT OFFENDERS

The **Department of Corrective Services** provides custodial and offender management services, and delivers offender development programs which aim to reduce rates of re-offending.

In 2003-04, the estimated total expenses for the Department of Corrective Services will be **\$665.5 million**. Services provided include the management of offenders in the community and in prisons, the delivery of programs, and the provision of secure offender management in selected court and police cells.

The 2003-04 Consolidated Fund Capital budget allocation is **\$107.3 million**, which will fund new major works including redevelopment of Mulawa Correctional Centre, extending the Mid North Coast Correctional Centre and upgrading the Parramatta Community Offender Services accommodation, and capital works in progress including the Western Region Correctional Centre, Long Bay redevelopment and Mid North Coast Correctional Centre.

Significant progress has been made in the establishment of **Mental Health Assessment Units** at Mulawa Correctional Centre for women and the Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre (MRRC) for men, which will assist mental health professionals to provide appropriate assessment and treatment within a therapeutic environment. These units will be jointly operated by the Department of Corrective Services and Corrections Health Service of the Department of Health. A total of **\$1.7 million** in recurrent funding will be allocated to this project in 2003-04, and then **\$3.3 million** annually, in addition to **\$24 million** in capital.

The **Assessment, Classification and Development of Inmates Program** will be allocated **\$107 million** net cost of services in 2003-04 towards developmental programs and specialised care services that provide an opportunity for inmates to successfully return to the community.

A total of **\$2.6 million** will be allocated for **Throughcare Community Grants** in 2003-04. This Program provides community grants to non-government agencies which support inmates' rehabilitation both during and after periods of incarceration, and their families.

Long Bay half-way house will be commissioned in 2003-04 (for full operation in 2004-05) to accommodate the **Trial Diversionary Scheme** for dually-diagnosed female offenders with recurrent funding of **\$700,000** in 2003-04, increasing to **\$1 million** in 2004-05.

4.4 POLICING AND SAFE COMMUNITIES

NSW Police is responsible for protecting the New South Wales community and property by preventing, detecting and investigating crime; monitoring and promoting road safety; maintaining social order; and performing and coordinating emergency and rescue operations. NSW Police contributes to the Government's social justice objectives by establishing and maintaining consultative processes and encouraging community participation in policing issues. The total NSW Police budget in 2003-04 is **\$2.073 billion**.

NSW Police promotes access to police services through active development and maintenance of interpreter services and support person programs. The rights of victims, witnesses and suspects will continue to be improved during 2003-04 through enhancing programs targeting the areas of intellectual disability, sexual assault, child protection, domestic violence and mental health.

The **Innovative Models of Police and Community Training** program provides avenues for communication and development of strong relationships between police and local communities, by working together on local projects and training initiatives. Funding of **\$485,000** has been allocated to this program in 2003-04.

The **Cultural Diversity Workplace Trainers** program provides innovative learning opportunities to facilitate a culturally aware policing service. Funding of **\$224,000** is allocated in 2003-04.

A joint initiative of the Department of Community Services and NSW Police is the creation of **Joint Investigative Response Teams**. These teams undertake risk assessments, protective interventions and, where indicated, criminal investigations into alleged cases of serious physical and sexual assault to children and young people. The Department of Community Services received additional recurrent funding of **\$2.3 million** in 2003-04 to increase the number of caseworkers attached to Joint Investigative Response Teams and to improve other aspects of the program. Funding will rise to **\$4 million** in additional expenditure from 2004-05.

CHAPTER 5: MEETING THE HOUSING NEEDS OF PEOPLE ON LOW INCOMES

The Government is committed to a system of housing assistance which targets those most in need of housing services.

The New South Wales Government is contributing **\$172.1 million** in 2003-04 to a range of targeted housing assistance initiatives. These funds, in addition to \$470.8 million in Commonwealth and other funding, will provide assistance to an estimated **500,000 people** on low incomes or who are otherwise unable to access or maintain housing in the private sector.

In 2001, the New South Wales Government announced a four year program of enhancement funding for the housing portfolio targeted at home improvements, repairs and maintenance in public and Aboriginal housing. Total expenditure by the Government on **improving existing housing stock** in the public, community and Aboriginal housing sectors will rise to **\$276.2 million** in 2003-04. Of this, **\$46.6 million** has been provided by the Government as enhancement funding and debt relief, to bring more social housing properties up to a maintained state consistent with current standards.

PROVIDING OPTIONS FOR HOUSING

The **Housing Policy and Assistance Program** is the Government's continued commitment to the development of housing assistance in areas other than long-term subsidised rental housing. In 2003-04, a total of **\$642.9 million** of Commonwealth, State and other funds will be applied to this program.

The Department of Housing's **Increasing the Diversity and Viability of Housing Assistance Services** initiative has been allocated **\$103.7 million** in 2003-04. This funding includes:

- ◆ **\$10.9 million** to help around **1,730 people** to secure affordable accommodation in the private rental market through top-up subsidies under the **Special Assistance Subsidies Program**; and
- ◆ **\$25.8 million** to be allocated to approximately **61,900 people** through the **Rentstart Program**, which helps eligible applicants to obtain private rental accommodation. The scheme provides assistance with funds for bonds and rent, and for temporary accommodation for people with urgent housing needs.

