

Social Justice Budget Statement

2001-02



New South Wales

FOREWORD

Since coming to office in April 1995, the Carr Labor Government has implemented many initiatives to enhance the well-being of the NSW community, in particular, the well-being of those in need. These include:

- ♦ a massive increase in the health budget, which has funded the redevelopment of many of the State's hospitals;
- ♦ substantial increases in funding to provide schools with better facilities and ensure a high standard of public education;
- ♦ major reforms in child protection;
- ♦ provision of youth initiatives in partnership with children, young people and families;
- ♦ introduction of the Drug Summit plan of action;
- ♦ wide-ranging programs to improve health, housing and education outcomes for Aboriginal people;
- ♦ the establishment of a Council on Crime Prevention, which has developed strategies to make communities safer and policing more effective; and
- ♦ programs supporting families to raise healthy, well adjusted children.

These initiatives represent substantial improvements in the level of support provided to the NSW community. Improving social justice, however, is a continuing challenge. Therefore the Government will continue to respond to change as new issues arise and better solutions become apparent.

The initiatives outlined in this 2001-02 Social Justice Budget Statement provide further impetus to the Carr Government's already substantial commitment. The Statement illustrates the high priority the Government places on a fairer and more inclusive society. The Government's commitment to responsible financial management and economic improvement underpins our goal of better social outcomes.

We commend this statement to you.



Bob Carr
Premier



Andrew Refshauge
Deputy Premier

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2001-02 SOCIAL JUSTICE BUDGET STATEMENT

Social justice is what faces you when you get up in the morning. It is awakening in a house with an adequate water supply, cooking facilities and sanitation. It is the ability to nourish your children and send them to a school where their education not only equips them for employment but reinforces their knowledge of and appreciation of their cultural inheritance. It is the prospect of genuine employment and good health: a life of choices and opportunity, free from discrimination.

- Mick Dodson, former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 1993.

1. Social Justice in New South Wales

Social justice is a core requirement of good government. Its promotion represents one of the key themes of the New South Wales Labor Government's principles for good government—along with economic development, environmental protection, and financial responsibility.

The New South Wales Social Justice Strategy is based on the four interrelated principles of equity, access, participation and rights. The Government is committed to implementing these principles in ways that respect people's needs and aspirations.

This broad conception of social justice was outlined in the inaugural New South Wales Social Justice Directions Statement, entitled *Fair Go, Fair Share, Fair Say* (October 1996).

The achievements of that Statement were built upon with *Supporting People and Strengthening Communities* (February 2000). This latter statement identified the following priority themes:

- ♦ supporting families and strengthening communities;
- ♦ providing high quality government services which are responsive to diverse needs;
- ♦ improving health outcomes, particularly for Aboriginal people and people in rural areas;
- ♦ educating and training people for improved life opportunities;
- ♦ enhancing the justice system and protecting consumers and workers; and
- ♦ recognising diversity and promoting an inclusive society where people have a fair say.

The Social Justice Budget Statement was first instituted by the NSW Government in 1995. The major programs and initiatives identified in this 2001-02 Statement represent the key pillars of the Government's overall Social Justice Strategy outlined above. In doing so, this Statement is not an exhaustive list of every Government program or initiative related to social justice.

The coordination, development and implementation of the Government's social justice policies and strategies is overseen by the Cabinet Committee on Social Justice, chaired by the Deputy Premier. The Cabinet Committee is one way of building coordinated social policy across Government and monitoring its effectiveness.

The Government's main source of community advice on major and strategic Social Justice issues continues to be the Social Justice Reference Group. The Reference Group, chaired by the Reverend Harry Herbert, reports to the Premier, through the Deputy Premier, on matters referred to it by the Government.

2. Funding Social Justice for 2001-02

The programs and initiatives listed below are presented in sections focusing on key social justice priority areas. They are not exhaustive of the Government's social justice activities but reflect key priorities for expenditure in 2001-02.

Supporting Children, Youth and Families

The Government is committed to providing support and protection for children and young people in our community and to provide responsive services to help families. Strong and caring families are important in providing the foundation for a healthy functioning society. Families, with the support of communities, need to fully appreciate and act on the responsibilities associated with preparing the next generation to lead fulfilling lives.

In recognising that young children have special needs in order to give them the best start in life, the Government is paying particular attention to children in families where there is economic or social disadvantage. The Government also has specific programs aimed at strengthening communities, supporting vulnerable people, and helping young people.

The NSW Government's **\$54.2 million** (1999-00 to 2002-03) **Families First** strategy aims to increase the effectiveness of prevention and early intervention services in helping families to raise healthy, well-adjusted children. To achieve this, service networks are being developed for families that offer a wide range of support from before birth and during their children's early years. The key features of the service network include:

- ♦ outreach and home visiting by both professionals and volunteers;
- ♦ parenting information and support for parents and carers;
- ♦ support for children with special needs from teams of professionals; and
- ♦ community development activities to connect families with other families for support.

In 2001-02, **\$16.1 million** will be allocated to **implement Families First in 11 (out of 16) areas in NSW**: South West Sydney; Mid North Coast; Far North Coast; Inner West Sydney; Orana Far West; Hunter; Central West; New England; Central Coast; Nepean and Southern Highlands. Families First will be rolled out to all areas of NSW over the next two years.

In 2001-02, **\$424.9 million** will be provided for **child and family support services**—an increase of **\$35.6 million** (or 9.1%) on the 2000-01 allocation. Included within this amount is:

- ♦ **\$121.2 million**—an increase of 9.7% on the 2000-01 allocation—towards the protection of children from abuse and neglect (including **\$4 million** additional recurrent funding for 60 caseworkers);

- ♦ **\$100.6 million** under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (a joint Commonwealth/State program providing assistance to people who are in crisis, homeless, moving towards independent living, or who are returning to their own families). The Program helps community organisations to provide accommodation or other support services for people in need;
- ♦ **\$165.5 million** towards the provision of out-of-home care and foster care; and
- ♦ **\$37.6 million** to provide support and help to children and families during the year, including the family and individual support program.

In 2001-02, **\$105.1 million** will be allocated to assist the community in the provision of **child care and related services**, including flexible and innovative child care for rural families, seasonal workers, and farming, Aboriginal and remote communities. Specific programs will receive the following funding:

- ♦ **\$85.9 million** for pre-schools and day care centres;
- ♦ **\$2.4 million** for vacation care; and
- ♦ **\$4.3 million** for early childhood resource and support services.

An allocation of **\$131.4 million** in 2001-02 will enable support services and concessions to assist in reducing the effects of social disadvantage and increase community self-sufficiency. Specific programs will receive the following funding:

- ♦ **\$20 million** for community development projects, including the provision of neighbourhood houses and playgroups;
- ♦ **\$16.6 million** for community youth and adolescent support;
- ♦ **\$4.3 million** for financial assistance to vulnerable families; and
- ♦ **\$80.2 million** will be provided in concessions including **\$76.2 million** towards **electricity vouchers** for financially disadvantaged people, and **\$4 million** for the **Charitable Goods Transport Subsidy**.

As a result of the Wood Royal Commission into the NSW Police Service (the Paedophilia Inquiry), additional recurrent funding was also allocated to meet the costs of proposed accommodation support programs for juvenile offenders in rural and regional NSW. The **Wood Accommodation Support Program** continues to provide supported accommodation to juvenile offenders whose prospect of abuse and/or sexual exploitation is increased due to a lack of appropriate housing and support. There are currently six projects operating across NSW with more than **\$500,000** per annum allocated for the Program.

The **Commission for Children and Young People** works in partnership with children and young people, families, schools and community-based organisations and government agencies to help make NSW a better place for the more than 1.5 million children and young people living in the State. Funding of **\$5.496 million** will be allocated to the Commission in 2001-02, including an additional \$300,000 per annum for mandatory employment screening, \$192,000 for a media campaign targeting excessive punishment of children and \$154,000 for research into sudden infant death syndrome (\$309,000 for two years).

The Government recognises the importance of providing access to both school and vocational education and training for all people in NSW. To assist children, youth and families to achieve access to government educational services, a range of strategies to provide financial support will continue in 2001-02, including:

- ♦ **\$55.8 million** for the Back-to-School Allowance to help parents in the purchase of clothing, shoes, books and equipping children for school;
- ♦ **over \$4 million** for the Student Assistance Scheme which complements the Back-to-School Allowance by assisting needy students with education costs and covers items such as textbooks, stationery, excursions, uniforms and footwear;
- ♦ **\$836,000** for the Living Away from Home allowance to support students who are required to live away from home to access a secondary school. The Allowance in 2001 is \$1,000 per student, and;
- ♦ **over \$0.4 million** for Access Scholarships for isolated students to assist in meeting boarding costs for isolated students eligible for enrolment at special government schools.

TAFE NSW **administration charge exemptions** will also continue to apply to needy students who are low income earners, in receipt of eligible pensions/allowances (such as AUSTUDY), students enrolled in designated programs targeting key disadvantaged groups (such as Aboriginal students, students with disabilities, women, students from non-English speaking backgrounds), and students enrolled under the TAFE NSW Capped Scholarship Scheme. Under this scheme, students from rural and low socio-economic areas also receive financial assistance of \$200 per annum to meet travel and other expenses.

Funding for other youth-focussed initiatives to be delivered through the Department of Education and Training in 2001-02 include:

- ♦ **\$5.7 million** to be allocated under the **Ready for Work Plan**, an initiative that aims to prepare students in Years 9-12 for work through the development of individual school to work plans;
- ♦ **\$1.8 million** for the TAFE **Youth at Risk Program** to provide support for disadvantaged young people in the community by providing pathways for further education and employment; and
- ♦ **over \$11.4 million** to promote **anti-violence programs in schools** and to provide a wider range of placement and support options for students with disruptive behaviour.

The Government has committed **\$300,000** to the **Youth in Sport program** for 2001-02. The program is a partnership between Police and Community Youth Clubs and the Department of Sport and Recreation. It includes sport and recreation programs in 16 areas throughout the State with a strong focus on crime prevention.

Additional children's and young people's recreational activities to receive funding support in 2001-02 will include:

- ♦ **\$100,000** to community organisations targeting children and young people under the 2001-02 **Active Kids Communities Grants Scheme**. The Scheme supports initiatives that encourage greater participation in physical activity, particularly by under-represented and targeted populations;
- ♦ **\$79,000** towards the ongoing operation of the NSW **Playground Advisory Service**. The Service will continue to 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;

- ♦ **\$50,000** to the **Flying Fruit Fly Circus** to enable children throughout NSW to have the opportunity to participate in circus activities and receive training that may assist them to pursue continued improvement in gymnastics and acrobatics; and
- ♦ **exemptions to the recreational fishing fee** will be provided for pensioners, children and adults assisting children to ensure that community members who can least afford to pay the fee do not suffer any unnecessary financial hardship.

The Strengthening Local Communities Strategy, managed by the Premier's Department, deploys whole of government responses to key social, economic or environmental issues, at the local level, through a place management approach to service planning, funding and delivery.

Place projects provide a better integrated and higher quality response by State Government agencies to key issues in local communities. They also facilitate greater co-operative effort between different levels of government, non-government sector organisations, business groups, and others, through a commonly agreed series of actions.

