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Strategic Priority 1 – I want the right support, right time, right place

To develop the strategic framework for Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014 we consulted with the community and you told us that you wanted.

- I have whole-of-life, person-centred planning that results in relevant and effective supports that grow and change as necessary.
- I have support and skills to maintain my natural supports, friendships and relationships.
- I know the range and choice of paid supports available and how to apply for them.
- I know the range and choice of accommodation options available to me to assist me in my planning.
- I have secure, stable and continuous support when I use an agency or have funding to secure my own support.

Highlights

- 40% increase in budgeted funding for disability services from a $68.59 million in 2009-10 to $96.17 million in 2013–14. Within this is $10.1 million to prepare the ACT for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
- Completion of a pilot and evaluation of the My Choice Self-Directed Funding program. Read more information about My Choice on the Anglicare website.
- There was an increase in the number of Individual Support Packages (ISP) offered to people with disability to purchase support services. Read more about Individual Support Package policy on CSD’s website.
- A range of grants have been made available to people with disability since 2009 including Quality of Life grants, Innovation grants, Good Life Planning grants and IDay grants.
- Flexibility and diversity in the range of respite models funded by government including centre based respite, home and flexible respite in the non-government sector. Read more about ACT respite services on CSD’s website.
- Introduction of afterschool and vacation care programs for young people with disability, including:
  - Children’s School Holiday Programs at Malkara School website and Belconnen Community Services website.
- Young Peoples After School and School Holiday Program at Northcott and at Belconnen Community Services.
- The Policy Framework for Children and Young People with Disability and their Families was endorsed in 2010.
Draft People with a Disability who are Ageing Policy Framework was developed and consulted on.

A range of activities of activities were undertaken to enhance engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability.

ACT Corrective Services is piloting the use of an ability screening tool that identifies the level of individual functioning of detainees entering the Alexander Maconochie Centre. Read more about the screening tool at the University of Sydney website.

The ACT Equipment Scheme (ACTES) provides a broad range of equipment to eligible ACT residents. Read more about the ACT Equipment Scheme. The ACT equipment information database and those of all Independent Living Centres in Australia is available on the Independent Living Centre’s Australian website. Click here to view Independent Living Centres Australia’s website.

Hands Across Canberra is a new approach to philanthropy and giving in Canberra. Visit the Hands Across Canberra website.

Housing Options Planning facilitation has been provided to more than 100 people with disability, and their families as well as more than 600 people receiving information and advice on housing options and planning. Read more about housing and tenancy options on CSD’s website.

Funding for innovative housing options for people with disability, including:

- Project Independence
- Living In Networked Communities (LINC)
- Homeshare model of support and a series of public information sessions to improve housing outcomes have been held. Read more about homeshare.

The 2014 Housing Symposia included three public forums which were filmed. Click here to view the forums on YouTube.

The ACT meets Gold Standard for all new social housing developments. The Liveable Housing Guidelines are available here.

ACTION’s pre-booked flexible bus service commenced, which is a localised, flexible transport option for Canberra Seniors and people with disability. All bookings can be made by calling the Community Transport Coordination Centre on 6205 3555 or email flexiblebusservice@act.gov.au.

62.62% of ACTION’s bus fleet was wheelchair accessible as of October 2014, upgrades were made to 60% of bus stops by the end of September 2014 and the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Centralised Booking Service was introduced. Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Commonwealth) can be found here.
The ACT Government Assistance website was launched in April 2012 to help people find out what assistance they might be eligible for and who to contact for more information. Click here to view the Assistance website.

Launched in May 2013, the ACT Chronic Conditions Strategy 2013-18 sets the direction for the care and support of those living with chronic conditions in the ACT. Read more about the ACT Chronic Conditions Strategy on the ACT Health Website.

Focus ACT trialled the Comprehensive Health Assessment Program (CHAP) to improve the health of adults with intellectual disability. Read more about the CHAP tool on the QLG Government website.

**Key Achievements**

**Funding for Disability Services**

There has been a continued growth in funding for disability services over the last 5 years. Funding for disability services has increased each year in order to provide better and more responsive services to people with disability. These services have been funded through service funding agreements and current arrangements can be seen at: [http://www.procurement.act.gov.au/contracts/contracts_register/contracts_register_functionality/contracts_search](http://www.procurement.act.gov.au/contracts/contracts_register/contracts_register_functionality/contracts_search)

Actual funds expended on:

- Accommodation support in 2009-10 was $43.301m and increased in 2013-14 to $56.859m.
- Community Support in 2009-10 was $8.458m and increased in 2013-14 to $14.612m.
- Community Access in 2009-10 was $6.474m and increased in 2013-14 to $11.159m.
- Respite Services in 2009-10 was $6.765m and increased in 2013-14 to $8.239m.
- Advocacy and information services in 2009-2010 was $0.766m and increased in 2013-14 to $1.237m
- Services classed as other support was funded $0.957m in 2009-10 and increased to $5.416m in 2013-14.