The Government's commitment to increasing the diversity and viability of housing assistance in 2003-04 includes the development of new products and services, new service initiatives and new homelessness initiatives.

New products and services have been allocated **\$10.3 million** in 2003-04 and include:

- ◆ the provision of **rooming house style accommodation** with basic practical support for those who need it. This is a joint initiative between the Department of Housing and the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, with housing management provided by community housing providers; and
- ◆ **leases for homeless people** – these will be private rental dwellings managed by community housing providers with outreach support to assist people to become sufficiently independent to assume their own leases after 12-18 months.

Other new service initiatives have been allocated **\$15.5 million** in 2003-04 and include:

- ◆ the purchase of **12 single living units** targeted at clients with low to moderate support needs; and
- ◆ the upgrading of **250 units**.

New homelessness initiatives have been allocated **\$1.1 million** in 2003-04 and include:

- ◆ the **Hunter Homelessness Pilot Project** – which makes contact with 250 to 300 homeless people in the Hunter Region and provides a case management plan and service to 80-100 clients over 12 months;
- ◆ a **NSW Homelessness Action Plan** for 2003-05, which will link the provision of crisis services with transition to longer term private and social housing; and
- ◆ the **Inner City Homelessness Action Plan** which has been developed as a key initiative of the Partnership Against Homelessness. The Plan brings together government, local government and non-government agencies to develop new and sustainable ways of working together to address the complex needs of rough sleepers.

The **Homeless Action Team Support and Outreach Service** makes contact and assists homeless persons who are sleeping rough in the inner city suburbs of Sydney. The service targets the priority areas of Woolloomooloo, Kings Cross, Redfern and Surry Hills.

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE TENANCIES AND COMMUNITIES

The Government will continue its strong emphasis on improving older housing stock in the public, community and Aboriginal housing sectors, as well as community renewal of public housing estates. The Department of Housing's **Building Sustainable Tenancies and Communities** initiative is focussed on achieving these goals. This includes undertaking improvements that range from painting to major upgrade work in order to bring properties to agreed standards.

Total expenditure on asset improvement on public and community housing properties as a result of this initiative will rise to **\$251.2 million** in 2003-04. Of this funding, **\$46.6 million** comes from a four year program of enhancement funding, introduced by the New South Wales Government in 2001 to bring social housing properties to agreed standards. A further **\$204.6 million** comes from combined Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement funds.

In 2003-04:

- ◆ **\$244.7 million** will be spent on upgrading existing public housing stock, with up to **58,500 properties** undergoing some form of improvement. This includes \$26 million of funding carried forward from 2002-03;
- ◆ **\$4 million** will be spent on upgrading existing mainstream community housing stock, with up to **725 properties** undergoing some form of improvement; and
- ◆ **\$2.5 million** will be spent upgrading **Crisis Accommodation** properties.

In addition the Government will continue its commitment to **18 Intensive Tenancy Management** projects operating on estates that experience high levels of social disadvantage and client need. Staff are located on site to build relationships with tenants, encourage them to become involved in community development activities and assist them to access health and other services. Intensive Tenancy Management programs are currently in place in Airds, Bidwill, Bonnyrigg, Claymore, Cranebrook, East Nowra, Hamilton South, Kempsey, Lake Macquarie, Minto, Mt Druitt, Redfern, South Coogee, South Moree, Taree, Telopea, Toongabbie and West Dubbo. Funding of **\$3.8 million** has been allocated to this program in 2003-04.

Tenant participation and community development initiatives will receive approximately **\$1.8 million** in 2003-04, including allowances to support the development of tenant participation initiatives in public, community and Aboriginal housing.

WorkiT is an employment and training program of the NSW Department of Housing that commenced in 2002-03 with funding of **\$1.9 million** over two years. Funds are provided to selected organisations to assist unemployed people living in social housing to access training and employment, and offers these organisations the opportunity to tender for selected Department of Housing service/minor works contracts provided they directly employ social housing residents to do this work.

INCREASING ASSISTANCE TO DISADVANTAGED HOUSEHOLDS

The Government's **Increasing Assistance to Disadvantaged Households** initiative is focussed on new housing supply, including new capital works, the completion of works in progress, and subsidies for existing and new short term and long term leasing. The initiative has been allocated **\$199.5 million** in 2003-04. This includes **\$125.2 million** for the capital program to purchase or commence construction on new dwellings. Of this funding, **\$62.6 million** will be spent to increase Public Housing capital supply through the purchase or commencement of **298 new dwellings**, with a further **\$62.6 million** to be spent on increasing mainstream capital community (excluding crisis) housing supply through the purchase or commencement of **266 new dwellings**.