Evidence, from longer operating projects suggests that, positive outcomes from this type of initiative, include improvements to community safety, better access to human services, new employment opportunities, better youth services and more effective client referral and case management practices.

A commitment of **\$1.6 million**, over four years (1999-2003) has been made to implement the Strategy, with **\$530,000** being allocated in 2001-02.

The **Area Assistance Scheme** (AAS) is a community development grants program targeting areas in NSW of significant social and economic disadvantage. The AAS builds community capacity for mutual support and provides benefits to individuals, groups and communities, including:

- ♦ helping people establish social/support and mutual aid networks;
- ♦ providing a means for individuals to develop local responses to community needs;
- ♦ developing skills and encouraging self development;
- ♦ promoting local community enterprises and resource sharing;
- ♦ building capacity of local community organisations to engage their communities and deliver effective services and programs;
- ♦ providing social and community infrastructure in new towns villages and neighbourhoods;
- ♦ developing local council capacity to work with local communities;
- ♦ helping create healthier communities by providing locally based programs;
- ♦ reduce domestic violence, child abuse, youth suicide, crime and vandalism in local communities through support, inclusion, referral and support services; and
- ♦ providing opportunities to deal with social issues before reaching crisis point.

A total of **\$10.5 million** will be provided for the AAS in 2001-02 including:

- ♦ subsidies of \$500,000 to local councils towards the salaries of Community Projects Officers;
- ♦ funding commitments to 195 projects continuing from previous funding rounds to a total of \$6.4 million; and
- ♦ funding for new projects at approximately \$2.9million.

A total of **137 AAS projects** have been recommended for funding in 2001-02.

The United Nations has declared 2001 to be the **International Year of Volunteers**. The Government is supporting the Year with a number of practical initiatives to promote volunteering as a way of strengthening communities. For example, the Government is providing funding for Volunteer Expos across NSW, a Demonstration Grants Program for innovative projects with a volunteering focus, a series of IYV Forums with volunteering themes, and the Premier's Awards for Active Citizenship to recognise the outstanding contributions to communities by individual volunteers.

Of the total **Casino Community Benefit Fund**, forecast expenditure on services and programs which have a significant social justice component during 2001-02 is **\$6.9 million**. The bulk of this is to be applied to projects directed to alleviating gambling-related harm through the establishment of new or enhanced information, counselling and other support programs and services to counter gambling-related problems in the State, and the provision of other services having an acknowledged community benefit. Major expenditure in 2001-02 includes:

- ♦ **\$627,121** to High Performance Healthcare for the operation of the *G-line (NSW) telephone counselling helpline* (1-800 633 635) for persons affected by gambling problems;
- ♦ **\$326,025** to Wesley Gambling Counselling Services, Chippendale, to assist with the provision of a **counselling and treatment service** for problem gamblers and their families;
- ♦ **\$315,000** jointly to the Community Relations Commission of NSW and the Multicultural Health Unit, Western Sydney Area Health Service for a new **multicultural problem gambling counselling and treatment service** and specialised training programs for bilingual counsellors working with people from non-English speaking backgrounds with gambling problems;
- ♦ **\$265,173** to St Vincent de Paul Society (GAME) to assist with the provision of comprehensive **treatment and rehabilitation services** for problem gamblers and their families through face-to-face counselling;
- ♦ **\$240,613** to 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, early intervention and response strategies in community education**; and
- ♦ **\$206,715** to Mission Australia – Nowra to assist with the provision of a comprehensive **counselling and treatment service** for problem gamblers and their families.

The Department of Gaming and Racing, in conjunction with the Liquor Administration Board, will also be continuing its oversight of the **community development and support expenditure scheme**. This scheme requires registered clubs to spend 1.5% of gaming machine profits over \$1 million on welfare, community development projects, social services and employment assistance programs.

In 2001-02, **\$8.7 million** will be allocated to the **Fair Trading Strategy Program** to enhance the development and performance of the marketplace as a fair and equitable trading environment for all consumers and traders in NSW. This will include implementation of an over-arching Access and Equity Strategy to ensure the Department of Fair Trading's services are accessible and appropriate to disadvantaged sections of the community. A priority for 2001-02 will be the development of Disability Access Implementation Strategies to address issues identified in the recent physical access audit and communication and service delivery review conducted by the Department.

The **Consumer and Trader Services Program** provides information and assistance to consumers, traders and the community on fair trading, home building and property services through a network of 23 Fair Trading Centres. This includes access to complaint resolution services, information on tenancy issues and advice on access to tribunals. In 2001-02, **\$68.2 million** will be spent on the program, with part of this funding used to implement proposed reforms to consumer protection and dispute resolution in the home building industry.

Funding of **\$22.5 million** will be allocated for the operations of the **Fair Trading Tribunal and the Residential Tribunal**, which provide an informal, timely and inexpensive means of resolving consumer and tenancy disputes.

Also during 2001-02, a senior officer of the Department will be seconded to the Council of Social Service of NSW to work on the **No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS)** Development project. The Department will also contribute **\$20,000** to the project. The Department of Urban Affairs and Planning is contributing \$60,000 over two years to NILS. In 1999, the Department of Fair Trading assisted the Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS) in holding a NILS conference and commissioned a review of No Interest Loans Schemes. The review concluded that NILS are a viable concept and have the potential to be an important social justice initiative, particularly in regional NSW.

Strengthening Education and Training

Education is the foundation of an informed society. It promotes participation in community life and is essential in developing the creative, social and intellectual potential of individuals. It nurtures the skills necessary for people to effectively engage in the issues that confront and challenge us as a society.

A good education system provides life long learning, recognised credentials, and clear pathways to employment and other social opportunities. A key goal of the Government is to provide equitable access to high quality public education and training.

By giving young people effective training and education opportunities, we are giving them the best possible chance for their future. Importantly, the Government is also backing that effort with record funding for education. The initiatives outlined below detail how the Government is working to achieve this key social justice objective.

In 2001-02, the Department of Education and Training will be introducing a major focus on the quality of education received by school and TAFE NSW students. A key element of this strategy is to enable teachers to adapt programs to suit individual students' needs and capabilities. Students facing particular educational challenges will be the main beneficiaries of this drive.

This will be achieved through a record level of funding of **\$7,549 million** in the Department's 2001-02 Budget.

In 2001-02, **\$257.6 million** will be provided for the construction of **new and replacement schools** and the upgrading of, and additions to, existing facilities. The program provides for 38 new building projects, including new primary schools at Cecil Hills, Prestons and Glenwood and a replacement primary school at Rouse Hill. Work will also commence on the second stages of new high schools at Kellyville, Mount Annan and the new joint high school and TAFE NSW facility at Tuncurry. At the same time, **\$157 million** will be allocated for an expanded **school maintenance program**.

Funding allocation for the **TAFE NSW capital program** totalling **\$86 million** in 2001-02 will enable commencement of 39 new projects across NSW TAFE campuses.

In 2001-02, **\$116.9 million** will be allocated for the Department's **Literacy and Numeracy Strategy**. This strategy focuses on new teaching programs and provides a framework of state wide testing at key stages. Testing includes English Language and Literacy Assessment, the Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program, the Primary Writing Assessment Program, Count Me In Too, and Counting On. This strategy also provides intensive programs for students requiring additional support and will improve the literacy and numeracy achievements of all groups of students.

As part of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, the Government will allocate approximately **\$25 million** in 2001-02 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 2001, the program is available in 813 schools and is taught by 918 teachers. By the end of 2000, NSW had 1,300 teachers trained in specialist Reading Recovery techniques that can also be used in general classroom teaching.

Over **\$6 million** will be allocated in 2001-02 under the new **Links to Learning Community Grants Program** to assist young people at risk to remain in or return to education and training. Under the revised program, the Department also offers projects to assist young Aboriginal people in rural and regional areas.

The successful **Computers in Schools plan** will be continued and expanded with funding of **\$137.3 million** in 2001-02. This includes new initiative funding of **\$5.4 million** for the provision of E-mail and a range of other E-services for students and teachers in Government schools and TAFE NSW Institutes and Colleges.

The equivalent of 90,000 multi-media computers have been provided to schools, reducing the computer to student ratio in Government schools to around 1:8. These computers are now being replaced through leasing arrangements to ensure schools have the most up-to-date technology. This ratio will be further improved as 25,000 extra computers are provided.

To ensure students have the necessary computing skills for secondary school, the Government has introduced, in 2001, a **Computer Skills Assessment Program** for all Year 6 students in Government schools. Similarly, training for teachers in the **Technology in Learning and Teaching Program** will continue with almost **\$5.6 million** being provided in 2001-02. By 2003, around 40,000 teachers will have been trained in using technology in the classroom. .

An additional allocation of **\$13 million** will support nearly **80 Adult and Community Education (ACE) organisations** across NSW. This will ensure adults have access to high quality education and training opportunities. More than **\$6 million** will be allocated to assist ACE organisations develop and implement initiatives to encourage greater participation and maximise successful outcomes for geographically isolated communities, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, older people, those experiencing social and economic disadvantage (including people who are unemployed and women), and men experiencing educational disadvantage (including those with low literacy levels).

It is anticipated that more than 30,000 ACE courses will attract over 390,000 enrolments throughout the State in 2001-02.

The **School Student Transport Scheme (SSTS)** provides free travel to and from school for eligible students on Government and private bus, rail, ferry services, school charter services, long distance coaches and in private vehicles where no public transport services exist. In 2001-02, **\$416 million** has been allocated to fund payments to operators for the SSTS. An additional **\$3 million** will be provided **for school crossing supervisors** to help infant and primary children cross streets outside their school safely.

Promoting Health

Health is a fundamental concern for every person in NSW. Without access to effective health care, an individual's ability to lead a fulfilling life and participate in society can be significantly compromised. The NSW Government is striving to improve the health of the residents of NSW by improving people's access to appropriate, high quality, health services. We are delivering improved integrated health services in the community and giving particular focus to evidence-based medicine that links funding and service priorities to improved health outcomes.

The Government is engaging with a wide range of stakeholders in discussions about priorities and directions for health reform. It is also undertaking specific programs on health care for Aboriginal people and rural communities.

The NSW Health system delivers a wide range of essential services to assist in improving the health of the community. These services are provided through:

- ♦ 206 general hospitals
- ♦ 15 multi purpose services
- ♦ 15 nursing homes
- ♦ 280 community health centres
- ♦ 500 early childhood centres.

On an average day, 3,600 people are admitted to NSW public hospitals for in-patient care, with 17,700 people spending the day being treated in a hospital bed, and more than 5,000 people every day (or around 3 people a minute) seen in emergency departments. Ambulance services respond to an average of 1,800 calls a day.

Waiting times for elective surgery remain a priority for the Government. NSW has one of the lowest waiting lists per capita compared with other States. Better practice initiatives will ensure that we constantly improve.

In addition, over the last five years, there has been a steady increase in the percentage of patients who have their surgery performed on a same-day basis. In 1995, 45.7% of patients had same-day surgery; in 2000-01 it was 55.3%; and in 2001-02 it is projected to increase to 60%. There has also been an increase in the number of patients admitted to hospital on the day of their booked surgery—from 40% in late 1997; to 79% in March 2001; and projected to reach 80% in 2001-02.