Within this is $10.1 million to prepare the ACT for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This funding is for initiatives to support NDIS readiness and to enhanced service support for people to prepare for the NDIS. Examples of these initiatives include Enhanced Service Offer (ESO) grant payments, individual planning support, additional grant support and funding to meet unmet demand.
**My Choice pilot**

- The My Choice Self-Directed Funding Pilot was a partnership between Disability ACT, Anglicare and Community Connections that began in April 2013 and formally came to a close on 30 September 2014.

- My Choice supported 18 people with individualised funding arrangements to self-direct the services and supports they need and make decisions about how, where and when they received them.

- The evaluation of the My Choice Self-Directed Funding Pilot was launched on 4 September 2014. [Read the My Choice evaluation report.](#)

**Individual Support Packages**

- There was an increase in the number of Individual Support Packages (ISP) offered to people with disability to purchase support services. ISPs aim to promote independence, increase community access for people with disability and enhance a person’s capacity to self-manage funds.

- In 2011-12 there were 107 ISPs amounting to more than $10 million. 15 more people were allocated an ISP the following year (2012-2013) and another 13 people in 2013-14, which bought the total to 135 individuals. Two ISPs are being managed under the Consumer Controlled Funding pilot, 18 ISPs are under the Self-Directed Funding Pilot and the majority of remaining ISPs have been contracted to 29 community agencies through Service Funding Agreements. A small number are also administered by Disability ACT.

- More than $12 million was allocated to ISPs in 2013-14. [Read more about Individual Support Package policy.](#)

**Grants**

- A range of grants have been made available to people with disability since 2009.

- Quality of life grants (QOL) saw an increase in funding from $324,000 annually to $500,000 in 2012-13, with a total of 508 successful applications approved over a three-year period. The 2013 QOL process was incorporated into the Enhanced Service Offer which saw 340 QOL grants issued.

- Good Life Planning (GLP) grants have been available since April 2011, offering a one-off grant of up to $5,000 to assist people not linked to any government funded service provider to develop and implement their plans. Total annual allocation for GLP grants was $50,000. In 2011,11 applications were approved totalling $30,100. In 2012, 24 applications were recommended for funding with a total amount approved of $42,880. GLP grants were not offered as a discrete grants round in 2013-14 as such assistance could be offered through the Enhanced Services Offer.

- Over 2010- 2013 Innovations grants were offered to individuals and organisations to support one-off projects or initiatives that aim to do things differently for vulnerable people,
including people with disability. A total of $508,868 in grants was allocated over three years for new technology, research initiatives, social ventures and community access activities. Some notable examples include:

- **Enabled Employment** to progress the Enable Technology Learning Program
- **Nican’s ‘Know Before You Go’ Toolkit**
- Supporting family governance initiatives such as [Vela Microboard](#)
- **ACT Deafness Resource Centre Inc**- Mobile Outreach Program 'Hearing Aiders'- [read more about the ‘Hearing Aiders’ program](#)
- Rob de Castella's SmartStart for Kids- [SmartStart for Kids](#)-Physical Fun
- **Paperworks Inc**- Paper Making Program for Migrants or Refugees
- **TADACT Inc**- Therapeutic Electro-Mechanical Motion Generator (EMG) for Children with Disabilities
- **Social Ventures Australia** –ACT- Social Enterprise Seed Fund

- I-Day grants have helped to promote International Day for People with Disability celebrations. Disability ACT allocates around $20,000 annually to support initiatives and events that promote awareness and understanding of disability issues and encourage support for the dignity, rights and well-being of people with disability. In 2011, six events were supported totalling $23,193. In 2012, 11 events were supported totalling $21,743. Six events were supported in 2013 totalling $20,000 and another five events were supported in 2014.

**Respite**

- The ACT Government funds a range of respite services. This includes 6,300 Centre Based Respite bed nights and 54,500 hours of flexible respite per year. Over the years, in home respite, flexible respite and community access has replaced centre based as community based respite models of choice. The development of alternative models ensures that more individuals and families benefit from respite that can be matched to their needs and timing.

- Disability ACT moved to transfer all government run centre based respite services to community providers. These services were transferred in preparation for the NDIS, to strengthen the community sector, and to increase choice and control for service users. [Read more about ACT respite services.](#)

- Marymead and the Illawarra Disability Trust have been funded, through a tender process, to provide flexible respite arrangements for individuals and families to assist identified need and responsiveness (7,700 hours per annum combined). As a result of the tender process, funding is also provided to Carers ACT (3,000 to 4,000 hours per annum) and Northcott to provide targeted age based flexible respite support (10 individualised flexible respite packages to individuals).
A number of community organisations receive funding either directly or via individualised funding to deliver flexible respite, in-home respite and community access (that delivers a respite effect) across the ACT. The locations these services are delivered from are not fixed and can respond to the location of the person receiving the service or their needs and interests.