The **leasing program** complements the capital program by allowing a more flexible and rapid response to housing needs. Leasing subsidies enable public housing and community housing associations to lease properties at market rent from the private sector, and sub-let them to low income tenants at an affordable rent. Funding of **\$64.2 million** will be spent on leasing properties (excluding crisis) in the private rental market:

- ◆ **Forty new and 2,617 existing public housing properties** will be leased at a total cost of **\$23.1 million**; and
- ◆ **Forty new and 5,651 existing mainstream community housing properties** will be leased at a total cost of **\$41.1 million**.

In 2003-04, around 20 percent of community housing dwellings will be targeted to supported housing, using formal agreements between the housing and support providers to ensure support is provided to give clients the best opportunity to sustain their tenancy in the long term. The Department will also extend the number of public housing properties that are used specifically for supported accommodation.

By June 2004 an estimated **350,000 people** will be in Government-subsidised **long term housing** managed by public, community or Aboriginal housing providers in New South Wales. In addition, support will be provided on a short-term basis for people under the **Crisis Accommodation Program**, a tied program under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement which provides funding for accommodation for people who are homeless or in crisis, or who need transitional support to move toward independent living:

- ◆ a total of **\$10 million** will be directed towards the Crisis Accommodation Program in 2003-04 to fund **25 new capital properties and 15 new and 173 existing leases**; and
- ◆ approximately **\$4.4 million** of this funding will be allocated to fund **capital projects**.

HOUSING FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

The Department of Housing will continue its administration of a range of programs which fund non-government agencies to provide supported housing and crisis accommodation, a number of these agencies provide services specifically targeted at Aboriginal people. In addition, it will continue to provide accommodation for about **8,700 Aboriginal households** in mainstream public housing.

The **Aboriginal Housing Office** is a statutory authority governed by an Aboriginal board. The Aboriginal Housing Office plans and administers the policies, programs and asset base for Aboriginal housing in New South Wales. This includes resource allocation, sector-wide policy, strategic planning and monitoring outcomes and performance in the Aboriginal housing sector.

The Aboriginal Housing Office manages and coordinates a substantial annual capital works program, and the development and implementation of a range of financial and resourcing strategies. In addition, the Aboriginal Housing Office has an important role in facilitating and improving training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.

In carrying out its functions, the Aboriginal Housing Office is guided by the principles of self-determination and self-management by Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal Housing Office therefore strives to maximise the involvement of Aboriginal housing providers and the Aboriginal community (including tenants and housing applicants) in the development of housing policy and standards, and the delivery of housing programs.

The capital works program plays a major role in meeting housing need in the Aboriginal community. In 2003-04, **\$12.4 million** of Aboriginal housing funds will be directed towards community-based Aboriginal housing providers through the **Housing Aboriginal Communities Program**. In addition, **\$9.64 million** has been allocated for the acquisition of Aboriginal Housing Office housing stock.

A priority of the Aboriginal Housing Office is to ensure that Aboriginal housing is safe and sustainable. In 2003-04 a total of **\$11.25 million** has been allocated to improve the level of **repairs and maintenance** for houses managed by Aboriginal housing organisations. This is one of the key issues to be addressed in ensuring the sector is viable and houses are safe and sustainable.

The **Aboriginal Housing Office Upgrade program** aims to bring all Aboriginal Housing Office stock to an acceptable standard over a five-year period. Current estimates of the cost of the program are **\$85 million**. In 2003-04 the budget for the program is **\$10.92 million**. The program also seeks to enhance Aboriginal employment opportunities in the construction industry through preferential engagement of Aboriginal builders in over ten percent of the program.

The Aboriginal Housing Office has responsibility for developing the Aboriginal housing sector, which includes enhancing training and support for the sector and improving the standards and accountability of Aboriginal community-based housing services. In 2003-04, **\$6.133 million** is allocated to **supporting and training the Aboriginal housing sector** to improve housing management skills and the long-term viability of providers and the stock they manage. Key initiatives are outlined below:

- ◆ **Training for Aboriginal community housing workers** - in 2003-04 the Aboriginal Housing Office will enter into a partnership arrangement with TAFE NSW to deliver accredited training in housing management for Aboriginal community housing workers.
- ◆ **Resourcing Aboriginal Community Organisations** - this program aims to support and enhance the management of Aboriginal housing organisations.
- ◆ **Management Models** - to address the problem of recurrent deficits, deteriorating stock and loss of stock through liquidations, the Aboriginal Housing Office is developing management models for shared housing management arrangements which achieve economies of scale.
- ◆ **Management Standards and Accreditation** - the Aboriginal Housing Office has worked in consultation with Aboriginal housing organisations to develop Housing Management Standards for the Aboriginal housing sector. The Standards aim to assist organisations improve the service they provide to their tenants.

EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS

\$8 million has been provided to support implementation of the **Statewide Infant Screening – Hearing Program** (SWISH), which was launched on 1 December 2002. Under this new initiative free hearing tests are available for all babies across New South Wales within the first few days of being born. The Program enables the early identification of newborns with significant hearing impairment and allows decisions to be made about appropriate interventions. During the first four months of the program, approximately **14,000 babies** were screened, with a small proportion requiring referral to diagnostic audiology services for further investigation.

