



## **Response by Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS) to Productivity Commission Report on Government Services 2008**

### ***Introduction***

Each year, the Productivity Commission produces a Report on Government Services as part of the Review of Government Service Provision established by the Council on the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 1993.

Although the Report aims to provide comparative data across jurisdictions as well as information on national performance, comparisons cannot easily be drawn because data is recorded differently across the States and Territories.

Within these limitations, NCOSS has undertaken an analysis of the Report in key areas of interest to the sector - Aged Care and Community Care, Child Protection and Support Services, Children's Services, Corrective Services, Disability Services, Education, Health, Housing, SAAP and Vocational Education. NCOSS has also attempted to measure data from the Report against NSW State Plan Priorities.

### ***Aged Care and Community Care***

#### **Positive**

- NSW had the best result for accreditation decisions for residential aged care services at 30 June 2007. 95.8% of NSW residential aged care services were accredited for 3 or more years. The Australian average for service accreditations of 3 or more years was 92.2%. This was in improvement form 2007.
- NSW reported the shortest median time elapsed between ACAT approval and entry into residential or packaged care in 2006-07. [table 13A.37]
- NSW achieved the second highest average score (17.2) for HACCC National Service Standards appraisals in the three years ending 2003-04, national average was 16 compared to ACT at 17.9
- After NT, NSW reported the lowest proportion of people aged 70+ years and Aboriginal people aged 50+ years needing maintenance care who remained in public hospitals for more than 35 days.

- The Productivity Commission has identified three outcomes indicators for development and reporting in the future: social participation in the community, the maintenance of individual functioning and enabling people with care needs to live in the community. Future performance reporting will include improved indicators in the following areas: efficiency in HACC and assessment services, waiting times for residential services and long term aged care in public hospitals.

## Negative

- At 30 June 2007, NSW reported the lowest access rate to aged care by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people per thousand Aboriginal people aged 50+ years and as a proportion of all recipients. NSW had 29.3, national average was 48.6, and Victoria had 64.9. [table 13A. 17]:
  - For all states and territories, the access rate per one thousand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50+ years to Community Aged Care packages was higher (25.9) than for the total target population (17.1). NSW however had the lowest access rate in Australia 19.1, significantly lower than the national average 25.9 and Victoria at 46.
  - This compares with a drastically lower access rate per one thousand Aboriginal people (22.2) to residential aged care services in all states and territories compared to the target population (77.7).
- People from non-English speaking backgrounds accessed residential aged care services, packaged care and Home and Community Care HACC at significantly lower rates than the target population:
  - NESB access to residential services was 48.1 per thousand compared to 77.7 per thousand for the whole target population.
  - NESB access to Community Aged Care Packages was 15.1 per thousand compared to 17.1 per thousand for the target population.
  - NSW reported 13.8% of all HACC recipients were from a non-English speaking country; compared to the proportion of NSW population aged 70+ years who were born in a non-English speaking country at 24.6%.
- NSW reported the lowest Minimum Data Set MDS return rate by HACC agencies at 75%, national average was 83%. This represents a 6% reduction in NSW MDS returns over the previous year.
- NSW reported the lowest number of HACC services received per 1000 people in the target population (ie people aged 70+ years and Aboriginal people aged 50+ years) at 12,847. The Australian average was 18,599 and Victoria reported 21,446. When recalculated for a 100% MDS return, the rate of HACC services received in NSW still remains the lowest in Australia:
  - NSW also reported the lowest number of meals provided per 1000 target population at 4,974; Australian average 6,126, Victoria 6,056
- The NSW result marginally improves for the number of HACC services received per thousand people in the HACC population (ie including eligible

people with disability) but remains significantly lower than the national average and Victoria, even when recalculated for a 100% MDS return rate.