Plans to construct a purpose built respite centre for children with disability aged 5-12 years are under development at a site in Chifley in partnership with the Ricky Stuart Foundation. Click here to view Ricky Stuart talking about the new children’s respite centre in Canberra.

**Afterschool and Vacation Care Programs**

ACT Government funds two afterschool and four vacation care programs for young people with disability providing 20 afterschool and 40 school holiday places. Afterschool and holiday programs began operation in February 2012 as a direct response to the recommendations of a scoping study for Specialist Afterschool and Vacation Care. Read the scoping study.

Children’s School Holiday Programs at Malkara School and Belconnen Community Services.

Young Peoples After School and School Holiday Program at Northcott.

**Children and Young People**

The Policy Framework for Children and Young People with Disability and their Families was endorsed in 2010. The link to the Children and Young People’s portal was placed on the reviewed Disability ACT website. Disability ACT’s Children and Young People’s team continues to work within a holistic framework to address the needs of young people and families. Read the Policy Framework for Children and Young People with Disability and their Families.

**Ageing people with disability**

A draft of the People with a Disability who are Ageing Policy Framework was developed. The Framework was put on hold following national policy reforms in health and disability reforms including the National Partnership Agreement on Transitioning Responsibilities for Aged Care and the NDIS. These reforms are influencing the local pathways for people with disability who are ageing. The draft policy framework which has been developed will be considered as part of the implementation of the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 in the ACT.

Training has been provided to service providers through the Disability Providers Learning Network on dementia awareness. Disability ACT includes dementia awareness training as part of the induction program for Disability Support Workers.

Disability ACT works with its community partners including ACT Health’s Aged Care Assessment Team, social workers in hospitals and disability accommodation providers to
divert younger people with disability who are at risk of admission to residential aged care into more appropriate forms of accommodation.

- In line with the ages and stages approach of transition to the NDIS, people who are 64 years old phased into the NDIS in the first quarter from July 2014 to September 2014 and people who are 63 years old will phase in the second quarter.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability**

- Following the initial release of the draft Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People with a Disability Policy Framework in 2010, Disability ACT engaged an aboriginal senior policy officer to engage with people in the local community to develop a culturally appropriate framework for the delivery of disability services in the ACT.

- In 2012-13, Disability ACT engaged with Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people through a dedicated service for families who are caring for someone with a disability. This service linked with other parts of government and community services to deliver support.

- The ACT NDIS Expert Panel includes an Aboriginal parent of a young person with disability. The NDIS Expert Panel has considered and provided valuable input into ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are considered and informed throughout the social reform in the ACT.

- The Enhanced Service Offer (ESO) gave priority to applicants with additional complexity or disadvantage in their lives, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Through effective engagement with community organisations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies and outreach work undertaken by ESO planners, the ESO reached 67 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the first round and 113 in the second round. 90% of the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people who applied received a grant. Read more about the ESO.

**People with disability in contact with the justice system**

*ACT Corrective Services Use of HASI Tool*

- ACT Corrective Services is trialling the use of an ability screening tool that identifies the level of individual functioning. The tool is called the Hayes Ability Screening Index (HASI). HASI is a screening tool rather than a diagnostic tool and provides an indication as to whether the detainee should be referred for further screening.

- At this time, ACT Corrective Services is determining the suitability of the tool in the context of Alexander Maconochie Centre operations and to provide baseline data. If the tool is suitable, ACT Corrective Services proposes widespread roll-out of its use.

*Intensive Treatment and Support (ITAS) Program for People with Dual Disabilities*

- Disability ACT began a specialist program ITAS in 2006 to deliver intensive treatment and support to people that have a dual disability (intellectual disability and a mental disorder/dysfunction), high complex needs and are at risk of entering or re-entering the
criminal justice system. 26 clients were initially identified by a clinical assessment process targeting group criteria for the ITAS program.

- The aim of the program was to provide a transitional system of treatment and support that integrates clients back into the community. Over the life of the program, ITAS:
  - held workshops on disability awareness across government and community
  - established working arrangements with members of the judiciary and legal fraternity and with the relevant non-government and advocate bodies
  - developed two specialist accommodation options, a step-up secure accommodation option and a step-down community-based housing option.

**Assistance technologies, aids and equipment**

- All recommendations from the ACT Health Equipment Services Review February/March 2008 by Michael Keen have been implemented. The ACT Equipment Scheme (ACTES) provides a broad range of equipment to eligible ACT residents. Full financial support and equitable eligibility criteria systems have also been implemented. The final recommendations which included a van and staff to provide a Mobile Equipment Repair and Maintenance Service for the ACT Equipment Scheme and the contract for an external continence supplier to provide a full range of items, including home delivery, were finalised in June 2011. An evaluation following the implementation of the recommendations was finalised in August 2011. Improvements to policies and operating procedures will continue through the ACTES Advisory Committee.

- IT solution Management of Equipment Schemes and Loans Services (MESALS) was implemented. The system provides equipment tracking and client information. This system supports the ACT Equipment Scheme (ACTES), the Equipment Loan Service (ELS) and the ACT Domiciliary Oxygen and Respiratory Support Scheme (DORSS).