Controls on the point-of-sale **advertising of tobacco products** are being strongly enforced and more extensive compliance monitoring of illegal sales to minors is being undertaken. Current evaluation results from 2002-03 indicate that state-wide compliance with NSW tobacco legislation is high: 78 percent for tobacco advertising and 83 percent for sales to minors respectively. There are plans to increase evidence collection and prosecution in 2003-04. An **Environmental Tobacco Smoke Campaign** commenced in 2001-02 with funding of **\$2.4 million** over four years. The Campaign is designed to minimize young children's exposure to environmental tobacco smoke. In 2003-04 a budget of **\$676,000** will be allocated to this program.

The **Collaborative Centre for Aboriginal Health Promotion** is an initiative of the NSW Aboriginal Health Partnership and is a major step forward in developing better practice health promotion approaches to improve Aboriginal health in New South Wales. The Centre will primarily gather, review and disseminate case studies of good practice in Aboriginal health promotion, provide the Aboriginal health promotion workforce with training opportunities to acquire necessary skills and knowledge in health promotion, and increase the skills of Aboriginal communities and local organisations in effective health promotion planning and implementation. Implementation will be supported with an allocation of **\$500,000** in 2003-04.

A **NSW Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy** is being developed to establish priority populations and set directions for sexual health services and education programs across NSW. The strategy aims to improve the effectiveness of the approximately **\$12 million** that is expended annually in on sexual health services.

The NSW Health **Aboriginal safety promotion strategy** provides strategic directions that aim to reduce the burden of unintentional and intentional injury among Aboriginal people. The implementation of priority areas of the strategy in 2003-04 will receive an allocation of **\$119,000**.

PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The **NSW Active Community Grants Scheme** run by the Department of Sport and Recreation is a program aimed at increasing opportunities for people in New South Wales to participate in physical activity at a community level. In 2003-04 the program has been allocated **\$350,000**.

Funding of **\$100,000** for 2003-04 will be maintained for the **Women's Sports Leaders Scholarship Program** to enable women to improve their sports management skills, attend international events and conferences and undertake industry-relevant research. This funding will include a research project to examine the aspects of physical activity that can improve the emotional wellbeing of young women and the most effective ways of engaging young women in sport and physical activity.

To develop **skills and sustainable sport and recreation opportunities** in communities, the Department of Sport and Recreation has allocated **\$50,000** per year to Aboriginal community organisations.

SUPPORTING HOME OWNERSHIP

A trial **self-build program** will commence by July 2003. This program supports local government or not-for-profit agencies to conduct schemes in which they guide and support a group of low-income people using their own labour to construct houses. Once the basics are built, the participants can usually obtain private finance to complete the project and ultimately purchase the property. Funding of **\$250,000** has been allocated to this trial in 2003-04.

The **Government Guaranteed Loan Scheme** will provide **800 home loans** to low income households. At least a quarter of the loans will be available for people who are eligible for public housing. Assistance by the Department consists of providing a back up guarantee to commercial lenders.

A total of **\$1 million** will be directed towards the **Mortgage Assistance Scheme** in order to assist households experiencing temporary difficulties in meeting mortgage repayments.

NSW Treasury (Office of State Revenue) contributes to the Government's social justice objectives by providing stamp duty exemptions/concessions to eligible first home buyers in New South Wales (First Home Plus) and through making information and services to taxpayers more accessible by continuing to develop electronic service delivery options.

First Home Plus provides exemptions or concessions on transfer stamp duty and mortgage duty for first home buyers and builders in New South Wales. Eligible first home buyers do not pay transfer contracts and conveyancing duty or mortgage duty on first homes costing up to \$200,000 in the metropolitan area or up to \$175,000 in other parts of the State. Concessions on duty are on a sliding scale between \$200,000 and \$300,000 in the metropolitan area and between \$175,000 and \$250,000 in other parts of the State. The value of the stamp duty exemptions/concessions available under the First Home Plus initiative for 2003-04 is estimated to be **\$69 million**.

A community based **Home Building Advice and Advocacy Service** will be piloted by the Office of Fair Trading. The six month trial will be funded **\$250,000** in 2003-04.

ADVICE, ADVOCACY AND COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION FOR TENANTS

The **Tenants Advice and Advocacy Program** will be allocated **\$6.8 million** in 2003-04 by the **Office of Fair Trading** and the **Rental Bond Board**. This will consist of:

- ◆ **\$4.4 million** that will be allocated to fund fourteen community based, direct tenancy advisory services located in the Sydney metropolitan and regional areas;
- ◆ **\$1.3 million** for four Aboriginal advice and advocacy services throughout the State; and
- ◆ **\$1 million** that will be allocated to tenancy resource services, including specialist services for Aboriginal tenants, older tenants and residential park residents.