- While the rate of Aged Care Assessments in NSW per one thousand Aboriginal people aged 50+ years has more than doubled since 2003, the overall general rate has declined by over 4% in NSW (per thousand people aged 70+ years and Aboriginal people aged 50+ years). [table 13A.39]
- While figures have improved in recent years, NSW still reported the highest average number of residents per room in residential aged care in Australia.
- NSW received the lowest Australian Government expenditure per person aged 70+ years and Aboriginal people aged 50+ years in the following programs:
  - National Respite for Carers (NSW 68.9, Vic 72.6)
  - Day Therapy Centres (NSW 7.4, Vic 11.4)
  - Home and Community Care (NSW 405.6, Vic 451.1, Aust 457.6)

## ***Disability Services***

### **Positive**

The NSW Government committed \$192.5 million over 2006-08 towards disability services under the *Stronger Together Disability Plan*, which contains five years of spending measures totalling over \$1.3 billion. NCOSS expects the impact of this new spending to become visible in the 2009 Productivity Commission Report on Government Services. *Stronger Together* was also accompanied by a commitment to annual public reporting against identified targets. NCOSS looks forward to the 2008 progress report.

### **Negative**

- NSW reported providing services to 21.9% of the potential population for CSTDA, Victoria reported 41.6% and the national average was 29.1%.
- Excluding ACT & NT, NSW reported the lowest proportion 3.0% of potential population using accommodation support services in 2005-06. The national average was 4.2% and Victoria had 4.8%.
- Excluding ACT & NT, NSW reported the lowest proportion 19.7% of potential population using employment services in 2005-06. The national average was 21.1% and Victoria had 23.9%.
- Equalling the ACT, NSW reported lowest proportion 3.3% of potential population using community access services in 2005-06. The national average was 5.6% and Victoria had 8.1%.
- NSW reported a very low proportion 9.0% of potential population using community support services in 2005-06. The national average was 13.7% and

Victoria had 20.3%. NSW reported a much higher proportion of service provision to people with profound disability than the national average.

- NSW reported the second lowest proportion 6.3% of the potential population using respite services in 2005-06. Victoria had 22.0% and the national average was 11.5%. Again the proportional provision to people with profound disability was higher than national average.
- “The AIHW estimates that the proportion of Indigenous people aged over 18 years who had a profound or severe core activity limitation is approximately 2.4 times that of non-Indigenous people.” In 2005-06, NSW reported a lower than national average proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander users for all CSDTA services except employment services, and the NSW score was significantly lower than Victoria for every measure:
  - In accommodation support services, NSW was 1.3 per 1000 people, the national average was 2.4 and Victoria reported 11.0.
  - Similarly for Indigenous users of CSTDA community access services, NSW reported 1.7 per 1000 people, the national average was 2.5 and Victoria reported 10.9.
  - For community support services, NSW reported 6.6, the national average was 8.0 and Victoria reported 16.2.
  - For respite services, NSW reported 1.6, the national average was 2.9 and Victoria reported 16.2.
  - For Indigenous users of CSTDA employment services, NSW reported a user rate of 6.5 which is lower than the previous year (at 7.3). The national average for 2005-06 was 5.9 but Victoria reported 12.6.
- NSW reported a significantly lower than national average proportion of CSTDA users born in a non-English speaking country for both accommodation support services and employment services. For accommodation support services, NSW reported 0.2 users born in a non-English speaking country per 1000 people, the national average was 0.5 and Victoria had 0.6. For employment services, NSW reported 1.3, the national average was 1.9 and Victoria had 2.8.
- NSW had the lowest number of all users of CSTDA community accommodation and care services as a proportion of all accommodation support services at 74.1%, the national average was 83.9% and Victoria reported 84.5%. Community accommodation and care services include group homes, attendant care/personal care, in-home accommodation support, alternative family placement, and other accommodation support.
- In 2006-07, NSW was again the highest spending jurisdiction by all measures on government administration expenditure as a proportion of total expenditure at over 15% compared to the national average of around 9.8% and Victoria at just over 7%. NSW reports that this jump of 4% was due to reallocation of \$55 million in capital grants.
- While overall scores were significantly lower than for non-disabled people, NSW was similar to the national average in labour force participation and

employment rates for people with disability as well as for social participation rates and slightly higher than national average for most rates on education and training attainment.

## ***Child Protection and Support Services***

### **Positive**

- Real recurrent expenditure on child protection services has increased from \$171,284,000 in 02/03 to \$240,496,000 in 06/07. Almost double that of Victoria and significantly above other states and territories.
- Real recurrent expenditure on out of home care has also increased from \$259,660,000 in 02/03 to \$364,688,000 in 06/07.
- There has been an increase in expenditure on intensive family support services from \$53,334,000 to \$68,070,000.