The Government's Action Plan for Health provides a coherent, systematic and consistent way of implementing the findings of the NSW Health Council, and the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Smaller Towns (the Sinclair Committee). The Action Plan involves more than 500 clinicians (doctors, nurses and other health workers) from across the State in leading the change process to improve the integration and continuity of care delivered to patients across the many components of the health care system.

NSW Health is implementing substantial, comprehensive improvements across the State's public hospital system. For the first time in the history of NSW, the Government has committed to a three-year recurrent health budget.

In 2001-02, the budgeted recurrent expenditure for Health is **\$7.77 billion**—an increase of 4.7% over the previous year's Budget allocation.

Planned expenditure on health capital works in 2001-02 will be **\$529 million**. Major new projects include:

- ♦ the **Central Coast Health Access Plan—Wyong Hospital (\$15.5 million)**—to redevelop and provide additional acute in-patient and mental health beds and clinical, imaging and diagnostic facilities;
- ♦ the **Central Coast Health Access Plan—Gosford Hospital (\$13.5 million)**—to provide upgraded emergency department, operating theatres, cardiac care and acute in-patient facilities;
- ♦ a **Patient Administration System (\$9 million)**—to progress the rollout of an improved patient administration software system to replace Areas Health Services' existing inadequate and antiquated systems. The new software will allow full tracking of patient data and location as patients move through the hospital care system as either an in-patient or out-patient;
- ♦ the **State Electronic Health Record (\$7 million)**—implementation of this pilot project will enable information to be shared between hospitals, community health and general practitioners, and other clinicians for patients with chronic and complex care needs. This will enable patient care to be coordinated across the health care continuum;
- ♦ the **Rural IT Infrastructure (\$2.5 million)**—to upgrade or replace information communications and technology infrastructure in rural and regional hospitals in NSW;
- ♦ the **Prince of Wales Parkes Block (\$2 million)**—refurbishment to provide oncology, haematology, renal, vascular and eye services; and
- ♦ **Mental Health Phase 2B (\$3 million)**—upgrading of mental health facilities in emergency departments at Auburn, Blacktown, Mt Druitt, Westmead and James Fletcher Hospitals, additional funding for Blue Mountains Acute In-patient Unit, and planning for a 50 bed in-patient unit and ambulatory care centre at Liverpool Hospital.

The Health forward **Asset Acquisition Program** recognises a significant schedule of priority projects that will be considered for introduction in future years. To ensure value for money and appropriate prioritisation, substantial pre-planning work will be undertaken during 2001-02 for health technology, radiation oncology and selected specialities, the rural minor works program, the strengthening rural health in small towns program, and the research institutes program.

The Government is also making a forward commitment to **two key Area Health Service Asset Strategies**. The 2001-02 Budget allocates funds of **\$2 million** for planning the **Newcastle Strategy**—involving works at John Hunter Hospital, Belmont Hospital and Mater Misericordia Hospital—as well as beginning planning of the **Western Sydney Asset Strategy**, with funding of **\$2 million** involving works at the Westmead and Auburn hospitals.

A total of **\$27.4 million** will be allocated in 2001-02 to the Aboriginal Health Service Program for provision of **supplementary health services to Aboriginal people**, particularly in the areas of health promotion, health education and disease prevention. This is in addition to those provided through general health services.

The Government is also increasing **mental health** funding by **\$107.5 million** over the period 2000-01 to 2002-03. This funding package is providing:

- ♦ 700 additional direct care staff;
- ♦ mental health services to 12 000 additional clients over three years, in community and other service settings; and
- ♦ 150 new acute beds, including 90 in rural areas.

Specific mental health initiatives include:

- ♦ a massive expansion of mental health services in the community to meet local needs, particularly in growth and rural areas;
- ♦ additional funding for non-government organisations;
- ♦ the establishment of a new regional Adolescent In-patient Unit in Campbelltown;
- ♦ new acute mental health facilities for Wollongong, Coffs Harbour, Tweed Heads and Dubbo;
- ♦ a new Child and Adolescent Unit for Hunter;
- ♦ 20 mental health liaison nurses in emergency departments across the State;
- ♦ the establishment, in partnership with the University of Newcastle, of a professorship and Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health in Orange to develop new service delivery models for clients from rural and remote locations;
- ♦ an expansion of tele-psychiatry at The Children's Hospital at Westmead to service the needs of rural and remote communities;
- ♦ an expansion of the Transcultural Mental Health Centre servicing the needs of our multicultural community; and
- ♦ \$1 million recurrent funding to provide support for carers.

Telehealth has been implemented in 61 facilities across NSW. In 2000-01, the service was expanded to a further 46 sites across the State, bringing to 107 the number of health facilities providing rural areas and metropolitan areas with access to specialist consultations on a wide range of health services. Over the three years to 2002-03, the Government is spending another **\$11 million** on this important initiative.

With the expansion to new sites, the range of clinical services offered through Telehealth is being expanded. Eighteen new services have been added, including chronic pain management, sexual health services, aged care services, radiology services, and a research pilot to assess the efficacy of speech pathology.

To address essential environmental health needs, the **Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program** provides councils in country NSW with financial and technical assistance to deliver appropriate water supply and sewerage services. Part of this is the **Small Town Sewerage Program**, providing financial assistance to councils to upgrade sewerage systems in towns of less than 1,000 people with a low growth potential, to a sustainable standard. Under this initiative, 150 small towns with high or urgent human and environmental health needs will be provided with \$168 million to sewer their communities. \$53 million is expected to be spent by 2000-01 with **\$18 million** earmarked for expenditure in 2001-02.

Providing support and funding for **programs and research that will assist effective injury management** remains a statutory function of the Motor Accidents Authority. The primary objective of the MAA Grants Program is minimising the effect of motor accident injuries. Priority areas for funding have included:

- ♦ investigation of the effectiveness of different approaches to the short and longer-term management of whiplash associated disorders, post traumatic stress disorder and chronic pain in people injured in motor vehicle crashes;
- ♦ the evaluation of trauma systems and programs;
- ♦ investigation of deficiencies and opportunities for improvement of trauma care; and
- ♦ the promotion of the use of evidence-based practice by allied health services, particularly in psychology and occupational therapy.

For 2000-01, funding of \$2.156 million was approved for 15 projects in 4 distinct categories to assist effective injury management—rehabilitation services, community support, brain injury management, and research. It is anticipated that a similar amount will be allocated in 2001-02.

Providing Access to Justice and a Safe Community

The NSW Government will continue to demonstrate its commitment to improving the administration of justice and improving community access to the justice system for the people of NSW in 2001-02.

A just society requires a legal system and laws that are based on the principles of equity, access, participation and rights. To achieve this, the Government is responding to changing social trends and dynamics. Sound legislation, help in accessing the legal system, removing inefficiencies, and pursuing strategies for resolution outside the court system are all part of the Government's approach.

Improved justice options, anti-crime interventions, appropriate corrective services, reducing reoffending, and increasing support for victims are other key issues on the Government's justice agenda.

Recurrent funding of **\$485,000** per annum is provided for the **Police and Community (PACT) Program** to develop crime reduction initiatives by bringing together police, youth and community groups in jointly facilitated sessions to identify innovative strategies, enhance stakeholder awareness of policing, and provide training opportunities.

To facilitate communications, an amount of **\$7 million** has been provided under the Radio Communications Network Project over 2000-01 and 2001-02 for the installation of **Mobile Data Terminals** (MDT). These will be installed in many first response police vehicles and will enable police to access Police Service information systems from their vehicles.

Funding of **\$150,000** is also provided in 2001-02 for the continuation of the pilot mandated **Domestic Violence Intervention Education Program** for perpetrators of domestic violence, which commenced in 2000-01. Attendance at the program is a condition of an apprehended violence order (AVO), ensuring that non-attendees are charged with a breach of an AVO.

The Department of Gaming and Racing will be continuing the *No More. It's the Law. responsible serving and drinking program* in 2001-02. The program is one of a range of measures that seeks to minimise alcohol-related violence and anti-social behaviour in the community. It is expected that more than **\$100,000** will be expended on activities under this program during 2001-02, with related initiatives including monitoring of the landmark harm minimisation legislation imposed through the liquor laws in 1996, together with enforcement and compliance action targeting problem premises, intoxication, underage drinking and liquor venue hot spots. The harm minimisation laws require the responsible service of alcohol by licensed venues, impose increased penalties (including on the spot fines) for intoxicated patrons, and are supported by server and patron education measures to raise awareness about responsible drinking. There are also joint programs involving police, liquor industry and the community—such as liquor accords—which often go beyond the law in setting standards that local liquor industry participants agree to adopt.

To improve the safety of passengers, the Government is continuing its program of **improved station security** through improved lighting and the installation of closed circuit camera monitoring. In 2001-02, **\$12.5 million** has been allocated to this project.

Security guards patrol trains across the network after 7pm. In addition, CityRail is deploying contract security guards on stations where a safety risk has been identified and on some services from 2pm each weekday.

In addition, **\$1.2 million** has been allocated to **incorporate electronic sensors** in State Transit **bus doors** to improve passenger safety.

The NSW Police Service is committed to the identification and prosecution of offenders involved in crime. To assist this, a total of **\$4.7 million** will be provided over the next three years for the implementation of the **Enforcement Notices System**. This system will be fully compatible with the Community Orientated Policing Service (COPS) system and provide a platform to facilitate the electronic transfer of data between the NSW Police Service and courts. The Enforcement Notices System supports the Arrest, Charge/Summons, Witness Attendance and Victim Protection initiatives.

A total of **\$226,000** will be provided in 2001-02 for the development of a **Missing Persons DNA Database**. This will effectively build a missing persons Intranet database and will further assist police in the execution of their duties, as well as providing a more responsive service to the community. Access to justice will also be improved through the upgrading of Infringement Processing Bureau technology and improvements to Forensic Facilities throughout NSW.

The Government will also continue to **improve court security** for all participants in the justice system in the face of increasing risk. A further increase in the numbers of Sheriff's officers in courts is planned for 2001-02 and will build on the successful implementation of Year 1 of the Court Security program, which deployed 26 officers to the highest risk locations. The increased presence of Sheriff's officers is a key feature of the Government's strategic program to improve the safety of all participants in the justice system in the face of increasing risk.

To enhance the operation of the court system in 2001-02, the Government will also:

- ♦ provide ongoing support to the various jurisdictions to further improve the management of caseloads to reduce backlogs and achieve service delivery standards.
- ♦ enhance teleconferencing facilities to enable further improved access to witnesses.
- ♦ introduce Electronic Court Transcript systems resulting in real time availability of transcripts.
- ♦ develop the Courts Administration System to improve registry operations and services offered to the community.
- ♦ continue development and implementation of the Strategic Framework for Court Services to further enhance court services and facilities.

Additional funding of **\$1.6 million** has been provided in 2001-02 to meet the full year operating costs of **court security and regional inmate transport activities** taken over from the Police Service in 2000-01 and in early 2001-02. This transfer of responsibilities to Department of Corrective Services personnel will free up more police in regional areas for frontline duties.

The **Police and Court Services Project in Fairfield** will be extended further across the State with the allocation of additional funds of **\$2.2 million**. This includes a range of strategies designed to reduce the time spent in court by police officers such as the appointment of additional Aboriginal Court Liaison Officers and establishing E-mail links between court registries and police stations.