- The ACT equipment information database and those of all Independent Living Centres in Australia are now available on the Independent Living Centre’s Australian website. View the website here. A link is also available under equipment choices and Disability ACT’s website here. You can view the Disability ACT web page here. View the Disability ACT equipment and technology webpage here.

**Philanthropic donations**

- Hands Across Canberra is a new approach to philanthropy and giving in Canberra. It is being led by the Hands Across Canberra Board comprising a group of community, business and government leaders who are committed to improving the lives of the most vulnerable people in our community. Read more about Hands Across Canberra.

- The Community Services Directorate has established a workplace giving program to enable employees to donate in a planned way through the payroll system. Donations through this program may go toward Hands Across Canberra or Boundless Canberra which is the National
Children’s Playground Project to build an all-abilities playground in the national capital precinct.

- Volunteering and Philanthropic Investment has been considered in the NDIS context. Urbis was engaged in 2014 to review the potential impact of the NDIS on philanthropic and volunteer contributions in the ACT disability sector. The project, due for completion by the end of November 2014, will develop tools for service providers to use to retain and enhance this contribution.

Planning for future housing, tenancy and support

**Online information portal**

- Disability ACT has developed the Principle Based Supported Accommodation Framework which includes public information sessions and workshops, an innovative housing unit to explore innovative development opportunities, and a web based information sharing portal.

- The portal will seek to provide a one-stop accessible web-based location for information and opportunities for people with disability who are seeking to live in the Canberra region. The portal will offer people with disability control and choice as to who they choose to live with and where they choose to live. The portal builds on the e-marketing tool developed through the NDIS Practical Design Fund. Disability ACT consulted community agencies to determine viability and interest in the portal along with initial scoping and development of the portal.

**Housing Options Facilitator**

- The Housing Options Facilitator assists families to plan for housing and support arrangements and to formalise pathways to social and community housing and other housing options. In 2013-14 Housing Options Planning facilitation was provided to more than 105 people with disability, their families, advocates or community service workers bringing the contact to over 600 people within the period.

- Three Accommodation Futures Planning Sessions have been held with up to 85 people at each session, with information about accommodation and support options for people with disability.

- To contact the Housing Options Facilitator call the Disability ACT information service on 6207 1086 or email: DACThouseoptions@act.gov.au

**Housing options**

- In December 2010, the report, From House to Home – Housing, Tenancy and Support for People with Complex Needs Related to their Disability was released. The House to Home project was a feasibility study into accommodation and support for people with high and complex needs. From House to Home includes a range of housing and property designs and tenancy and support arrangements for people who require sustained formal and informal assistance through their lifetime. It explores supported accommodation models which
provide for a range of lifestyle preferences and maximise the ability of the whole community to be welcoming and inclusive of people with a disability.

- Funding for innovative housing options for people with disability have been created including:
  - **Project Independence**
  - **Living In Networked Communities (LINC)**
  - Homeshare model of support and a series of public information sessions and housing symposia to progress good outcomes have been held. [Read more about homeshare.](#)

- Three symposiums were held in 2014 looking at responsive, sustainable and innovative housing options for people with disability and market and industry solutions to increase supply. [The Housing Symposia series can be watched on YouTube here.](#)

- The Real Estate Institute (REI) is engaging private landlords, agents and property managers to promote opportunities around leasing their property to people living with disability. Housing ACT and Disability ACT will support REI.

### Universal design in new and modified housing

- The final report on implementing the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines in Future Social Housing Development was endorsed at a joint ministerial meeting between disability and housing ministers in February 2012. The Guidelines provide technical advice and guidance on the key easy living features that make a home easier and safer to live in for people of all ages and abilities.

- In September 2012 the Liveable Housing Design Quality Mark was launched as part of a national campaign to ensure all new homes are safer, more comfortable and easier to get around by 2020. The performance ratings of Silver, Gold and Platinum performance are based on practical, common sense guidelines to liveability. The ACT meets Gold Standard for all new social housing developments. The ACT Government has consulted with the local community regarding the proposed implementation of a requirement for all new Class 1a detached dwellings to comply with Universal Design Guideline.

### Building accessibility


- The ACT’s building standards reflect the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010. Work to align exemptions in the ACT’s building law to mirror the effect of the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010 has proven more problematic noting that if an exemption is granted under ACT law it is not granted under Commonwealth
legislation and so will not prevent action being taken under the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010. Regulations are proposed to be completed in 2015.

Transport options

**Use of regional community buses**

- The ACT Government implemented a study of the Community Transport service to better understand the need for community transport. As a result of that study, ACTION has implemented a pre-booked flexible bus service, which is a localised, flexible transport option for Canberra seniors and people with disability. The service provides a free service to individuals who have limited access to other public transport options.