### **Negative**

- Real recurrent expenditure per child has increased from \$268.38 in 02/03 to \$375.16 in 06/07. However, this is still less than Queensland, ACT, Northern Territory and Tasmania.
- Real recurrent expenditure per notification has decreased from \$1,564 in 02/03 to \$1,266 in 06/07.
- Real recurrent expenditure per investigation has decreased from \$3,784 in 02/03 to \$2,105 in 06/07. (This is the lowest of any state or territory however changes in investigation categories may impact on the comparability of data)
- Real recurrent expenditure per substantiation has decreased from \$10,217 in 02/03 to \$6,483 in 06/07.

### **Of Note**

- The number of children commencing intensive family support in NSW has increased from 138 in 02/03 to 265 in 06/07. However, this is significantly below that of Victoria (1,115 in 02/03 to 1,741 in 06/07)

## ***Children's Services***

### **Positive**

- Real expenditure on children's services in NSW increased from \$582,372m in 02/03 to \$693,047m in 06/07.
- There was also an increase in financial support to families in this time from \$469,132m in 02/03 to \$566,912 in 06/07.
- Real expenditure on preschools increased from \$95,366m in 02/03 to \$122,368 in 06/07.
- In 2006 62.4% of staff had relevant formal qualifications – the highest number of any state or territory.

## **Negative**

- Real expenditure on child care decreased from \$42,472m in 02/03 to \$37,237 in 06/07
- In 02/03 NSW had the highest real expenditure per child in child care services at \$505.92 per child, which increased to \$608.75 per child in 2006/07. However, if Commonwealth Government expenditure is excluded then this drops to \$119.74 in 02/03 and \$140.19 in 06/07. The lowest expenditure of any state or territory.
- Real average fees per week have increased in centre-based and family day care between 2004 and 2006.

## **Of Note**

- In 2006 the number of places provided by Australian government approved child care services was 83,935 (centre based long-day care), 24,830 in family day-care and 72,201 in OSH. This is a significant increase on the availability of places in 2002.
- In 02/03 64,565 children were using state government funded or provided preschool services, which represents 60.4% of the resident population of children. (11,966 were younger children and 52,599 were in the year before school). This increased to 65,514 in 06/07, representing 64.6% of the resident population.

## ***Corrective Services***

### **Positive**

- NSW has 8 periodic detention centres and the ACT has one. No other state or territory has any.
- NSW has one of the lowest prisoner assault rates (prisoner to prisoner)
- There has been a decrease in the the number of deaths caused by apparent unnatural causes from 0.11 per 100 in 02/03 to 0.05 in 06/07

### **Negative**

- NSW has the highest daily prisoner population (9,468) well above Victoria (4,044) and Queensland (5,649). This has also been an increase on prisoner numbers from 05-06 (9,101)
- NSW has the highest number of correctional custodial facilities (56) compared to Victoria (14) and Queensland and WA with 13.
- In 2006/07 there were 17,970 people on community corrections (this includes non-custodial sanctions such as community work), which is less than 2005-06 (18,047)
- Imprisonment and community correction rates by year, per 100,000 people, have increased however there is a decrease in the number of people in periodic detention.

- NSW spends \$262.50 per prisoner per day, which is below that spent by Victoria (\$276), Tasmania (\$269) and the ACT (\$312.30). However it is above the national average.
- Real recurrent expenditure on prisons in NSW has increased from \$593,607,000 in 02/03 to \$692,074,000 in 06/07. This is significantly above all other states and territories.
- Real recurrent expenditure per prisoner per day decreased from \$197.40 in 02/03 to \$195.80 in 06/07.

## **Education**

### **Positive**

- Real government expenditure on schools increased from \$8,019,636,000 in 01/02 to \$8,357,506,000 in 05/06
- School participation rates have increased from 50.2% of 15-19 year olds in 2002 to 51.8% in 2006.

### **Negative**

- There was a decrease, from year 3 to year 7, in the percentage of students who achieved the reading, writing and numeracy benchmarks in 2005. In year 3 93.3% of students achieved the reading benchmark, 93.6% achieved the writing benchmark and 91.7% achieved the numeracy benchmark. This decreased to 88.1% for reading, 92.1% for writing and 75.8% for numeracy in year 7 students.