In 2003-04, **\$28 million** will be allocated to fund the operations of the **Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal**. The Tribunal provides an efficient, inexpensive and informal means of resolving consumer and tenancy disputes. Applications to the Tribunal can be lodged electronically or in person at a range of locations.

CHAPTER 6: PROMOTING HEALTH

The New South Wales Government has instigated major reforms of the health system to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of New South Wales. In 2002-03, a number of initiatives were delivered, including additional funding for metropolitan hospitals, funding for rural communities and specific rural health initiatives, as well as further funding enhancement for mental health beds and accommodation. Through these reforms, the Government is delivering better access to health services for all members of the community. Continuing to improve the quality of health services to meet community needs is a key priority for future planning.

In 2003-04, the budgeted recurrent expenditure for **NSW Health** is **\$9.3 billion** – an increase of **11 percent** over the previous year's initial budget allocation.

During 2001-02, the Government committed to an historic change in the provision of public liability indemnity cover for doctors working in public hospitals. From 1 January 2002, the Government has provided coverage for all Visiting Medical Officers who elect to be covered under the Treasury Managed Fund Scheme for all work they perform on public patients in public hospitals in New South Wales.

\$5 million has been allocated in 2003-04 to **extend medical indemnity insurance** to Visiting Medical Officers and Staff Specialists who work in rural areas to treat private patients in public hospitals, and to simplify the billing arrangements for doctors who accept this funding so that private patients do not have to pay "the gap".

IMPROVING RURAL HEALTH SERVICES

In an Australian first, **\$2.6 million** is currently being expended for a six month trial of the **Mobile Surgical Service** which commenced in March 2003. A review of this significant initiative will be evaluated at the completion of the trial and, if successful, extended to other locations. This Service will bring a state of the art operating theatre to remote locations. During the trial the mobile surgical service will travel to Gunnedah, Inverell, Lightning Ridge, Moree, Narrabri and Walgett. The service will not replace existing operating theatres, but because of the technology and equipment it contains, will be able to provide an extension of services. The surgical services provided include ear nose and throat, ophthalmology, orthopaedics, general surgery and colonoscopy. This means that operations such as gall bladder removals, hernia repairs, cataract surgery, arthroscopies and colonoscopies will be performed.

There will be a continuation of the **\$2.5 million** annual enhancement funding provided to expand renal services in rural areas. This money is being spent on improving access to dialysis service by establishing new dialysis centres in key areas, enhancing facilities already provided, and services to support people in rural areas on home dialysis. An additional **\$2 million** has been allocated in 2003-04 to enhance this funding.

A total of **\$5 million** in additional funds have been provided to increase **orthopaedic surgery** in eight rural health services. In 2003-04, **Southern AHS** will receive an additional **\$490,000**, **New England AHS** will receive an additional **\$635,000**, **Mid Western AHS** will receive an additional **\$530,000**; **Far West AHS** will receive an additional **\$190,000**, **Mid North AHS** will receive an additional **\$880,000**, **Macquarie AHS** will receive an additional **\$390,000**, **Greater Murray AHS** will receive an additional **\$860,000**, and **Northern Rivers AHS** will receive an additional **\$1.025 million**.

Telemedicine improves access to services in over 200 health facilities across New South Wales with a particular focus on rural and remote areas. Telehealth offers benefits to patients, clients and their carers by allowing them to receive specialist treatment without having to travel to the city, and to health workers who can access the skills and experience of their metropolitan colleagues without having to leave town. In 2003-04 **\$4 million** has been allocated to this program.

The **Transport for Health** initiative assists people living in rural New South Wales who cannot readily use public or private transport to gain access to health services. The initiative focuses upon strengthening partnerships between Area Health Services and community based transport providers to improve the planning and coordination of non-emergency transport services. Recurrent funding of **\$2.5 million** has been allocated to support implementation of this program in rural areas.

IMPROVING SERVICE IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

In 2003, a trial of **Rapid Emergency Assessment Teams** was commenced at 19 sites throughout the Greater Sydney metropolitan area and the Central Coast. These trial sites are scheduled to be evaluated in early 2003-04 with annual funding of **\$8 million** for the initiative to be continued at successful sites.

Similarly in 2002, a trial of eleven **Emergency Medical Units** was introduced and began operation across the Greater Sydney metropolitan area and Newcastle. Emergency Medical Units provide better care for patients who do not require hospital admission but need to be under observation. Such patients will be moved to these units rather than waiting in emergency departments or being unnecessarily admitted to a hospital ward. This initiative will mean more beds to care for patients in emergency departments and reduced time for patients who need to be moved to a hospital ward. The evaluation of this trial will be concluded in early 2003-04 with annual funding of **\$23 million** allocated for the units to be continued at successful sites.

IMPROVING CANCER SERVICES

Cancer is the second most common cause of death in our community. One in three people will develop cancer and one in four will eventually die from it. There are almost 30,000 new cases of cancer each year, and more than 12,000 deaths. In the past two decades, the incidence of cancer has risen by almost 25 percent. Fortunately, death rates from all cancers are the lowest since 1972.