A total of **\$24.4 million** has been allocated for the construction of new courthouses, the expansion or modification of existing courthouses, and for related capital purposes. Major court construction and refurbishment works scheduled for 2001-02 are:

- ♦ the commencement of construction of a **new Metropolitan Children's Court at Parramatta**. This new six-court facility will provide discrete care and criminal courts, with holding areas and other necessary facilities. The court will form part of a justice precinct being developed on the adjacent Parramatta Hospital site. The estimated total cost of the court is \$17.335 million (**\$482,000 in 2001-02**);
- ♦ the commencement of construction of a **new Children's Court at Worimi** in the Hunter District. The court will provide for children's care and criminal matters and have two courtrooms and associated facilities for the delivery of the children's court services. The estimated total cost of the court is \$6.5 million (**\$300,000 in 2001-02**).

A total of **\$1.1 million** will be provided in 2001-02 for the second stage of the **Criminal Histories/Court Results project**. This is the result of a Government initiative to improve the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of criminal histories provided to courts when sentencing and determining bail applications.

Funding of **\$4.9 million** for **Youth Justice Initiatives (YJI)** in 2001-02 will enable the Department of Juvenile Justice to implement and maintain a range of community based services and programs into 2001-02 including post-release support, mentor programs, legal assistance to clients in custody, bail accommodation and general accommodation support services, family alcohol and other drugs services, and preventative youth work services targeting Departmental clients.

In 2001-02, the Government will also continue funding the innovative **Youth Justice Conferencing scheme**. The scheme brought police warnings and cautions under a legislative regime (the *Young Offenders Act 1997*) for the first time by introducing a carefully integrated hierarchical scheme of police warnings, cautions and youth justice conferences, designed to be utilised in response to a significant proportion of youth crime. Youth Justice Conferences recognises that the young offender's family and their community, together with victims of their crime, and their families and supporters, should all play a part in responding to and holding young people responsible for the harm caused by their offending behaviour.

Young offenders who meet the conditions and criteria for eligibility to participate in a youth justice conference are brought face to face with their victim through the conferencing process, so that the offender understands the impact and takes responsibility for that crime. Participants agree to a range of plans that may include sanctions such as apologising and making restitution to the victim, and participation in developmental and support programs that will help the child to mature into a productive member of their community. Entering its second year, **\$4.2 million** is being allocated to this program.

The Budget provides **\$4 million** in 2001-02 for **facility redevelopment costs at Long Bay Correctional Complex**. Once completed, enhanced facilities will cater for therapeutic special needs programs such as those for sex offenders, violent inmates, inmates with intellectual disabilities, those at high risk of suicide, medical transients and offenders with major drug and or alcohol problems.

Commencing in 2001-02, a budget of **\$12.471 million** over three years has been allocated for the construction of a new and vastly improved **Young Women's Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC)** to be located at Lidcombe. This will replace the outdated Yasmar JJC located at Haberfield. An additional **\$23.317 million** has been budgeted over five years (commencing in 2001-02) for the **redevelopment of the existing Reiby JJC** located at Campbelltown.

This funding will enable both the Reiby and Yasmar accommodation to conform to National and Aboriginal Deaths in Custody standards. It will also enable the upgrading of visitor facilities at Cobham JJC located at St Mary's.

NSW Government and the Community: Tackling the Drug Problem

Following the Drug Summit in May 1999, the NSW Government committed an additional **\$176 million** for capital and recurrent projects over four years to implement its **Drug Summit Plan of Action**. More than **\$50 million** of this was projected to be spent in 2001-02 on Drug Summit projects.

This additional funding brought drug program allocations and projected expenditure by NSW Government agencies, from **July 1999 to June 2003**, to approximately **half a billion dollars**.

Key areas where the extra funding has been allocated are as follows.

- ♦ **\$93 million** over four years for expanding both **compulsory and voluntary treatment**.
- ♦ **\$25 million** over four years **to help families and young people through prevention and early intervention programs**. Support services for young people, including juvenile justice detainees have also been enhanced.
- ♦ More than **\$9 million** over four years for **education in schools and community action** including establishment of **Community Drug Action Teams and public education**.
- ♦ **\$23 million** over four years to **drug programs and facilities in correctional facilities**.

- ♦ **\$5.5 million** over four years to **law enforcement and the justice system**, including crime prevention activities.

Drug Summit funds in 2001-02 will allow:

- ♦ continued expansion and improvement of the **methadone program**, including new places, case management and counselling for clients
- ♦ continued expansion of the **home detoxification program** in Area Health Services
- ♦ continuation of services provided by **eight new drug and alcohol counsellors** already appointed in **rural Area Health Services**, the Illawarra outreach service and the newly completed in-patient detoxification service for the North Coast (Lismore)
- ♦ continued training for GPs, pharmacists and specialists in **drug treatment pharmacotherapies**.

A new **15-bed detoxification unit** to deliver drug and alcohol in-patient and out-patient programs, will be constructed on the grounds of **Nepean Hospital**, commencing in 2001 and due to be commissioned in early 2002. Funding of **\$1.743 million** recurrent has been allocated.

A new **15-bed drug treatment unit** is being built at **Wyang Hospital**. The services will include pharmacotherapy treatment, in-patient detoxification and out-patient detoxification treatment, counselling and referral services. Building has commenced with the unit due to be commissioned by the end of 2001. Recurrent funding for the unit is **\$1.290 million**.

A new **heroin overdose plan** will commence implementation, underpinned by a budget of **\$670,000**. It aims to help young people to get off this drug and reduce deaths.

In 2001-02 in the Justice area the Government will continue the **five pilot programs** as part of the **joint Commonwealth/State diversion initiative**. The aim is to increase the chances of rehabilitation of both long and short term drug users and to provide a gateway to treatment for people. The projects include the **Youth Drug Court** and the **Magistrates Early Referral into Treatment pilot (MERIT)**.

The **Youth Drug Court Trial** and associated treatment services has been established with a commitment of more than **\$8 million** over the period of the trial.

A working group is developing a **new special local diversion initiative for adult and young offenders in Wellington** to treat their drug dependency problems. The project is based on the specific needs of that community. It is expected to commence in 2001-02.

Three new detoxification centres are being set up to treat inmates withdrawing from drugs and alcohol at **Bathurst, Grafton and Parklea Correction Centres**. In 2001-02 more than **\$1.3 million** will be allocated to running these units.

A **transitional centre** will be located at **Emu Plains Correctional Centre** for 16 minimum security women prisoners, to prepare women who have only six months left to serve in gaol for release back into the community. The unit will target women with a history of drug problems. Funds of **\$880,000** have been allocated for the building in 2001-02.

Ten additional alcohol and other drug Department of Juvenile Justice counsellors have been recruited and will continue to work with departmental clients in regional areas.

Two new residential rehabilitation facilities for young offenders have been recently announced for **Dubbo** and **Coffs Harbour**. An allocation of **\$4 million** over two years has been made to run the services and provide any capital needed to locate, secure and refurbish suitable properties.

Nine regional project managers have been appointed, who are **establishing Community Drug Action Teams** across the State. There are now over 50 such teams developing locality specific responses to drug problems. A set of guidelines on the Community Drug Action Strategy, an information kit and website have been developed to assist these teams.

Over the next two years, community action will be supported **by a number of new resources** including:

- ♦ a NSW family drug information kit
- ♦ a drugs and media kit
- ♦ a community education campaign
- ♦ a toolkit for Community Drug Action Teams
- ♦ a local government training and information program

During the period 2001-03, **TAFE** is **providing funds** to expand delivery of short locally customised **Alcohol and Other Drug courses** in rural and outlying metropolitan regions.

In addition to continuing its comprehensive drug education program, the Department of Education and Training has been allocated **\$610,000** over four years in Drug Summit funding to undertake an evaluation and to expand the **Ted Noffs Foundation Schools Program**. In 2001, the program will be operating in **11 schools in the east and inner west of Sydney**.

In 2001-02 funds will also be allocated to:

- ♦ **the extension of the *Healing Time* program**, a culturally appropriate drug education resource for Aboriginal students
- ♦ **ongoing training for school and TAFE NSW counsellors** on strategies to support students at risk of harmful drug use
- ♦ the development and trialing of **culturally specific alcohol and tobacco education** and cannabis education in geographic areas where cannabis use is high

The Department of Community Services has been allocated **\$3.6 million** over four years and **\$1.03** in 2001-02 for the **continuation of the 'Getting it Together' program**. This offers a service to approximately 250 young people a year in twelve locations across NSW. It involves a case manager brokering or otherwise ensuring these young people receive services specific to their individual needs – these might include treatment, education, housing, or interpreter services.

The Department of Community Services has also been allocated **\$1.03 million** for the 2001-02 year to provide case management and aftercare services for approximately **90 Youth Drug Court clients**.

All Drug Summit programs will be **monitored** and **evaluated**. A set of evaluation guidelines will assist agencies to develop appropriate performance indicators and evaluation plans. The Government wants to ensure its significant investment in the drug problem is properly targeted.

Supporting Rural and Regional Communities

The NSW Government recognises the strengths, challenges and diversity of rural and regional NSW. We acknowledge:

- ♦ the contribution made by rural and regional NSW to the overall NSW economy;
- ♦ the particular needs of rural NSW in relation to access to services;
- ♦ the significant economic social and environmental stress being experienced by some communities; and
- ♦ the capacities and resilience of rural communities.

Over the last 20 years, most major regional centres have grown in size and prosperity, while many smaller towns have experienced difficulties in attracting population, investment and services. It is clear that the rural and regional areas of NSW face different challenges and have different strengths to the urban areas of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong.

The Government acknowledges these differences and is working to assist rural and regional communities identify where it can help and where it can give aid in building on local strengths and develop opportunities. Ensuring that people in rural and remote areas have fair access to effective health services, improved infrastructure, secure employment and increased business opportunities – as well as maintaining and strengthening communities – are challenges addressed by a number of programs funded by the NSW Government in the 2001-02 Budget.

Established in 1994, the **Regional Coordination Program** (RCP) now covers all of rural, regional and metropolitan NSW. Eight Regional Coordinators work in country centres throughout the State to improve rural and regional service delivery and progress collaboration between Government agencies and communities on issues of concern to people living outside Sydney. The Government will allocate **\$2.949 million** for the RCP in 2001-02.

In December 2000, the Government released the **Staying in Town** rural affairs statement, which reinforces the Government's commitment to refocussing Government services and resources in country NSW to better meet the needs of rural people. This Statement outlines strategies to:

- ♦ improve access to services in rural and regional NSW;
- ♦ facilitate agencies working in an integrated, whole of government way;
- ♦ promote Government jobs and people staying in rural and regional areas;
- ♦ strengthen local communities; and
- ♦ focus resources on service delivery rather than paperwork.

To support these strategies, the Government has allocated **\$6.5 million** over three years.

In 2001-02, **\$150,000** will be provided to support the work of the **Regional Communities Consultative Council**. 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.

Under the **Government Access Program**, the Government has been trialing the delivery of integrated government services and information from ‘one stop shops’ in rural and remote communities. Services provided include vehicle registration renewal, applications for birth, death and marriage certificates and recreational fishing licences. Funding of **\$1.8 million** has been allocated in 2001-02 to expand the Program and establish a network of shop-fronts in small rural communities to improve access to government services and information.