### **Of Note**

- In 2003 there were 749,880 full time total students in government schools, which decreased to 739,307 in 2006. However, the number of active staff to primary and secondary full time total students increased from 63,394 in 2003 to 66,894 in 2006.
- In 2006 in non-government schools there were 368,640 full time total students to 35,088 staff.
- There has been a decrease in the number of full time student enrolments in government schools from 753,700 in 2002 to 739,307 in 2006. However, there has been an increase in the number of enrolments in non-government schools from 351,081 in 2002 to 369,640 in 2006.
- There has been no significant change, and in some cases no change at all, in completion rates per year, by socioeconomic status and sex across all schools between 2002 and 2006. However, there is a higher retention rate of students from high socio-economic status deciles to those from a low socio-economic decile.

## **Health**

### **Health Expenditure**

#### **Positive**

- NSW had the second highest level of recurrent expenditure per person on public hospitals (including psychiatric hospitals), at \$1209.3 in 2005-06. This is higher than the national average of \$1117.1, and is an increase of \$48.2 from 2004/05
- Total health expenditure per person in NSW was \$3809 in 2005-06, a moderate increase from \$3780 in 2004-05, and above the national average of \$3758.
- Recurrent expenditure on public hospitals has increased slightly, from \$7 850 million to \$8 578 million from 2004-05 to 2005-06. However the bulk of this increase is increases in salary and wages.

#### **Negative**

- Australian Government expenditure per person on GPs in NSW has not changed from the 2005-06 period (\$266). However, NSW figures remain higher than the national average (\$247)

### **Health Workforce**

#### **Positive**

- NSW and the ACT reported 30 Indigenous Primary Healthcare services for 2005-06. This was a slight increase from 2004-05 (28).
- NSW continues to have the highest number of medical practitioners billing Medicare (8 187 in 2006-07) as well as the highest number of fulltime workload equivalent GPs per 100 000 population (94.1), a slight increase from the 2005-06 period (92.4)
- NSW has an above average medical practitioner rate, at 315 per 100 000 people compared to 290 according to 2004 figures.
- In 2006 NSW had a slightly above average number of Indigenous Health Workers as a proportion of the total health workforce, at 1.1 % compared to 1.0%.
- There were on average 11.4 FTE staff per 1000 population in NSW public hospitals (including psychiatric), above the national average of 10.8 in 2005-06.
- FTE direct care staff employed in specialist mental health services in NSW has increased from 81.2 per 100 000 in 2001-02 to 93.6 per 100 000 in 2005-06.

## Negative

- NSW has a below average rate of FTE nurses per 100 000 population, at 1 099 compared to a national average of 1138, and only higher than Queensland and Western Australia (998 and 1069 respectively)
- There has been very little change in the availability of dentists in NSW comparing 2003 data to 2005 data. Across NSW availability has increased by 0.1, from 6.5 to 6.6 dentists per 100 000 population. There has been no change in availability in major cities (7.8). Overall availability in NSW is slightly higher than the national average of 7.2.
- NSW had the second lowest availability of public dental therapists (2.1 per 100 000 people) in 2003, slightly in front of Victoria (1.8). NSW is below the national average of 3.7, and is well below availability in Tasmania (8.8), Queensland and WA (6.6), and SA (5.8).
- 2005 figures indicate that 57.7% of the nursing workforce in NSW (including midwives) is between the ages of 40-59.
- NSW has below average FTE staffing levels in ambulatory mental health services (37.9 to 40.6 in 2005-06) and community residential services (3.6 to 7.9 in 2005-06)