- The new service is managed by the Community Transport Coordination Centre which brings together the Special Needs Transport Fleet, the ACTION Charter Booking Service, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Bus Service and the new Flexible Bus Service. The Centre aims to improve utilisation of the Special Needs Transport buses through providing demand responsive bus services for the elderly, the disabled and the vulnerable in the community. All the buses are wheelchair accessible and bookings can be made by calling the Community Transport Coordination Centre on 6205 3555. The flexible bus service was also developed to align community transport services and improve transport accessibility for those in the community who are at risk of social isolation because of a lack of suitable transport alternatives.

**The review of taxis including Wheelchair Accessible Taxis (WATS)**

- The review of Wheelchair Accessible Taxis (WATS) was completed in November 2010 and the ACT Government provided a response to its recommendations in 2011. On 10 December 2012, the ACT Government implemented an independent Wheelchair Accessible Taxi centralised booking service (WCBS) to manage the booking and dispatch of all WAT hiring. The contract for providing the service has been extended for a further two years, to 2016.

- The WCBS model incorporates a strong element of micro-management and monitoring of WAT bookings which is considered critical to achieve improved accessibility and an acceptable 24 hour, 7 days per week service for people who rely on WATS for transport.

- The WCBS has grown and is continuing to grow and improve the service provided to those people in the community who need WATS as a means of transport. The Office of Regulatory Services will continue to work with the WCBS, taxi operators, drivers and users to ensure the reliability, timeliness and quality of WATS services continue to improve. All Wheelchair Accessible Taxis can be booked by calling 13WATS or 13 92 87. Administration enquiries and assistance with transport needs can be discussed by contacting the WCBS on 6280 4123.

**Accessible Public Transport Action Plan 2013-2018**

- The ACT Government continues to improve disability access to public transport with the release of the 2013-2018 Action Plan for Accessible Public Transport in the ACT in March 2014. The updated Action Plan evaluated the progress made since the implementation of
The Accessible Public Transport Action Plan 2009-2012 to remove barriers to accessing public transport services for people with disabilities as well as older people.

- The Action Plan identifies areas in public transport and infrastructure that need to be addressed by both public and private providers, and makes recommendations for further focus and actions required to continue to meet disability access goals. The Plan also makes recommendations to improve disability consultation, industry monitoring and reporting, and to steer the Action Plan forward over the next five years.

- In addition, the Action Plan acts as a guide for government and non-government transport and infrastructure providers to meet their legal obligations under Territory and Commonwealth disability discrimination laws.

- The updated Action Plan focuses on key areas including: monitoring and reviewing the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Centralised Booking Service and associated incentives; continuing to upgrade fleets to meet the Commonwealth’s Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport compliance targets for accessible buses and coaches for government and non-government public transport providers; continuing to upgrade public transport infrastructure including bus stops, stations and taxi ranks; and continuing to expand ways of providing information to passengers including implementing the NXTBUS Real Time Passenger Information System.

- The ACT Government is committed to removing discrimination from the public transport system and improving access for people with disability in the ACT community. A copy of the Action Plan for Accessible Public Transport in the ACT 2013 – 2018 is available by clicking here or from any Canberra Connect Shopfront or the Office of Regulatory Services. For public transport concerns, please contact Public Transport Regulation on 6205 4585.

Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Commonwealth)

- The Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Transport Standards) specify the minimum accessibility requirements providers and operators of public transport need to meet in order to remove discrimination from public transport services. The Transport Standards recognise that access to public transport enables people with disability, their families and their carers to fully participate in community life and also benefits many older Australians and parents with infants in prams.

- The Transport Standards include compliance timetable milestones at 2007, 2012, 2017, 2022 and 2032, which are intended to reflect the normal depreciation and replacement cycles of public transport conveyances, and normal cycles of upgrades for infrastructure. All public transport conveyances, except trains and trams, are expected to be 100% compliant by 2022. Trams and trains are required to be 100% compliant by 2032.

- Significant progress has been made in the ACT to improve access to public transport services for people with disabilities in our community. This includes 62.62% of ACTION’s bus fleet being wheelchair accessible as of October 2014, upgrades to 60% of bus stops by the end of September 2014 and the introduction of the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Centralised Booking Service. The number of compliant buses varies and has decreased slightly from figures
reported in January 2014 due to the total number of buses decreasing. There are currently 258 compliant buses in a fleet of 412.

- Public transport is a crucial factor in the successful participation of people with disability in family, education, community and work life. Transport providers need to be diligent in making progress towards meeting the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport.

Concessions program

- During 2011, the Community Services Directorate and Treasury Directorate began modelling the value of concessions for a range of income support recipients. The assessment of concessions was incorporated into the ACT Taxation Review, which reported in May 2012.

- Recommendations included: ‘Address the impacts on low income households from the substitution of the tax through the concessions system, with a possible expansion of the current rebate scheme’ and ‘Continue a Pensioner Duty Concession Scheme over the transition period and adjust the property value thresholds to support ageing in place and access to housing choices within an area’.