In 2001-02 **\$250,000** will be allocated to the **Townlife Development Program** to assist smaller towns (with populations of less than 2,500) that are particularly vulnerable to the effects of globalisation and the rationalisation of industry. The funding support will be provided to communities to plan and implement projects that involve new economic activity.

A total of **\$997,000** will be provided to 26 rural community groups to assist with the employment of **35 rural financial counsellors** throughout NSW in 2001-02. The Rural Financial Counsellors provide 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 NSW Governments as well as the local community in a ratio of 50:25:25. The services are designed to enhance the ability of the farming sector to adjust to the range of pressures facing it, with flow-on benefits for rural and regional communities.

The **Murrumbidgee Rural Partnership Program** commenced in 2000-01 with the majority of expenditure occurring in 2001-02. The program is designed to enhance the viability of farm business within the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area by the provision of financial assistance in the area of business enterprise planning, and business and property redevelopment. State funding of \$2.5 million (matched by the Commonwealth) is being provided from 2001-02 to 2003-04.

The **Disaster Relief Scheme** provides loan funds to farmers and small businesses to allow them to continue their farming or business operations immediately following a natural disaster. In 2001-02, \$2 million has been notionally allocated for the Scheme

The **Home Care Service of NSW** provides the greater proportion of its services to people outside the Sydney metropolitan area. Fifty-six per cent of all people who receive Home Care services live outside Sydney. This reflects a trend of increasing services to rural and regional communities in the last two years. In the last twelve months alone, service levels in rural and regional NSW have increased by 27 percent benefiting an additional 2,800 people. The Home Care Service plans to sustain this enhanced level of service in 2001-02, with an estimated \$89 million being set aside for rural and regional communities.

FarmBi\$ promotes a positive approach to change and builds on the farm sector’s culture of continuous improvement to increase productivity, profitability and sustainability of business by enhancing farm business management skills. Assistance is provided in the form of direct financial contributions towards the cost of programs and training activities to enhance farmers’ business management skills. State funding of \$13.4 million (matched by the Commonwealth) is being provided from 2001-02 to 2003-04.

A total of **\$151.5 million** will be provided in 2001-02 for a wide variety of specially targeted research, training and regulatory services designed to assist our 42,700 farmers—and the rural communities dependent on them—to **improve their relative efficiency and ability to compete with overseas and interstate competitors**. The services are provided by NSW Agriculture’s 2,300 staff at 101 country locations and cover all aspects of crop and livestock production, disease control and marketing.

The outcome of these projects will have a major bearing on the economic viability of the communities throughout rural NSW including the jobs of 25% of the State's workforce.

A suite of **Community Economic Development Programs**—comprising the Main Street/Small Towns, Business Retention and Expansion, and Developing Regional Resources programs are expected to receive cumulative funding of up to **\$750,000** in 2001-02. These programs help communities and regions in regional NSW to take a strategic and proactive approach to their economic futures and to explore opportunities that value-add to local resources and diversify from the traditional economic base.

The **Regional Economic Transition Scheme (RETS)** will also be continued, allowing targeted assistance to attract new industry to regional communities adversely affected by economic restructuring. Funding of **\$5 million** per annum will be allocated to RETS over the next four years.

The **Regional Procurement Program** being implemented during 2001-02 is expected to lead to an increase in orders from Government agencies placed with small and regionally based businesses, through local sourcing and the effective matching of regional procurement needs with regional capabilities. In the short to medium term, this should lead to sustained employment and increased investment in regional areas and the potential for increased employment as the program grows.

Through the **Regional Tourism Action Plan**, the Government is working with regional NSW to grow tourism in a sustainable way to achieve economic and employment growth for regional areas. Each region is supported in developing its own marketing and development plans, in recognition that each is unique and has its own individual needs. In 2001-02, **\$1.945 million** will be provided to continue to evolve industry and local council supported independent Regional Tourism Organisations, which represent local and regional marketing and development needs.

Initiatives to be undertaken through the Police Service in 2001-02 to support rural and regional communities include:

- ◆ the provision of new police stations at various locations, including Waratah;
- ◆ cell improvements at various locations across rural and regional NSW;
- ◆ remote police housing in Walgett and Bourke;
- ◆ the relocation of the Infringement Processing Bureau to Maitland;
- ◆ an allocation of \$175,000 to upgrade information technology at the recently relocated Firearms Registry in Murwillumbah; and
- ◆ improved Forensic Laboratory facilities in a number of rural and regional areas including Coffs Harbour.

The 2001-02 Police Service works program also provides **\$6 million** to improve the Service's **Country Radio Communications Network**. This will provide a more efficient and effective police communication system across rural and regional areas.

Funding of **\$69.2 million** will be provided in 2001-02 for **rural students** in Government schools. This includes allocations to support 19 Distance Education Centres, improved staffing in smaller schools, isolated schools grants, and staffing supplements for central schools.

New facilities at Dubbo, Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Miller and Ultimo **TAFE campuses** and major refurbishment works at GyMEA, Wollongbar and St George campuses will be provided under TAFE NSW capital program to which **\$86 million** has been allocated in 2001-02.

Access to adequate transportation is a key component in sustaining regional and rural communities. Funding initiatives in 2001-02 include:

- ♦ **\$206 million** allocated to the Rail Infrastructure Corporation in accordance with Line Community Service Obligation agreements to keep **regional railway lines** open and available for use by passenger and freight services;
- ♦ **\$6 million** for the completion of the electrification of rail services between Kiama and Dapto;
- ♦ **\$6 million** for **remotoring of XPT rail cars**. Total estimated cost **\$22 million**;
- ♦ **\$2 million** for 2001-02 for new intercity rail cars. Total estimated cost **\$120 million**;
- ♦ **\$1.5 million** in 2001-02 for **replacement of rail cars in the Hunter region**. Total estimated cost **\$61 million**;
- ♦ **\$300,000** for **refurbishment of Countrylink rail cars**. Total estimated cost \$5.5 million;
- ♦ **\$1 million** allocated under the Waterways Asset Development and Management Program to provide infrastructure for recreational boaters in regional NSW; and
- ♦ **vehicle weight tax expenditure/concessions** estimated for 2001-02 at **\$17.6 million**.

To alleviate the high cost of travel associated with participating in sporting competitions for people living in rural and remote communities, **\$100,000** will also be allocated to the national/international travel program.

The **Special Conservation Scheme** provides concessional interest loans for works such as soil conservation, irrigation and water supply. Loans are provided on the basis that the proposed works have a beneficial impact on the land, the community and the environment. In 2001-02, **\$7 million** is being made available for the Scheme.

The **Water Use Efficiency Scheme** is designed to encourage irrigators to make optimal use of irrigation water. It provides financial assistance, totalling **\$25 million over five years**, to irrigators with the capacity to undertake capital improvements to increase on-farm water use efficiency and to increase the adoption of water use monitoring technologies.

The Department of Land and Water Conservation is the lead agency in natural resource management for NSW. Its decentralised structure, with about 75% of the staff located in non-metropolitan areas, is ideally suited to assisting and supporting rural and regional communities through a variety of natural resource management committees. These committees, which comprise a broad range of local community participation, are developing regional plans and strategies for vegetation, water, catchment, estuary, floodplain and coastal management. Such a community based planning process provides for regional communities to develop regional solutions to regional natural resource management issues.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is committed to working with other agencies and local communities to identify how national parks and other protected areas can further the Government's social justice objectives by contributing to sustainable rural and regional development. NPWS contributes to these objectives through:

- ♦ purchasing goods and services from local businesses for park management and capital works, and attracting visitors, and thus visitor expenditure to the area. The Service is also a significant employer in regional and rural NSW with some 61% of staff (1,089) employed in areas outside the Sydney metropolitan area.
- ♦ developing better working relationships and associations with private stakeholders and other public agencies to achieve conservation outcomes that also provide economic and social benefits. This includes participating with other agencies in an integrated approach to natural resource planning and management to foster the ecologically sustainable use of natural resources; and
- ♦ ensuring that programs and plans developed by the NPWS formally include assessments of the potential social and economic impacts of NPWS activities on local communities and economies and are revised to promote social and economic benefits where possible.

NPWS has an ongoing program of research into the economic and social benefits of protected areas to communities in rural and regional NSW. Recent studies examined the regional economic impacts of Warrumbungle, Sturt, Kinchega and Mutawintji national parks. The economic information obtained from these studies will be used to develop strategies and initiatives for natural and cultural heritage conservation which can be integrated into rural and regional development programs being fostered by local councils, public agencies and other organisations.

Sport and recreation initiatives for rural and regional communities in 2001-02 will include:

- ♦ **\$200,000** under the **Rural and Remote Grants Scheme** for specific projects that assist athletes, coaches, and officials from rural NSW to improve their qualifications and experience
- ♦ **\$530,000** for seven regional **sporting academies** that service rural NSW; and
- ♦ **\$200,000** for the **Country Athletes Scheme** to assist athletes from rural areas to access competition coaching, and training opportunities similar to those available to city based athletes.

Enhancing Social Housing

The Government is committed to a diversified social housing system. It continues to target social housing assistance to applicants and tenants with priority needs. It also continues its focus on providing a wide range of housing options for its most disadvantaged clients. This involves the reconfiguration of existing dwellings for people with a disability, the provision of supported housing and accommodation for people with special needs, and the provision of financial assistance to low income renters in the private rental market.

NSW will spend **\$616 million** for housing assistance in 2001-02 to help an estimated 479,000 people.

The 2001-02 **capital works program** for social housing includes **\$242.9 million** for the commencement of 1,022 new dwellings across public, community (including crisis), and Aboriginal housing, and the leasing of 1,020 dwellings from the private sector, including:

- ♦ **public housing** supply will be increased through the commencement of 479 new dwellings, with around **\$25 million** being spent on works in progress, and **\$54 million** on new works;
- ♦ **community housing** supply will be increased through expenditure of around **\$25 million** on works in progress and around **\$39 million** on new works, with 381 new community housing commencements; and

- ♦ the supply of **Aboriginal housing** will be increased through expenditure of almost **\$34 million** on works in progress and new works, with commencements of 117 new dwellings for Aboriginal people and the completion of 109 units commenced in 2000-01

In 2001-02, **\$216.2 million** will be spent **upgrading existing housing stock**, with more than 60,000 properties undergoing some form of improvement. This includes upgrades to Aboriginal housing stock of nearly **\$19 million** as part of the Government's commitment to improved housing options for Aboriginal people. An additional **\$3.9 million** will be spent to modify around 550 dwellings to cater for the needs of people with disabilities.

An allocation of **\$40.3 million** will be spent specifically on **housing estates**, including both asset and non-asset improvement. This will be guided through the development and implementation of an estates strategy.

Intensive tenancy management approaches will continue at a cost of **\$1.3 million** in selected estates with significant social problems—Bidwill, Toongabbie, Minto, Bonnyrigg, Redfern, Lake Macquarie, South Moree and West Dubbo. Partnerships with other government and non-government agencies will be developed to improve the co-ordination of support services for clients with complex needs, prevent crime and enhance employment opportunities for tenants. Public Housing will also work with local tenant groups to increase tenant participation and control in decision-making processes for estates.

Major expenditure on the upgrading of properties, improvement of infrastructure and public spaces, and other special projects is also planned for metropolitan estates such as Bidwill, Toongabbie, Airds, Waterloo and Riverwood.