## Community and Primary Health

### Positive

- NSW reported the highest number of Alcohol and other drug treatment services of any state or territory (282) for 2005-06. NSW has the majority of Government services of any state or territory (201 from a total of 285), and the second highest number of Non-government services (81, behind Victoria's 138).
- NSW had the highest number of pharmacies approved as providers of PBS medicines in 2006-07, 1447 urban and 263 rural, with the lowest number of people per pharmacy of any other State or Territory (3883 and 3679 respectively)
- In 2006-07, 92.3% of NSW GPs are using Enhanced Primary Care Medicare items, the highest percentage of any state or territory, and above the national average of 89.8%. NSW figures have increased from 86% in 2005-06.
- NSW had above average reporting for voluntary annual health assessments by older people in 2006-07 at 213.7 for every 1000 people in the target populations, compared to the national average of 203.2
- NSW has the highest number of female fulltime workload equivalent GPs available per 100 000 females of any state or territory, at 52.3 in 2006-07. This number is above the national average (47.8) and has steadily increased since 2002-03.
- The proportion of PBS services filled at a concessional rate in 2006-07 in NSW was 85.4, marginally above the national average of 85.2.

- NSW had a higher percentage of non-referred attendances that were bulk-billed than the national average in 2006-07, at 83.5% compared to 78%.

### **Negative**

- In 2005-06 NSW has the highest number of separations per 1000 older people for falls of any state or territory (50.9), and is above the national average (46.2)
- In 2005-06 NSW had lower participation rates in BreastScreen than national averages across all age groups from 40 to 85+ years.
- NSW was below national average for voluntary annual health assessments amongst Indigenous older people, at 85.8 per 1000 people compared to 92.6 nationally in 2006-07, although this figure has been increasing since 2002-03. The rate for Indigenous older people was much lower than for all older people (85.8 per 1000 compared to 213.7)
- Across Australia Indigenous life expectancy remains at 17 years behind the rest of the population (NSW specific figures were unavailable.)

### **Interesting**

- NSW is one of only two states where the number of Government Alcohol and other drug services outnumber non-government services (SA is the other state).

### **Hospitals**

#### **Positive**

- NSW had above average number of hospital beds available per 1000 people in 2005-06, however the overall number has declined from 2004-05 figures (from 3.1 to 2.9).
- 96.1% of separations in public hospitals in NSW (including psychiatric hospitals) in 2005-06 were for acute care, which was consistent with the national average.

#### **Negative**

- In NSW the number of hospital beds available per 1000 people has declined from 2004-05 figures (from 3.1 to 2.9).
- NSW reported 5.4% of patients waiting longer than 365 days for elective surgery in 2005-06, above the national average of 4.6%. However, this number had declined from 6.9% in 2004-05. The percentage of patients who waited more than 365 days was highest in the areas of Ear, Nose and Throat surgery (13%), Ophthalmology (9.4%) and Orthopaedic surgery (12%). Procedures with high percentages of patients waiting more than 365 days included those for septoplasty (32.9%), total knee replacements (29.1%), myringoplasty (26.7%), total hip replacements (16%) and cataract extraction (10.5%). NSW had above average waiting times across all of these areas.

## **Interesting**

- NSW had lower than average separations for public acute hospitals, at 199.8 per 1000 population compared to 212.8 nationally in 2005-06. It is difficult to determine whether this is a positive or negative outcome, as it is not clear what the reasons for this were.

## **Maternity Services**

### **Positive**

- NSW had a lower number of fetal deaths per 1000 births, at 4.4 compared to a national average of 5.4, and a lower number of perinatal deaths, at 7.6 per 1000 compared to 8.5 nationally.

### **Negative**

- NSW had a slightly higher number of Neonatal deaths than the national average at 3.2 per 1000 live births compared to 3.1 nationally.
- In NSW the Indigenous infant mortality rate for 2003-2005 was nearly twice that of the non-Indigenous rate, at 8.4 per 1000 live births compared to 4.4.
- In 2004 the mean birth weight for babies of all mothers in NSW was 3 382 grams, compared to 3 197grams for babies of Indigenous mothers, a difference of 185 grams.
- 2004 figures indicate that babies born to Indigenous mothers were more likely to be considered low birth weight (below 2500 grams) than babies born to all mothers in NSW (12.2 compared to 5.9. However in both cases NSW percentages were lower than national averages.
- Both inductions and caesareans for first time mothers aged 25-29 were higher in private hospitals than public hospitals in NSW, at 28.4% to 35.4% and 20.7% to 30% respectively in 2006.