- In response, the ACT Government developed a five year taxation reform plan, for a fairer, simpler and more efficient taxation system, setting the broad direction for reform, and measured changes to the taxation system.

- In July 2012, an amendment was made to the Concessions Program to include people living with medical conditions requiring special heating and cooling in the Life Support Rebate.

- The Energy Rebate was increased 10% in the 2011-12 Budget from $266.20 to $292.82 per annum. This was further increased in 2013-14 by 10% to $322.10 per annum and in 2014-15 by 5% to $338.21 per annum.

- The Utility Concessions were increased 2.5% in the 2011-12 Budget from $80 to $82 per annum. This was further increased in 2013-14 to $84.01 per annum and in 2014-15 to $88.25 per annum.

- The Water and Sewerage Rebates have remained at 68% of the supply and service charges respectively. In 2014-15 eligibility for the Sewerage Rebate was expanded to (approximately 4,215) holders of the Centrelink Low Income Health Care Card, making the eligibility for this rebate consistent with that of the Water Rebate and the Energy Concession.

- Total extra funding for the ACT Concessions Program in the 2014-15 Budget was $6.615 million.

- As a result of the 2011 Community Roundtable, the Targeted Assistance Strategy was launched to assist Canberrans in financial hardship and not normally in receipt of government income support. The recommendations of the Strategy continue to be implemented.

- As part of the Targeted Assistance Strategy, the ACT Government Assistance website was launched in April 2012. Click here to view the Assistance website.
The portal makes it easier for people to find out what assistance and advice they might be eligible for, by putting information in one place and in an easily understood way. It pulls together information from across the ACT and Australian governments and some ACT community organisations. Between 16 July 2014 and 15 August 2014 the website hosted 9,767 sessions with 8,681 users. 84% of visits were from new users.

The Expenditure Review Division (CMTEDD) is conducting a review of the ACT Concessions Program. The review commenced in August 2014 and will be completed to contribute to the 2015-16 Budget process.

**Mainstream Health**

*Hospital transitions*

- In the 2009-10 Budget, the ACT Government allocated $750,000 per annum to respond to the needs of eight long term patients in The Canberra Hospital. Of the eight long-stay patients, seven people fully transitioned out of hospital by 31 July 2010.

- The Admission and Discharge Policy and Procedure for the support of people with disability requiring hospital treatment was undertaken by Disability ACT in partnership with the Health Directorate, Quality Safety Unit and completed in 2012. The policy and procedure aims to improve the admission and discharge process for people with disability living in Disability ACT supported accommodations services needing hospital treatment.

**ACT Health initiatives**

- The Women, Youth and Child Health Policy Unit provides funding to women’s centres for health matters under the auspices of Women With Disabilities ACT (WWDACT). WWDACT work in the following priority areas of ageing, access to sport and fitness, housing, employment and income, transport, access to health care and violence against women with disabilities.

- In June 2014, WWDACT held a seminar which enabled community members, service practitioners, academics and researchers, to share their expertise and contribute to discussions about the effects of the intersection of gender and disability discrimination on the incidence and nature of violence against women with disabilities, and how we can improve responses.

- Launched in May 2013, the ACT Chronic Conditions Strategy 2013-18 sets the direction for the care and support of those living with chronic conditions in the ACT. Read more about the ACT Chronic Conditions Strategy.

- In the first 12 months of the Strategy’s operation a ‘stocktake’ has been undertaken to produce an activities list of ACT initiatives in the chronic conditions space in order to assess the scope and direction of services in the ACT.

- Another significant project during this time has been the development of ACT localised integrated Health Pathways of care. A jointly funded project by ACT Health and ACT
Medicare Local (ACTML) to adapt and localise the Canterbury Health Pathways model for the ACT, this project is also being progressed through ACTMLs newly formed Better Chronic Disease Management Systems Working Group; established to progress chronic disease management and coordination.

- The promotion of the importance of Advance Care Plans (ACP) for ACT residents has also been undertaken. The Project particularly targeted specific population groups, such as those with chronic disease and major community groups with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) clients, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, men and financially and socially disadvantaged groups. Promotion included a joint project undertaken with ACTML to provide education and support to local GPs, Residential Aged Care Facilities and the local community. In March 2014 a promotional campaign ‘Be My Voice’ was conducted to increase uptake of ACP generally.

- Initial consideration has already been given to workforce issues of capacity and a primary health care liaison position has been established in allied health to enhance the support provided to GPs through access to community health services.

**Comprehensive Health Assessment Program (CHAP)**

- Focus ACT received a grant from John James Hospital to pilot the Comprehensive Health Assessment Program (CHAP) to improve the health of adults with intellectual disability. Following the success of the program, in monitoring their clients’ health, Focus has now incorporated the program into their case managers’ annual key performance indicators. Focus Foundation, Focus’s charity arm, pays the licence fees to John James Hospital. Read more about the CHAP tool.
Strategic Priority 2 – I want to contribute to the community

To develop the strategic framework for Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014 we consulted with the community and you told us that you wanted.