An **additional \$17.9 million** will be provided under the **Crisis Accommodation Program** for homeless people and people in crisis. This will enable the provision of additional housing for clients with complex support needs, including new services for people with a mental illness, people with a disability and people with drug and alcohol problems. There will also be a continued expansion of exit housing for people leaving crisis accommodation to assist them move to long term housing.

Public Housing will continue to use existing properties for supported accommodation projects at levels similar to previous years. As a result, around 150 properties may be used to develop supported accommodation partnerships in public housing in 2001-02. For instance, a number of existing bedsits will be modified and refurbished in the Northern and Hunter Regions to provide supported accommodation for clients with special needs through partnerships with support agencies. Public Housing will also continue to explore the development of new brokerage roles for support services not provided by the Department of Housing.

There will also be a continued allocation of at least 15% of new community housing properties for supported housing where there is a formal agreement between housing and support providers to ensure tenancies can be sustained in the long term. This will provide around a further 60 supported housing units.

A total of **\$33.6 million** is being allocated in 2001-02 to provide **financial assistance to eligible low-income people** who rent in the private rental market. Of this, \$12.03 million is provided specifically to private renters with special needs, such as people with a disability or HIV/AIDS. The remaining \$21.5 million is being provided for low income earners largely to meet the costs of establishing a tenancy in the private market, that is, assistance with the costs of bond and advance rents.

Youth housing, training and employment (or 'Foyer') projects will be further developed in 2001-02, at a cost of around **\$330,000**. These projects offer employment and training opportunities in building-related activities at the same time as providing accommodation for younger people. The first **Foyer** will be located in Miller. Significant contributions will be sought from the private sector for these projects, which are the first of their kind in Australia.

As part of the NSW Government's **Affordable Housing Strategy**, **\$7.5 million** will be allocated in 2001-02 to develop long term affordable rental housing for low to moderate income households in partnership with the private, community, and local government sectors.

Of the available funds, **\$6.4 million** will be allocated to the **Affordable Housing Demonstration Projects** to provide zero-interest loans to pay part of the cost of building works. The loans are repayable at the project's completion to be applied towards future affordable housing. A further \$550,000 will be provided in the form of seed grants to assess the feasibility of a new project or model of affordable rental housing.

Meeting the Needs and Aspirations of Aboriginal People

NSW has the largest State population of Aboriginal people in Australia. The Government remains active in promoting policies and programs, in partnership with Aboriginal people, to help redress the social and economic disadvantages affecting their communities.

The Government is working hard to close the gap in the provision of basic services and infrastructure in Aboriginal communities. It is also working with Aboriginal people to improve health care and to develop programs that increase employment and economic well-being. The Government has also acknowledged the need to redress the wrongs of the past by providing Aboriginal people with genuine opportunities for the future.

In February 2001, the Premier announced a fresh plan on Aboriginal Affairs, to be known as *Partnerships – A New Way of Doing Business with Aboriginal People*. The development of Aboriginal leadership and economic independence will be part of the plan, with the delivery of government services and infrastructure measured against targets and timetables. Development of the plan in 2001-02 will also focus on improving education and health standards for Aboriginal people, cut duplication, and introduce an annual audit report measuring progress in meeting targets and timetables.

Providing essential services to Aboriginal communities in NSW continues to be a key priority in 2001-02. The **Aboriginal Community Development Program (ACDP)** is a **\$200 million housing and infrastructure** program. This program, the first of its kind in NSW, is delivering much needed housing and infrastructure such as water, sewerage and roads to a number of priority Aboriginal communities. The program commenced in July 1998.

There have been 22 communities approved for the Early and Major works component of the ACDP. These total \$52.61 million and include construction and purchasing of 17 houses, extensive repairs and maintenance to 76 houses, and landscaping, fencing and water and sewerage works. Some communities have also commenced an Employment and Training program in building and landscaping.

The ACDP will begin work in a further eight communities in 2001-02. Within seven communities, 136 new houses will be provided, with repairs and maintenance to a further 200 houses. Water and sewerage works within the ACDP have already enabled 22 communities to have access to a quality water supply and sewerage service.

The Housing for Health component of the ACDP is designed to assess and repair the health hardware of homes in Aboriginal communities throughout NSW. It has been conducted in eight Aboriginal communities and 124 homes at a cost of \$1.9 million and is currently underway in Brewarrina and Kempsey where it is expected that a total of 170 homes will be assessed and upgraded at a cost of \$1.4 million. A further 42 communities have been identified for inclusion in the program for 2001-02.

Overall, ACDP expenditure in 2001-02 will total **\$32.6 million**.

The **Aboriginal Business Program**—with a program allocation of **\$200,000**—will continue to support Aboriginal businesses to market and promote their products and services in new domestic and international markets. The 2001 **Aboriginal Employment and Business Awards** event will take place in December 2001.

The **Aboriginal Participation in Construction Implementation Guidelines** released in March 2001 assist agencies and industry to ensure Aboriginal participation outcomes in the form of employment, training and enterprise development are identified, planned and managed in selected government construction projects. Implementation will continue throughout 2001-02.

In January 2001, the Construction Policy Steering Committee obtained the Olympic Coordination Authority's **database of Aboriginal people with construction skills**. The database was established in 1998 and contains information and contact details for 162 Aboriginal people with construction skills/training. The database will be used to assist government agencies and the industry to identify skills and locate Aboriginal enterprises and tradespeople available to respond to work opportunities in the industry.

The Department of Industrial Relations delivers a range of relevant industrial relations services to Aboriginal people throughout the State. The Department's **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workplace Services Unit** was established formally in August 1999 to coordinate the delivery of these services. The intended outcome of this initiative is that Aboriginal people in NSW have better access to information about their employment rights and responsibilities.

The Unit's staff work closely with other organisations already involved with Aboriginal communities to improve employment conditions. In addition, regular tours to regional centres and the use of a Telephone Advisory Service for the cost of a local call, ensures the wide availability of the service. The recurrent cost of this initiative will be **\$150,000** in 2001-02.

In 2001-02, **\$32.6 million** will be provided through the Department of Education and Training as **targeted funding for Aboriginal students**. This includes Aboriginal training and employment programs, grants to schools under the Literacy and Numeracy strategy, and funding to support over 300 Aboriginal Educational Assistants and 30 Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers.

The Aboriginal Rural Training Program (ARTP), conducted by the Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture, delivers training that meets the educational needs of Aboriginal people and their communities. Training will be delivered through the Department of Education and Training-funded Links to Learning Program for the Brewarrina and Narrandera Shires. Other training will assist some of the most disadvantaged groups in the indigenous community, including those detained in Shepherds Park School (part of the Riverina Juvenile Justice Centre), Ivanhoe Correctional Complex, Yetta Dhinnakkal Centre (Second Chance Program), as well as the Warrakoo Life Skills Support Centre and through the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) at Narromine and Wellington.

A range of **sporting and recreational initiatives** relevant to Aboriginal people will also receive funding in 2001-02, including:

- ♦ **\$200,000** per year to the **Aboriginal Community Grants Scheme**, administered by the Department of Sport and Recreation, to provide funding to Aboriginal community organisations to develop skills and sustainable sport and recreation opportunities in those communities;
- ♦ **\$60,000** to implement **Sports Libraries** to remote areas of NSW enabling access to a variety of sports equipment for use by Aboriginal communities;
- ♦ **\$50,000** to maintain the North West Strategy that provides a range of **sporting activities in selected communities in north-western NSW** with the aim of developing competitions within communities and then expanding opportunities to include inter-town competition in selected sports; and
- ♦ **\$200,000** to the **Far West Regional Academy of Sport** to provide assistance to Aboriginal people and other talented athletes living in isolated and remote areas of the State.

Reducing Aboriginal over-representation in the juvenile justice system is one of the key goals of the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The Department has developed an **Aboriginal over-representation strategy** for the next three years to provide improved coordination and strategic focus. Other programs that come under the auspices of the Department include:

- ♦ the **Ja-Biah Bail Support Service** in western Sydney which provides an alternative accommodation option for magistrates by targeting Aboriginal young offenders who would otherwise be held on remand;
- ♦ the 'one stop shop' **Aboriginal Youth Support Centre at Purfleet** near Taree targeting DJJ Aboriginal clients, young people at risk of offending and their families;
- ♦ the **Kempsey Education and Motivation Program** funded by DJJ and operated by Digay Centre of Excellence in Aboriginal Education providing juvenile justice clients with culturally appropriate education, training and work-based learning opportunities;
- ♦ the **Youth Justice Conferencing Scheme**, established in April 1998, which assists in reducing the number of Aboriginal people appearing before court; and
- ♦ an **Aboriginal Mentor Scheme** currently operating throughout NSW which matches young people on community-based supervision with an appropriately trained adult to provide mentoring and support.

Funding of **\$1 million** per annum has been provided to the Attorney-General's Department to implement the **Indigenous Justice Strategy**. Initiatives funded under this Strategy will improve outcomes for Aboriginal people who come into contact with the criminal justice system or who are victims of crime.

The **Home Care Service of NSW** has a network of nine Aboriginal branches throughout NSW. These are staffed by Aboriginal workers and provide culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal communities. In 2001-02, the budget within the Home Care Service for Aboriginal services will be over **\$8 million**, or 5% of Home Care's budgeted income for the year. This will see Home Care assist over 1,200 Aboriginal people to remain living in their communities, rather than being admitted into residential care.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs' **Aboriginal Grants Program** helps address the socio-economic and cultural aspirations of Aboriginal people in NSW. Grants under the Program – with total funding of **\$800,000** in 2001-02—are allocated to reflect the priorities of the Government and the Department. The program is divided into two components—major and discretionary grants:

- ♦ major grants are distributed through a biannual process that is widely advertised. Grants can include research projects and partnership arrangements with other funding authorities and private enterprise. 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 are small allocations for Aboriginal people and organisations 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 through lack of funding programs or rejection from other agencies.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) works with Aboriginal communities to achieve the protection of natural and cultural heritage through mechanisms that also deliver social and economic benefits. In 2001-02, **\$200,000** will be allocated to meet statutory obligations for the **transfer of ownership of NPWS estates** which have significant cultural heritage values to registered Aboriginal owners and the leasing of these lands back to NPWS. This will allow Aboriginal owners a majority management of the lands and the incorporation of Aboriginal cultural heritage values in land management.

In addition, funding of **\$200,000** for **Aboriginal place investigations** will ensure that places of significant Aboriginal cultural heritage values are recognised and managed in accordance with agreed principles.

A further **\$500,000** will be allocated for site protection works and community consultation processes around **Aboriginal heritage projects**. This will increase the protection of Aboriginal sites through appropriate management techniques and the inclusion of Aboriginal cultural heritage values in NPWS land management processes.

The **Aboriginal Discovery Program** aims to foster an appreciation of, and understanding for, Aboriginal cultural heritage and to build capacity in Aboriginal communities to gain social, economic and environmental benefits through cultural education and tourism. The Program is conducted as part of NPWS state wide community education program of guided walks, talks and tours in national parks and through outreach activities. It includes a training component that supports the delivery of the Program in regions across NSW. A total of 41 Aboriginal discovery rangers have been trained, conducting more than 250 cultural heritage activities in the past two years with more than 3,500 participants on the program. A number of Aboriginal people working in the Program have gained experience and then joined private tour companies. The Program will continue in 2001-02.