## **Mental Health**

### **Positive**

- NSW Government spending on mental health services in NSW increased by \$15.4 per person from 2004-05 to 2005-06.
- The suicide death rate per 100 000 people in NSW in 2005 was 8, a decrease from 13.1 in 1996 and lower than the national average of 10.3.
- The suicide death rate rate of 15-24 year olds per 100 000 people in NSW in 2005 was 7.2, a decrease from 14 in 1996 and lower than the national average of 10.4.
- As at 30 June 2007 NSW had above national average for specialist public mental health services reviewed against the national standards for mental health, with 78% assessed at level 1 compared to 75.4% nationally in 2006.

## Negative

- Preliminary figures indicate that NSW spending on Mental Health remains the third lowest of any State or Territory (\$129.60) for 2005-06, and is only fractionally higher than the national average (\$128.80)
- The percentage of NSW funding on community residential mental health services has decreased from 4.1 per cent to 2.7 per cent between 2001-02 and 2005-06. Over the same period the percentages of funding allocated to public acute hospitals increased from 24.4 per cent to 31 per cent, while funding for public psychiatric hospitals fell from 25.3 per cent to 21 per cent.
- According to 2005-06 figures the percentage of NSW funding allocated to Non-government organisations and community residential mental health services is below national averages (6 to 3.4 and 6 to 2.7 respectively), whilst the percentage allocated to public psychiatric hospitals and public acute hospitals is higher than national averages (21 to 16.1 and 31 to 29.8 respectively).
- Number of beds per 100 000 people in public psychiatric hospitals and publicly funded residential facilities are declining, from 16.4 to 15.7 and 8 to 6.5 from 2002 to 2006 respectively.
- In 2005-06 NSW had a higher than average number of mental health patient days per 1000 people than the national average, at 68.5 compared to 66. There are an increasing number of patient days in acute units (347 958 in 2001-02 to 465 280 in 2005-06) and a decreasing number in non-acute units and 24-hour community residential units (271 094 to 260 682 and 84 179 to 73 113 from 2001-02 to 2005-06 respectively).
- NSW had below the national average of organisations with a formal position for mental health consumers on the management committee or a specific mental health consumer advisory group that advises on all aspects of service delivery, at 44.4% compared to 49.4% nationally in 2005-06. This figure had decreased from 50% in 2004-05.

## Interesting

- The average recurrent cost per inpatient bed day for general mental health services, child and adolescent mental health services, older person's mental health services and Forensic mental health services have all increased from 2001-02 to 2005-06.
- Costs for general mental health, child and adolescent mental health and older person's mental health services in NSW are all higher than the national average. However the cost for forensic mental health services is lower (\$443.92 compared to \$620.66 for 2005-06).
- The average cost to government for a mental health patient treated in the community in NSW in 2005-06 dollars is \$1 153.80. The average recurrent cost to government per day for a patient in a general adult unit of a community residential service is \$254.64 for 24-hour staffed services and \$80.74 for non-24 hour staff units. In comparison, the average recurrent cost for an inpatient

in a general mental health service in a NSW public hospital is \$680.94 per day. The average recurrent cost for an inpatient in an acute unit of a public psychiatric hospital in NSW is \$693.78 per day. The cost for a public acute hospital is \$737.50 per day.

- NSW had higher than average separations for public psychiatric hospitals, at 1.7 per 1000 population compared to 0.8 nationally in 2005-06. It is difficult to determine if this is a positive or negative without more information.

Link to health Chapter: <http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2008/health>

For more information contact Kristie Brown, Senior Policy Officer, Health on 02 9211 2599 ext 130 or [Kristie@ncoss.org.au](mailto:Kristie@ncoss.org.au)

## **Housing**

- The housing report covers housing programs under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) plus Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA). It does not cover the First Home Owners Grant, some indigenous housing and infrastructure funded outside the CSHA or housing-related assistance provided through the tax system.
- In 2006-07 funding for CRA was \$2.2 billion, substantially more than the \$1.3 billion provided under the CSHA. The report notes that over the 10 year period from 1997-98 to 2006-07 real expenditure on the CRA increased by 12.0%, while real expenditure on the CSHA fell by 16.7%.