The New South Wales Government's commitment to improving the way that New South Wales deals with cancer is highlighted by the appointment of a **Minister for Science and Medical Research**, and a **Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)**.

In 2003-04, **\$5 million** will be allocated to the newly created **NSW Cancer Institute**. The Institute will bring together cancer experts to find new ways to improve outcomes for cancer patients. The Institute will be administered by a board made up of leading cancer experts, cancer survivors, health economists and a Chief Cancer Officer who will be responsible for day to day management of the Institute.

The NSW Cancer Institute will be responsible for **advising on the allocation of funds** to new initiatives to fight cancer, such as better coordination of patient care, training for medical staff, public awareness campaigns and screening programs to help with early detection of cancer.

Radiotherapy will receive specific enhancement through a Funding Scheme to improve and expand radiotherapy services across New South Wales. \$76.7 million will be allocated over the next four years, with \$3.5 million in 2003-04. This will be in addition to funding for the NSW Cancer Institute.

To improve support for the radiotherapy workforce, \$8.5 million will be allocated to workforce strategies over the next four years, with \$1 million in 2003-04. This funding will be used to implement new strategies to attract and retain staff in radiotherapy units. A formal registrar training scheme for Medical Physicists will be commenced and tutor positions for Radiation Therapists will also be established. Each of these initiatives will reap benefits for the recruitment, retention and coordination of students.

SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WHO REQUIRE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Comprehensive networks of service are provided by Area Health Services and community based organisations for people seriously affected by mental illnesses and mental health problems. These service networks are also involved in the development of preventive programs that meet the needs of specific client groups. **\$715 million** has been provided in 2003-04 by the New South Wales Government for mental health services.

In 2003-04, an additional **\$5 million** of recurrent funding has been allocated to non-government organisations to provide **housing and accommodation support for mental health clients**. This continues a commitment made in the 2002-03 Budget. 118 supported accommodation beds are being established in the community for people with a mental illness who require care ranging from 24 hours-a-day to intensive support. The beds will be spread throughout New South Wales, targeting those areas of greatest need. The program is being provided under tripartite agreements between the Department of Housing, Area Health Services and non-government organisations.

In late 2000, the NSW Minister for Health approved \$2.83 million for a 2 year trial of an additional 20 Mental Health Consultation Liaison Nurses for Emergency Departments in 13 NSW Area Health Services to improve mental health services in emergency departments. Positive feedback from the trial has led to permanent funding of \$1.5 million per annum being provided to support the initiative on an ongoing basis. Widespread support for the trial has also led to funding for an additional 20 positions. The Minister for Health has also approved \$3.15 million from the National Mental Health Reform and Incentive Funds to provide an additional 20 positions for 2 years (\$1.575 million per year).

In 2001-02 NSW Health provided the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists with a grant of \$1.8 million over three years to develop and deliver support, supervision and training for psychiatrists working in rural and regional areas. A central recruitment drive for rural psychiatrists is underway. A further **\$1.5 million** in recurrent funding was allocated to **recruit psychiatrists** to areas of clinical need in 2002-03, an initiative which continues in 2003-04. In 2003-04, **\$150,000** has been allocated for **support, supervision and training in mental health for rural GPs**.

ENHANCING BIOTECHNOLOGY RESEARCH CAPABILITIES

As part of the New South Wales Government's initiative for implementing **BioFirst**, the whole-of-Government Biotechnology Strategy, **\$68 million** has been allocated over five years. In 2003-04, a total of **\$12 million** has been allocated to NSW Health to:

- ◆ establish the **St Vincent's Research and Biotechnology Precinct**;
- ◆ develop the **Westmead Millennium Institute (Stage 2)** as part of the **Westmead Research Hub**;
- ◆ assist the process of translating the output of biotechnology research into commercial product through contributing to the **Biotechnology Business Precinct** at the Australian Technology Park;
- ◆ implement a **Converging Technologies Initiative**, which seeks to optimise access to high-performance networks and specialist information technology resources for the people of New South Wales and not-for-profit biotechnology research organisations;
- ◆ implement the **NSW BioFirst Awards Program**, which provides "top-up" funding to attract biotechnology researchers to the State; and
- ◆ establish **Bio-Link**, to facilitate the commercialisation of life sciences research in New South Wales.

This funding assists biotechnology research and commercialisation initiatives that have the potential to develop and promote life-saving therapies for a range of conditions and diseases.

REHABILITATION AND EXTENDED CARE SERVICES

The **Rehabilitation and Extended Care Services Program** provides health services for the frail-aged and persons with long-term physical and psycho-physical disabilities. These services are coordinated with those provided by other agencies and individuals. The Program's total budget allocation in 2003-04 is **\$872 million**.

Under the New South Wales Government's **Future Directions Dementia Strategy**, **\$800,000** in recurrent funding has been allocated for specialist nursing positions aimed specifically at improving the care of people with dementia in acute hospitals.