NPWS **Regional Advisory Committees** are a primary means of ensuring ongoing community involvement in NPWS's work with the community in conservation management and the protection and conservation of nature, Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage in the NSW landscape. There are currently 19 Committees with 15 Aboriginal members appointed state wide for a four year term (to 2003). These appointments recognise the important role of Aboriginal people in decision-making processes that support positive economic, social and environmental outcomes for Aboriginal communities. The program will continue in 2001-02.

NPWS is also planning a workshop to be held in August 2001 to examine the relationship between **cultural heritage conservation and community health** in Aboriginal communities. It is anticipated that this workshop will be attended by representatives of government agencies involved in the delivery of services to Aboriginal communities and other professionals from the health and community services sectors.

In recognising the difficulties that Aboriginal people have had in accessing Natural Heritage Trust funds, the Department of Land and Water Conservation, as from January 2001, has been administering a specific funding program to **assist Aboriginal land management projects**. This Commonwealth funding program, of \$420,000 over two years, provides for grants up to \$10,000 per project. The program is flexible in its application requirements with all decisions being made by a panel of Aboriginal people.

Reforms of native vegetation and water management give major responsibilities to community-Government partnership committees for delivering successful natural resources management outcomes. The *Native Vegetation Conservation Act 1997* and the *Water Management Act 2000* provide for all regional vegetation committees and water management committees to include two seats for Aboriginal people. Also the peak advisory committees established under these Acts—the Native Vegetation Advisory Council and the Water Advisory Council—include Aboriginal representation.

Supporting Older People and People with Disabilities

Intervention and support for those with special needs—particularly older people or those who have a disability—is a key Government priority.

A particular priority is the delivery of services that are tailored to assist people with complex needs who may require support from a number of agencies. Frail older people and some people with disabilities need to be able to effectively access the system to obtain the range of services they need. People with a disability will be supported with effective services that as far as possible enable them to live as fully participating members of the community.

The expenses budget allocation in 2001-02 Budget for the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (Ageing and Disability Department) totals **\$1,114.5 million**—an increase of \$137.9 million on the 2000-01 Budget estimate.

The **Home and Community Care (HACC) program** provides a range of home and community care services to frail older people, people with disabilities, and their carers. These services include home nursing, home care, delivered meals, day and respite care, transport services, and carer information and counselling services. In 2001-02, an **additional \$26.2 million** per annum has been provided for maintenance and growth in the HACC program, with a total of **\$11.4 million** allocated specifically for community transport.

Funding will be allocated to support people with disabilities and their ageing carers to remain together at home through provision of services such as intensive in-home support, respite care, behaviour support, case management, and independent living training.

The second five-year **Dementia Action Program**, starting in July 2001, will provide services and support for people with dementia and their carers—including people in rural and remote communities. In 2001-02, an **amount of \$2.7 million** will be provided for support initiatives such as community awareness, counselling, and research to assist the growing numbers of people in NSW (5% of people over 65 in 2001) who are experiencing dementia.

Expenditure on the **Disability Services Program**, which includes disability prevention, supported accommodation, respite care and community support services, will increase by **\$9.2 million** in 2001-02.

For 2001-02, an additional **\$33.4 million** per annum has been negotiated with the Commonwealth Government under the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement. This will provide additional services that enable people with disabilities with ageing carers to remain supported by their families within their community.

The **Home Care Service of NSW** will deliver significantly increased services in 2001-02. The Service currently provides assistance to over 55,000 people throughout the State. These are mainly frail, older people, but also younger people with a disability, as well as carers. Service levels in 2001-02 are expected to rise to over 4.2 million hours (compared with 3.8 million hours delivered in 2000-01) benefiting an additional 9,000 people. The Home Care Service's total expenditure for 2001-02 is expected to be \$160.5 million, an increase of \$17.4 million over 2001-02.

Government funding for a wide range of transport concessions will be provided to both public and private transport operators to ensure that pensioners, retired senior citizens, veterans and welfare recipients have equal access to services and facilities.

In 2001-02, a total of **\$196.792 million** has been allocated to subsidise pensioner concession travel on Cityrail and State Transit services. This funding includes **\$169.037 million** towards **Pensioner Excursion Tickets (PETs)** for unlimited pensioner travel on all CityRail services and most State Transit Authority services on the day of purchase.

Additionally, **\$42.0 million** has been allocated in 2001-02 to Countrylink for the provision of **subsidised travel on Countrylink services**.

Services provided by **private transport operators** have been allocated **\$34.2 million** in 2001-02 towards subsidised concession travel.

The **Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme (TTSS)** 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. Funding of **\$12.606 million** has been allocated for TTSS in 2001-02

Funding of **\$14.408 million** has been allocated to community transport operators in NSW in 2001-02 through the **Home and Community Care Transport** Sub-program, the **NSW Community Transport Program** and the **Area Assistance Scheme**. Community Transport aims to address specific transport needs of frail aged, people with disabilities and their carers, and transport disadvantaged people.

CityRail is progressively installing **'Easy Access' facilities** around its network for people with a disability. In 2001-02, **\$30 million** will be allocated to upgrade the following 19 stations for this purpose—Maitland, Beresfield, Thornton, Rockdale, Campsie, Summer Hill, Fairfield, Riverwood, Beverley Hills, West Ryde, Allawah, Holsworthy, Katoomba, Caringbah, Engadine, Wollongong, Kiama, Padstow and Regents Park.

Concessional private transport arrangements will continue to be provided in 2001-02 to many older people and people with a disability, including concessions on **drivers' licence fees** (totalling **\$15.35 million**), **vehicle registration fees** (approximately **\$28.5 million**) and **vehicle weight tax** (approximately **\$128.8 million**).

Other funding initiatives in 2001-02 to enhance mobility and transportation for older people and people with a disability funding include:

- ♦ improvements to wheelchair access by rebuilding **kerb ramps** (approximately **\$86,000**)

- ♦ special parking concessions under the **Mobility Parking Scheme** for people with mobility disabilities
- ♦ provision of new audio-tactile **push buttons at traffic lights** to help people with visual impairment (approximately **\$367,000**).

Funding totalling **\$7.3 million** will be provided in 2001-02 for programs **promoting and developing access to education and training** for groups in the community which are under-represented in vocational education and training. These programs include Apprenticeships for People with Disabilities, and the Mature Workers Program. The Group Training (Joint Policy) Program also assists a large number of disadvantaged groups to gain access to the labour market through apprenticeships and traineeships.

The **Seniors Online Strategy** aims to increase the availability and adoption of IT by older people in NSW. The Department for Women has contributed **\$100,000** to the Strategy through the Women's Grants Program and will establish pilot projects targeting older women on the Central Coast and in Western Sydney.

The Department of Sport and Recreation will be allocating **\$40,000** in 2001-02 for the development of a **state wide service directory** of organisations that provide physical activity opportunities for people with a disability. The directory will be a valuable tool for the Department's regional staff, other service providers and people with a disability to access information on physical activity opportunities. It is proposed that the information format will be provided in a document that will have sections specific to regional areas across the State in both hard copy (ring binder format) and through the Department's internet site.

In 2001-02, **\$95,000** will be provided for projects aimed at enhancing the physical well-being of older adults, comprising:

- ♦ \$20,000 for two remote communities to develop sporting skills to enable participation in the **8th Australian Masters Games** to be conducted in the Hunter area during October 2001. Updating of coaching skills in the community will enable the selected sports to be continued in the community after the completion of the Games;
- ♦ \$50,000 for projects to increase physical activity by **older adults from three selected culturally diverse groups**. Ethnic networks will identify the needs of their community's older population and develop physical activity projects to meet the identified needs. The community groups participating will be provided with information sheets translated into their relevant language; and
- ♦ \$25,000 for a program for the **frail aged people** from various hostel accommodation to participate in physical activity.

The **Disability Community Grants Scheme** is designed for non-profit community organisations to apply for funds to assist people with a disability to participate in disability specific sport or for physical activity. Funding of **\$50,000** will be available for this Scheme across the State in 2001-02, with each organisation able to apply for a maximum allocation of \$5,000.

'**Active and Able**' is an initiative designed to assist people with a disability—particularly those acquired through motor vehicle accidents—to participate in mainstream sport and physical activity. Jointly sponsored by the Department of Sport and Recreation and the Motor Accidents Authority, the several pilot projects under the program (with a total funding pool of **\$542,500**) are due for completion in September 2001. Subsequently, a seeding grants program to assist sporting organisations to implement the case studies developed through Active and Able will be launched in 2001-02. A minimum budget of **\$150,000** will be available for this purpose.

Other sporting-related programs targeting people with a disability to be funded in 2001-02 include the following:

- ♦ the **Disabled Athletes Scholarship program** will enable elite athletes with disabilities to increase their participation in sporting activities (\$105,000);
- ♦ **sports science support** will be provided to athletes with a disability (\$150,000);
- ♦ the **NSW Sports Council for the Disabled** will be supported by approximately \$210,000 for participation and event management, regional and athlete development, and special project funding for member organisations;
- ♦ assistance will be provided for athletes with disabilities (and their escorts where appropriate) competing in approved **international competition** for the period 2000-2004 (\$25,000 per annum);
- ♦ \$495,000 is allocated to construct an aerobics and fitness centre at the Sydney Academy of Sport and Recreation, Narrabeen, to provide a comprehensive **training venue for athletes with a disability** and other talented athletes within the community; and
- ♦ \$10,000 will fund the **NSW Sport and Recreation Awards** for Athletes with a Disability.

Meeting the Needs of Women

The Government is committed to protecting and enhancing the rights of women in NSW, while encouraging their aspirations. As part of this, Department for Women is a key agent in improving the economic and social well being of women. Its focus—reflecting the Government's commitment to social justice—is on women with limited access to social and economic resources.

The Department's ongoing work gives effect to the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action for the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. The Department works through a whole of government approach to give effect to its corporate objectives and to the NSW Action Plan for Women, the basis of which is to:

- ♦ promote safety and reduce violence against women;
- ♦ promote sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental development for women within local communities;
- ♦ promote work places that are equitable, safe and responsive to all aspects of women's lives;
- ♦ ensure that women's interests are addressed in marketplace relations;
- ♦ promote the participation of women in political, social, economic and cultural spheres, particularly in decision-making roles;
- ♦ promote access to and successful outcomes for women through learning and life skills;
- ♦ improve the quality of women's lives through appropriate and accessible housing and infrastructure;
- ♦ improve the quality of and access to child care; and
- ♦ improve and maintain women's health.

The Department for Women has an annual operational budget of approximately **\$5 million**, and oversees several key initiatives that will continue into 2001-02.

The **Premier's Council for Women** was formed in 1995 to represent the interests of the women of NSW by consulting with, and providing advice to, women. The Council is an avenue for women to communicate with government, and provide advice to government and the Department for Women, on issues affecting women. The annual budget allocation for the Council is **\$135,000**.

In 2001-02, **\$1 million** will be allocated to the **Women's Grants Program** – administered by the Department for Women—to target women with limited access to social and economic resources. The Program is aimed at improving social justice outcomes for women in NSW.