## **Public housing**

- The total number of public housing dwellings in NSW has fallen in each of the last 5 years. As at June 2007 there were 121,872 dwellings compared to 125,216 as at June 2003. This mainly reflects the transfer of stock to the community housing sector.
- The number of new households able to be housed in public housing in NSW has fallen in each of the last 5 years, from a high of 10,129 in 2002-03 to 8,631 in 2006-07. This emphasises how increasingly hard it is for households experiencing housing stress or homelessness to access public housing. This is consistent with the experience of all other States and Territories, with the national number of new households assisted falling from 33,365 in 2002-03 to 26,824 in 2006-07.
- NSW continues to have the most tightly targeted public housing system across the country, in terms of income eligibility, with 93.6% of all new tenant households in 2006-07 being low income A households<sup>1</sup>. The national average was 87.7%, with the range for States/Territories being from 72.9% to 93.6%..

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<sup>1</sup> Low income A households are those households where all members receive income equivalent to no more than 100% of a Centrelink pension.

- NSW has the lowest income limits for new applicants for public housing. For a single person the NSW income limit is \$410 per week. For other States and Territories the range is from \$423 per week to \$674 per week.
- The proportion of new tenant households who fell within special needs groups<sup>2</sup> in NSW was 52.3%, well below the national average of 57.8%. It is difficult to compare the extent to which households in greatest need are newly housed in NSW, compared to the rest of Australia, as NSW excludes households facing very high rental costs in the private market from its definition of greatest need.
- NSW had the lowest level of public housing customer satisfaction, with 64.0% of tenants being satisfied or very satisfied, compared to the national average of 71.0%.
- The average weekly subsidy per public housing household in NSW was \$108.50 per week, well above the national average of \$86.30. For all States/Territories the range was from \$46.00 pw to \$131.10 pw.

### **State owned & managed indigenous housing**

- The number of state owned and managed indigenous housing dwellings in NSW has increased over the last 5 years from 3,986 in June 2003 to 4,234 in June 2007. The number of new tenant households assisted in 2006-07 was 433.
- As at June 2007 there were 1,628 applicants on the waiting list. The number on the waiting list has fallen in each of the last 5 years.
- The proportion of new tenants who were low income A households in NSW was 95.5%, much higher than the national average of 87.7%. For the States/Territories the range was from 76.5% to 100%.
- The proportion of new tenants who were special needs groups was 47.6%, close to the national average of 47.4%. For the States/Territories the range was from 44.6% to 65.6%.
- NSW had a higher than average level of customer satisfaction with 71.8% of tenants being satisfied or very satisfied, compared to the national average of 67.5%.
- The average weekly subsidy per tenant household in NSW was \$85.50 per week, well above the national average of \$79.80 per week. For all States/Territories the range was from \$54.40 pw to \$88.50 pw.

### **Community housing**

- The number of dwellings managed by the community housing sector in NSW has increased substantially from 10,087 in June 2003 to 14,140 in June 2007. The number of new households assisted in 2006-07 was 3,218.

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<sup>2</sup> Special needs groups include people with a disability, or who are indigenous, or where the principal tenant is aged under 25 or 75 and over.

- As at June 2007 there were 15,436 households on the waiting list. This number fallen in 4 of the last 5 years.
- NSW had the lowest proportion of new tenants who were low income households, with 89.2% compared to the national average of 93.6%. For all States/Territories the range was from 99.7% to 89.2%.
- NSW had the highest proportion of new households who were special needs groups, with 81.7% compare to the national average of 67.7%. For all States/Territories the range was from 51.9% to 81.7%.
- NSW had the highest level of customer satisfaction, with 87.0% of tenants being satisfied or very satisfied, compared to the national average of 83.0%.

### **Indigenous community housing**

- As at June 2006 there were 4,989 dwellings managed by indigenous community housing organisations in NSW. This figure includes dwellings managed by unfunded organisations. If only dwellings managed by funded/actively registered organisations are counted the number falls to 2,450.
- NSW had the lowest levels of dwellings in need of either replacement (2.7% compared to 7.2% nationally) or major repair (18.8% compared to 23.4% nationally).