NSW Health has established the **Care of Older People Committee** to oversee the development of integrated services and initiatives for older people along the continuum of care. Specific initiatives/services include:

- ◆ annual funding of **\$5.5 million** to establish **Aged Care Services Emergency Teams** in emergency departments across New South Wales to work with Emergency Department clinicians in providing specialised care, assessment and treatment to older people presenting to Emergency Departments;
- ◆ a **Chair of Geriatric Medicine and Aged Care** at Westmead Hospital to improve research into geriatric medicine in New South Wales, with joint funding from NSW Health of **\$200,000** per annum committed to this position over five years; and
- ◆ a budget allocation of **\$325,000** in 2003-04 to continue the development of **fall prevention initiatives**.

SUPPORT FOR DISADVANTAGED FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS

The **NSW Spectacles Program** is administered by VisionCare on behalf of the Department of Community Services. The Program ensures that children, young people and families who are financially disadvantaged receive appropriate assistance with vision aids. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are provided with eye clinics under the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Vision Outreach (NSW) Program**. The Program has a budget of **\$4 million** in 2003-04.

SUPPORT FOR NURSING STAFF

The **Nursing Re-connect** strategy is designed to attract nurses who are not currently working in nursing back into the public health care system.

Access to paid study leave to complete university and professional education is in high demand by nurses. However, hospitals often experience difficulties replacing those nurses on the wards. In 2003-04, **\$3 million** will be allocated to assist in the replacement of nurses while they are taking study leave.

Over **\$25 million** is provided annually for **nursing workforce initiatives**. These provide a range of educational initiatives including transitional support for new graduates, orientation programs for specialty clinical areas and mental health nursing grants. They also provide a range of funding for special initiatives such as mentor programs, graduate certificate courses and specialty short courses provided by the NSW College of Nursing and Trainee Enrolled Nurse Education through TAFE.

Nursing scholarships also enhance opportunities for nurses to do further study. In 2003-04, **\$500,000** will be provided to fund these scholarships.

WorkCover NSW will allocate **\$108,200** in 2003-04 to continue projects for the research, review and training of manual handling competencies for nurses in NSW Health and the Community Services Industry.

PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE SERVICE AND DRINKING

The Department of Gaming and Racing is continuing the *No more. It's the Law*. responsible serving and drinking program. As in past years, more than **\$100,000** will be expended on this program during 2003-2004. The Program is a key Government strategy in educating venue patrons about the responsible drinking laws. It is also used by venue staff when refusal of liquor service is required.

IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

NSW Health will allocate **\$38 million** to **Aboriginal Health Services** in 2003-04. The program covers the provision of supplementary health services to Aboriginal people, particularly in the areas of health promotion, health education and disease prevention.

Aboriginal Vascular health projects are based in 20 locations throughout New South Wales, and are directed at the prevention and management of vascular disease in Aboriginal people. This program has been allocated **\$1.6 million** in 2003-04.

NSW Health has provided Aboriginal Medical Services **\$1.2 million** in 2003-04 for **Aboriginal Family Health Strategy** initiatives.

The **Aboriginal Oral Health Program** has been allocated **\$1 million** in 2003-04 to improve the oral health status of the Aboriginal community.

The **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sexual Health Program** is made up of 40 projects which work in partnership with sexual health and related mainstream health services to conduct community educational workshops and provide services related to sexual health, HIV, Hepatitis C and harm minimisation. In 2003-04, **\$4.5 million** has been allocated to this program.

NSW Health will work in partnership with **Aboriginal Medical Services** to provide culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal Women. Approximately **\$700,000** has been allocated in 2003-04 for services targeted specifically at women.

RESOLVING, REVIEWING AND INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS

The **Health Care Complaints Commission** is an independent agency which acts in the public interest by resolving, reviewing and investigating complaints about health care with a view to maintaining, promoting and improving health standards and the quality of health care services in New South Wales.

Among the programs conducted by the Health Care Complaints Commission in 2003-04 are:

- ◆ **Patient Support Service:** This program assists consumers to resolve their concerns with private and public health services and providers at the local level. In 2003-04, **\$700,000** has been allocated to this program.
- ◆ **Outreach and support for Aboriginal Communities:** The position of Aboriginal Liaison Officer provides direct support to people with health concerns and training for Aboriginal health workers. **\$75,000** has been allocated to this program in 2003-04.
- ◆ **Information for diverse cultural and linguistic groups:** The Commission will consult communities from diverse cultural backgrounds during 2003-04, with the aim of improving access to the Commission's services, identifying possible concerns about health services and promoting the rights of health consumers. The Commission produces brochures in community languages, which are also available on the Commission's website. **\$25,000** has been allocated to this program in 2003-04.