Under the Program, the Department for Women funds a Partnership Project for which a grant of **\$99,300** has been provided to the Central West Regional Council of Adult and Community Education to run the **Building Women's Employment Opportunities project**. This project will develop a gender-informed model for an integrated and coordinated community-based approach to employment and business development using three communities in the Central West of NSW (Orange, Cowra and Condobolin). It will use this model to deliver real employment outcomes for women in these communities and assess the transferability of the strategies to other communities of similar character in regional NSW. A project advisory team with a wide-ranging representation of government, community, industry and women's network representatives has been established to inform the project.

\$132,000 has also been allocated from the Women's Grants Program for Information Technology projects, including a grant to **\$99,840** for the Armidale Development Corporation to employ trainers to develop and run skills workshops in networking and **building 'virtual communities' among rural and remote women** using the web. The Department for Women, in partnership with the Office of Western Sydney, has also developed an IT strategy in Western Sydney in the context of using IT to strengthen and build communities.

The **Women's Information and Referral Service (WIRS)** is a free and confidential telephone service (1-800 817 227) for all NSW Women, including women with special needs. Run by the Department for Women, WIRS provides information and referral advice about a wide range of organisations and services available to women. The annual costs of maintaining the service amount to more than **\$250,000** per annum.

Launched in April 2001, the **Women's Gateway** provides a website portal specifically to provide information and links to other sites of interest to women. The Gateway complements the WIRS freecall service, enabling women to access information 24 hours a day, seven days a week via the internet. To date, the Department for Women has contributed approximately **\$200,000** to the design, set up, launch and management of this site and will continue to maintain it on an ongoing basis. This project is part of the connect.nsw initiative.

The **Women's Equity Bureau** aims to improve the social and economic position of women workers by developing and implementing strategies to address pay and employment equity issues, and by providing advice and assistance to advance the industrial interests of women. The Department of Industrial Relations continues to fund the Bureau, at a cost of **\$500,000**.

The Bureau covers a number of areas relevant to social justice, including balancing work and family, part-time and casual work, and pay equity. Under the umbrella of the NSW Government Work and Family Strategy, the Bureau has been actively engaged in developing an approach that supports the rights of workers with family responsibilities. In coming years, this approach will focus on selected industries with the aim of implementing family friendly arrangements at the workplace.

One such project is **Rostering in Residential Care**. The Departments of Industrial Relations and Women, employer groups, unions and residential care providers, are together seeking to establish better family friendly workplaces in an environment where the relevant providers run a 24 hour day, seven day week operation. As many people working in these facilities are women, better ways of combining shiftwork and family responsibilities are needed.

In March 2001, the Premier announced a **\$4 million** three-year strategy to improve **protection for clothing outworkers** who are, in large part, women. The establishment of the Clothing Worker Entitlements Taskforce is intended to ensure that fashion houses and clothing manufacturers are observing their basic employee obligations relating to workers compensation, superannuation and the keeping of wage records. Through 2001-02 and beyond, the Taskforce will develop a compliance and enforcement strategy directed at inspection, education and compliance work with fashion houses and clothing industry manufacturers.

Women are now major contributors to small business growth and employment, but tend to face problems in juggling work and family commitments. In order to support **women starting and managing a small business, programs and services will include** a combination of mentor programs, workshops and regional based business development programs for women in business.

In 2001-02, the Government will also be assisting women in business through a number of other initiatives, including:

- ♦ the **Women in Business Mentor Program**, which assists emerging women business owners to grow their business by linking them with experienced business people (mentors). **\$150,000** has been allocated to this program in 2001-02;
- ♦ a **\$30,000** allocation for the **Growth Strategies Workshop Series** for women in business. These workshops provide practical training on a range of topics such as financing for growth, developing an export plan, using the internet as a business tool and protecting intellectual property; and
- ♦ a **\$60,000** allocation in recognition of the contribution made by women in small business in regional and rural NSW to deliver flexible **models of business development support** for businesswomen in small regional centres.

In the sporting arena, **\$100,000** has been allocated to the **Women's Sports Administration and Travel Scholarship Scheme** to enable women to gain the skills and experience to become senior sports administrators. The scheme aims to address the current imbalance of numbers of women represented on boards and committees of sporting organisations and in senior management positions within the industry.

NSW Agriculture's Rural Women's Network (RWN) has initiated a joint project with CB Alexander Agricultural College and a small team of women to develop a series of **practical leadership training courses specially designed for rural women**. The two-day leadership courses, open to all women in NSW, will run through FarmBi\$. The aim is to build on the diversity of leadership capacity in rural communities by developing rural women's confidence, action planning skills and establishing support networks. Workshops are being planned for the Central West, the Far West, the South West and the North Coast in the second half of 2001.

In 2001-02, **\$75,000** will again be provided to aid in the printing and distribution of the RWN **free 'Country Web' newsletter**. This is produced three times each year with each edition focusing on a particular issue relevant to rural women and their families. It also provides a valuable communication avenue for agencies and rural communities. Immediate past editions have focused on community building, water, and nurturing the self. The newsletter is also published on the RWN website (www.agric.nsw.gov.au/rwn/) which includes other resource material relevant to rural women.

The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) **NSW Rural Women's Award** for 2002 will again be coordinated by the RWN. The Award is an opportunity for all women involved in agriculture (including fisheries, forestry and natural resource management) to contribute to the future of their industry and rural communities. The **\$20,000** bursary provided by RIRDC can be used to develop skills in the areas of leadership, management and business with an emphasis on delivering wider community benefits. Two state finalists and the bursary winner also participate in a leadership-training program where they have an opportunity to network with finalists and winners from across Australia.

The Department for Women recently conducted the **Women on Wheels Outreach Program** to 23 NSW regional and rural locations. There was an allocation of \$40,000 from the Department's \$384,000 project budget. Based on the evaluation and review of the project it is anticipated that the Department will again allocate a similar amount in 2001-02 from the designated project budget for the same program.

Promoting Diversity

Living in NSW means being part of a community that includes individuals and groups from a diverse range of backgrounds, beliefs and cultures. Cultural diversity is one of the greatest strengths of NSW. In recognition of this, the Government has made a commitment to promote the value of cultural diversity and the rights of individuals from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The new Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW (CRC) emphasises a new approach to NSW society, with its enabling legislation recognising and valuing the different linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds of residents of NSW, and promoting equal rights and responsibilities for all. Our multicultural society is a community of communities. In it, all individuals and organisations should have an opportunity to contribute and participate in public life, as well as an equitable access to government services. The 2001-02 Budget continues the Government's strong commitment.

Community grants are one of the principal mechanisms by which the Government supports communities. The CRC **Community Development Grants Program** is an inclusive grants program that aims to promote community harmony and encourage the participation of people from disparate communities in all aspects of life in NSW. In 2001-02, **\$1.1 million** will be allocated under the Program.

The **Community Partnership Scheme** is a funding program of the CRC targeting priority community issues. The Scheme aims to develop innovative ways of responding to community issues so they can be adopted as best practice models by other communities or regions of the State. In 2001-02, a total of **\$100,000** will be allocated to the Scheme.

Access to government services relies upon the ability of the service provider and the client to be able to communicate effectively. The CRC **provides interpreting and translating services** in over 75 languages and dialects to all Government departments and agencies, private and commercial organisations, community groups and individuals. In 2001-02, **\$5.369 million** will be allocated for these services to allow effective responses by agencies in their dealings with all their clients.

The Government will provide **\$150,000** for the new **Rural Outreach project** which seeks to improve links between culturally and linguistically diverse communities in rural locations and the Community Relations Commission.

Carnivale is a significant occasion for the NSW community to celebrate its cultural diversity. **\$705,000** will be allocated for Carnivale in 2001-02.

Approximately **\$85 million** will be allocated in 2001-02 to support the provision of specialist education services to students from non-English speaking backgrounds. These services include the **English as a Second Language Program** (ESL), intensive community language programs and community liaison and support to ensure equitable educational outcomes for these students. ESL and other specialist language services will reach almost 90,000 students, including 6,000 newly arrived, through funding for 15 Intensive English Centres, and 876 ESL teaching positions throughout 753 schools.

The Department of Education and Training is committed to supporting and promoting cultural diversity in our schools. Over **\$3.8 million** will be provided to support a range of **multicultural programs**, including interpreter and translations services; non-racist and multicultural perspectives on teaching, learning, and drug education; and internet resources on multicultural Australia. Similarly **TAFE NSW** will receive **\$180,000** for activities aimed at increasing the participation of people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

NSW Health will continue its commitment to providing culturally appropriate healthcare and improving communication with **over 25 programs, projects and services** targeted at clients from non-English speaking backgrounds. The **Transcultural Mental Health Centre** has been allocated a current budget of approximately **\$2 million, including a recurrent enhancement of \$1 million over 3 years**. Its ten current projects provide leadership in the development of culturally sensitive clinical services. Other health initiatives will include **\$100,000 to the Multicultural Health Service Development Program** for research initiatives targeting culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Funding of **\$60,000** will be allocated to producing statewide **multilingual health information**.

The Government will devote approximately **\$12.7 million for the provision of community services** to culturally and linguistically diverse communities. One of the **185 multicultural programs** funded is **After School Youth Services** which continues to provide a safe place for young people to go and access a range of services, at a total cost of **\$3.4 million over four years**. The **Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy** aims to assist young people and their families involved in the drug culture in the Cabramatta area. The strategy has been allocated **\$2.9 million over three years** and will benefit many people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

An allocation of **\$4,206,020** has been made in the next financial year for **61 Home and Community Care projects** targeted at communities from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. An important initiative among these projects is the implementation of the **National Framework for the Development of Culturally Inclusive Home and Community Care Services**, which aims to address issues of equity, education, communication, responsiveness and accountability in service provision.

Approximately **\$150,000** will be spent from the **Women's Grants Program** in the next year on projects that meet the needs of women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This will represent no less than 17% of the program's total funding.

The Area Assistance Scheme run by the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning offers project grants which are required to address access and equity strategies for identified areas and groups of disadvantage. The Scheme will continue to support **19 current projects** targeted at people from non-English speaking backgrounds at a cost of **\$516,829**.

A total of **\$1,278,302** will be allocated **from the Casino Community Benefit Fund for 13 project grants** designed to increase awareness and tackle problem gambling among people of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The projects will include:

- ♦ **\$315,000** towards the development of a **new multicultural problem gambling and treatment service** and specialised training programs for bilingual counsellors working with non-English speaking background persons with gambling problems.

- ♦ **\$189,518 to Lifeline Western Sydney** for a bi-lingual counselling service for problem gamblers and their families.

The Workplace Training Program of the NSW Police Service has an allocation of **\$224,000** to devise appropriate workplace training on policing in a multicultural environment. **The Police and Community Program** receives **\$485,000** per year. One of its main aims is to increase local stakeholder awareness of policing and related services, particularly among culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

The Environment Protection Authority has earmarked **\$564,696** in the next financial year to target people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in its **education and awareness campaigns**. These include stormwater, pesticides, litter and general environmental protection.

A large proportion of market gardeners in the Sydney basin come from non-English speaking backgrounds. In response, the multi-agency **Market Gardening in a Culturally Diverse Society Project** receives approximately **\$120,000** a year for communication and education strategies to overcome difficulties faced by people in these communities.