### **Commonwealth Rent Assistance**

- State/Territory Governments are not involved in the provision of CRA.
- As at June 2007 324,528 NSW households were in receipt of CRA. This comprised 174,532 households in Sydney and 149,996 households in the rest of NSW.
- Sydney households receiving CRA paid the highest average rent in Australia, \$368.14 pf compared to \$325.82 pf nationally. However their average CRA payment of \$89.49 pf was only slightly above the national average of \$87.34 pf. CRA households in the rest of NSW paid an average of \$299.28 pf in rent, and received an average payment of \$85.51 pf.
- In June 2007 68.8% of NSW households on CRA were receiving the maximum rate of payment, compared to 67.2% nationally.
- 37.8% of eligible NSW households were still paying 30% or more of their income in rent even after receiving CRA, compared to 34.4% nationally. In Sydney the rate was 43.9%, compared to 37.6% for all capital cities, and for the rest of NSW it was 30.7%, compared to 30.0% nationally.
- 10.3% of eligible NSW households were still paying 50% or more of their income in rent even after receiving CRA, compared to 8.8% nationally. In Sydney the rate was 13.8%, compared to 10.3% for all capital cities, and for the rest of NSW it was 6.3%, compared to 6.7% nationally.

## SAAP

- Note that most of the SAAP data covered in the report covers the 2005-06 year. The only 2006-07 SAAP data that was available in time for the report was financial data. The Steering Committee expressed disappointment that most 2006-07 SAAP data was not available for this report and will have to be included in the 2009 report.
- NSW and QLD were the only two States that contributed 50% or more of funding for SAAP in their states in 2006-07. Nationally the States/Territories contributed 48.9% of total SAAP recurrent funding in 2006-07, an increase from 44.9% in 2005-06. This is consistent with the Commonwealth's requirements under SAAP V that other States and Territories move over time to match the Commonwealth's contribution.
- In 2005-06 44.2% of adults and unaccompanied children making a new request for accommodation to SAAP services in NSW were turned away. While still unacceptably high, the NSW turn away rate was the lowest of any State or Territory.
- Indigenous people were overrepresented amongst both those accommodated in NSW SAAP services (17.1%) and those whose valid requests for accommodation were unmet (22.1%). People from non-English speaking backgrounds were far less likely to be represented in either category (11.6% of those accommodated, and 10.7% of those unable to be accommodated).
- Recent data on client satisfaction with the assistance they received from SAAP services is not available. This data was last collected nationally in 2003.
- 55.5% of support periods provided to SAAP clients in NSW in 2005-06 were covered by a support plan. This was below the national average of 59.2%; across the States and Territories the range was from 68.6% to 48.5% of support periods.
- The report includes comparative data on the cost of SAAP assistance, calculated in three different ways: per client assisted, per completed support period and per day of support. The cost per client assisted was \$4,450 in NSW, compared to \$3,280 nationally; across the States/Territories the range in cost was from \$2,190 to \$7,630 per client. The cost per completed support period in NSW was \$3,350 in NSW, compared to \$2,200 nationally; across the States/Territories the range was from \$6,630 to \$1,270. The cost per day of support was \$49 in NSW, compared to \$42 nationally; across the States/Territories the range in cost per support day was from \$30 to \$75.
- The proportion of SAAP clients accessing public housing immediately after leaving SAAP was 19.0% in NSW, compared to 25.0% nationally; across the States/Territories the range was from 35.8% to 13.1%. Conversely the proportion of SAAP clients accessing private rental housing after leaving SAAP was 34.9% in NSW, compared to 24.6% nationally; across the States/Territories the range was from 34.9% to 10.9%.

- The proportion of SAAP clients exiting to independent housing and not returning within 6 months was 40.5% in NSW, compared to 45.4% nationally; across the States/Territories the range was from 57.9% to 35.4%.

## ***Vocational Education and Training***

### **Positive**

- Overall there has been some increase in the number of students attending VET across all regions from 2002 to 2006.
- Between 2002 to 2006 there was an increase in the percentage of students who found TAFE helped them to achieve their main reason for training.
- In 2006, 88.5% of all TAFE students were satisfied with the quality of their completed course and 87.5% of VET students were also satisfied.

### **Negative**

- Government real recurrent expenditure in NSW decreased from \$1,500.7m in 2002 to \$1,455.8m in 2006.
- Government real recurrent expenditure per person decreased from \$339.68 in 2002 to \$318.87 in 2006.