CAPITAL WORKS

Planned expenditure on NSW Health capital works in 2003-04 will be **\$456.7 million**. New projects in 2003-04 include:

- ◆ **Mental Health Stage 3A** (estimated total cost **\$12 million**; 2003-04 allocation **\$1 million**), which consists of two components the Northern Mental Health Network, a 15 bed Intensive Psychiatric Care Unit at Macquarie Hospital and the Western Mental Health Network a 20 bed non-acute facility.
- ◆ **Information Management & Technology (IM&T) Patient & Clinical Systems Implementation (Point-of-Care Clinicals)** (estimated total cost **\$42.5 million**; 2003-04 allocation **\$2.5 million**) which will provide clinical decision support information system to complement the Patient Administration Systems currently underway

The Government is also continuing its commitment to a number of key Area Health Service Asset Strategies and major project works. The 2003-04 Budget allocates capital funds for Asset Strategies and Major Works including:

- ◆ **Ambulance Infrastructure (\$8.7 million)**, this project involves the upgrade of medical equipment and the enhancement of clinical care and information systems, CAD communications, building works, co-location of ambulance stations with rural hospital facilities, fleet replacement and statewide infrastructure refurbishment/maintenance work.
- ◆ **Bourke Hospital & Health Service (\$11.3 million)**, this is part of the Rural Hospital and Health Service Program Phase Two. The project involves the construction of a new hospital providing inpatient accommodation, nursing home facilities, an emergency department, imaging facilities, an operating suite and consulting suites, an ambulance station, and community health and associated services.
- ◆ **Wyong Hospital and Mental Health (\$29.8 million)**, this project involves the redevelopment of Wyong Hospital to a Level Four hospital incorporating expanded inpatient services, a High Dependency Unit, operating theatres with a Perioperative Service, consolidation of outpatient functions, expansion of clinical diagnostic and support services, and expansion of education facilities. The project also includes a new large Mental Health Service.
- ◆ **Gosford Hospital Redevelopment (\$39 million)**, which involves the redevelopment of Gosford Hospital to a Level Six hospital with a new cardiac catheterisation service. The redevelopment will include a new emergency department, operating theatres with perioperative service, consolidation of outpatient areas and expanded clinical, diagnostic and support services.
- ◆ **Central Sydney Resource Transition Program (\$16.3 million)**, which is a comprehensive service, property and facility reform program to realign acute inpatient capacity and improve mental health services, aged care, rehabilitation and community health services.
- ◆ **Hay Hospital and Health Service (\$6.2 million)**, this project involves the complete redevelopment of the Hay Health Service with major new construction works. This will include new staff accommodation units.
- ◆ **Henty Hospital and Health Service (\$5.2 million)**, this project involves the co-locating a new Hospital and Health Service with the existing aged care facility. It will include the provision of integrated staff accommodation.
- ◆ **Hornsby Hospital Obstetrics & Emergency (\$6.5 million)**, this project involves the construction of new facilities for Obstetrics, Paediatrics and Emergency Services at Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital. It includes the construction of a new two storey facility, site infrastructure and the demolition of existing buildings.

- ◆ **Kyogle Hospital and Health Service (\$7.4 million)**, this project involves the complete redevelopment of the Kyogle Health Service with major new construction works and includes refurbishment of community health and staff accommodation.
- ◆ **Liverpool Hospital Emergency (\$6.7 million)**, this project involves the expansion of the existing Emergency/Trauma Department within the Liverpool Hospital, the provision of additional space for Paediatrics services and the relocation of Pharmacy to the Don Everett Building.
- ◆ **Liverpool Mental Health Facility (\$10.7 million)**, this will be a purpose-built facility to provide for 50 acute inpatient beds, ambulatory care, administration and research services in a four-storey building on the Liverpool Hospital campus.
- ◆ **Macarthur Sector Strategy (\$8.5 million)**, this project involves the redevelopment of Camden Hospital, the upgrading of Campbelltown Hospital and a childcare centre in Camden/Wollondilly.
- ◆ **Mental Health Accelerated Accommodation Program (\$3.1 million)**, this project involves the development of additional mental health inpatient beds within surplus accommodation to meet mental health service needs.
- ◆ **Milton – Ulladulla Hospital Redevelopment (\$4 million)**, this project involves a major upgrade of the Hospital to integrate services including inpatient, birthing and operating suites, and emergency, imaging, occupational therapy, kitchen and domestic services.
- ◆ **Newcastle Strategy (\$16.2 million)**, this project involves the upgrade of Belmont, John Hunter and Newcastle Mater Hospitals, and the establishment of a new Newcastle Polyclinic.
- ◆ **Prince of Wales Parkes Block (\$3.5 million)**, this project involves the upgrading of the whole of the Parkes Block (excluding a portion of Level 8) to provide more amenable facilities in a building that is now approximately thirty years old. The work involves upgrading building, electrical, hydraulic and air-conditioning services.
- ◆ **Rural Hospital & Health Service Program Phase 1 (\$3.8 million)**, this project involves the construction of eighteen rural health facilities across New South Wales under the Rural Hospital and Health Service Program. Phase One is continuing with the last two facilities to be completed by April 2004.