- I choose the form my adult life takes.
- As much as is possible for me, I am work ready and/or able to be a part of my community at the end of secondary and tertiary education.
- I have support, information and mentoring to be self-employed or to start my own business.
- I can engage in public and private sector employment in work that suits my needs and abilities.

Highlights

- Implementation of the Everyone Matters – Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010-2013. Read the strategic plan at the Education Directorate website.

- In 2012 Therapy ACT piloted a Therapy Assistant Program to enhance access to therapy services for students with developmental disabilities, and support teachers to embed therapy strategies into the school curriculum. Read the Therapy Assistant Program pilot report.

- A range of initiatives supported young people with disability transition from school to adult life including the community access program, Post School Options Expo and the Work Experience and Social Placements Program.

- Broadening employment and vocation options for young people with disability as they transition to adult life through support of social enterprises including the MULCH program (at Marymead’s website), Branch Out Cafe (at Carers ACT website), and Paperworks Inc.

- Since the ACT Social Enterprise Hub was established in 2009, 44 income streams have been established for people with disability. Visit Social Ventures Australia to find out more about the ACT Social Enterprise Hub.

- The Post School Options Expo (Planning Future Pathways) was held as part of ACT Careers Expo in 2012 and has continued to be held in 2013 and 2014. Visit the Canberra CareersXpo website.

- The ACT Government, Nican and ACT Inclusion Council introduced Disability Confidence Canberra a new speaking program to equip business, government agencies, community organisations and local communities to understand disability. Visit the ACT Inclusion Council website.
The ACT Government has introduced a payroll tax concession to encourage ACT’s biggest businesses to benefit from the talents and skills of school leavers with disability aged 17-24. Read more about Disability Employment Concessions at ACT Revenue website.

Volunteering ACT supported people with disability engage in volunteering placements with 119 referrals and 42 vulnerable people, including people with disability in volunteering placements. Visit the Volunteering ACT website.

Disability ACT continues to be involved in national discussion about data development related to disability inclusion.

Key Achievements

Implementation of strategic plan for disability education in public schools (Education and Training Directorate)

The Education and Training Directorate’s (ETD) Everyone Matters – Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010-2013 culminated in 2013 with recognition that students are at the centre of all our work, including students with disability. View the strategic plan here. This is also reflected in the Directorate’s strategic plan Education Capital: Leading the Nation 2014 -2017. This plan can be found here.

A pivotal aspect of the change to including disability in the overarching focus for ETD is the ACT Engaging Schools Framework. The Framework describes four underpinning principles and four areas of good practice that all ACT public schools can use to become more engaging places for students. The underpinning principles are: ensure every student belongs to their school; engage everybody; focus on success; and respond to context. The four areas of good practice are: strengthening relationships; valuing, understanding and having high expectations of every student; and building an engaging school culture.

Network Student Engagement Teams in each school network have been established to support schools to meet the diverse needs of students. This includes a Disability Education Partner in each team. This position is a school leader classification that works shoulder-to-shoulder with school principals and their executive teams to build their capacity to meet the needs of students with disability in their school, in line with the Engaging Schools Framework.

Training packages for Learning Support Assistants (LSAs), with a discrete disability component, are finalised and are being delivered.

A focus for ETD has been on building the capacity of staff in schools to support students with disability to access and participate in education on the same basis as their peers. To this end, the Directorate has collaborated with the University of Canberra to develop online learning packages for the Disability Standards for Education 2005 for staff in all ACT public schools. The online learning supports improved understanding of legal obligations of education providers to make reasonable adjustments for students with disability in schools. To date, 1,010 staff members have completed the online learning modules. This model has been adopted across the states and territories.
Further, more than 440 teachers have completed a series of Disability Education Online Learning Programs, with another 420 in the process of completing.

All 86 public schools have a Disability Education Coordinator.

Networking and workshopping sessions have been held for families and carers related to disability education.

98% of ACT public school students with disability accessing special education in mainstream and specialist schools had Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) developed as of 2012-13 including Transition Action Plans.

Therapy ACT and the ETD have partnered to provide a successful therapy program in a number of ACT public schools.

The Health Directorate and ETD have collaborated to support school attendance for students with complex healthcare needs, many of whom have a disability, in the Healthcare Access at School program.

ETD, through ACT public schools, supports students from year nine with careers and transitions. This is led in schools by transitions and careers officers and augmented by programs developed with and delivered by House with No Steps.

For many students with disability, this transition and career support is enhanced with a Transition Action Plan and additional support through the school’s Disability Education Coordinator and system Network Student Engagement Teams.

**Therapy Assistant Program**

In 2012 Therapy ACT piloted a Therapy Assistant Program to enhance access to therapy services for students with developmental disabilities, and support teachers to embed therapy strategies into the school curriculum. The program enables therapy assistants to work in schools implementing therapy programs developed by physiotherapists, speech pathologists and occupational therapists in consultation with teachers. In 2012, seven schools participated in the highly successful pilot project with more than 270 children receiving therapy services. During the pilot phase there was an 80% success rate for children meeting their goals or improving on standardised testing leading to the program’s expansion. From January 2013, the program included services for preschool students in the seven schools and in 2013-14 the program continued, working with seven schools each school year. [Read the Therapy Assistant Program pilot report.](#)

**Transition from school to adult life, partnerships and employment**

**Community Access Program**

The Community Access Program is designed to support people with high support needs who require ongoing supports to maximise their potential for social independence. Since 2009 the number of students accessing the program has steadily gown.
Each school leaver with high and complex needs who was due to graduate between 2011 and 2013 received a $5,000 grant to enable their better engagement in the community.

School leavers will be amongst the first group of individuals to transition to the NDIS from 1 July 2014. This group was also allocated up to $12,000 of additional supports and services, as part of the Enhanced Service Offer. The funds were used to:

- attend a training course to develop new skills
- arrange for supports to take part in a social activity
- do something else that enables them to get out into the ACT community.

School leavers were assisted through individualised planning sessions to plan how they will use their additional supports to meet their longer term life goals and participate in meaningful activities that contribute to their lives.

**Post School Options**

The Post School Options Expo (Planning Future Pathways) was held as part of ACT Careers Expo in 2012 and has continued to be held in 2013 and 2014. Planning Future Pathways provides students, their families, carers and teachers with appropriate and timely information on issues related to post school life and disability services. [Visit the Canberra CareersXpo website.](#)

**Work Experience and Social Placements Program**

House With No Steps staff located at the Disability Information Support Hub (DISH) work with local businesses to create work experience opportunities for year nine and year ten students with disability. Operating since 2009, the Work Experience and Social Placements program (WESP) is designed to help students decide on their career path through work experience with mainstream employers. Approximately 120 young people with disability have been assisted through the program each year.

**Social Enterprises**

The ACT Government has supported social enterprises to broaden employment and vocation options for young people with disability as they transition to adult life through support of social enterprises including:

- **MULCH program**
- **Branch Out Cafe**
- **Paperworks Inc.**

The New Shoots program was established, a collaboration between Fuji Xerox, Greening Australia, Bankmecu and Black Mountain School, to provide students with disability the
chance to develop their independence through horticultural work. Read more about the New Shoots program.

- Six Seeds, a social enterprise developed through the partnership of five community organisations and supported by private sector organisations, delivers inclusive and creative opportunities for young people with disability to develop viable business ventures. Read more about Six Seeds

**Enabled Employment**

- Enabled Employment received an Innovation Connect Grant of $21,000 from Economic Development Directorate in 2012-2013 to develop the Enabled Employment website.

- Formally launched in September 2014, Enabled Employment is an innovative, online employment agency for people with disability that connects employees and employers through an online database at [https://www.enabledemployment.com/](https://www.enabledemployment.com/). The agency provides a website platform to allow people with disability to work remotely. Employers may hire individuals by the hour or per day.

- Disability ACT engaged a teleworker through Enabled Employment to assist with canvassing and processing nominations for the ACT Chief Minister’s Inclusion Awards

**Disability Confidence Canberra**

- The ACT Government, Nican and ACT Inclusion Council (formerly BLITS) introduced Disability Confidence Canberra a new speaking program to equip business, government agencies, community organisations and local communities to understand disability. Speakers provide information and practical tools to improve access and inclusion for people with disability. Visit the Inclusion Council website.

**Payroll tax concession**

- The ACT Government has introduced a payroll tax concession to encourage ACT’s biggest businesses to benefit from the talents and skills of school leavers with disability aged 17-24. The payroll tax exemption is a $740,000 initiative over two years (2013-2014). It provides ACT businesses paying payroll tax with a concession of up to $4,000 for each school leaver with disability they employ. Disability ACT has produced a range of promotional materials to engage the business sector with this initiative. Read more about Disability Employment Concessions.

**Disability Employment Strategy**

- The ACT Public Service Employment Strategy for People with Disability 2011-2015 was launched in April 2011. Read the employment strategy.

- An ACT Government coordinator has facilitated whole-of-government support to embed the ACTPS Employment Strategy for People with Disability (the Strategy) in several ways, including:
• whole of government promotion
• linking entities across the ACTPS with service providers and sustaining those linkages
• providing advice and support to human resource professionals across the ACTPS
• providing advice in the development of specific employment programs
• amending legislation to develop ‘designated positions’ in line with the Commonwealth Government
• providing policy advice to support the principles of the Strategy
• connecting with local universities to better promote employment programs in those universities
• developing whole-of-government policies in consultation with the Australian Network on Disability to develop and maintain a disability confident ACTPS.

o The proportion of the ACTPS workforce composed of people with disability has increased from 1.9% (384 employees) in June 2013 to 2.0% (415 employees) in June 2014.

o Whole of government separation rates for staff with disability increased from 6.8% in June 2013 to 7.4% in June 2014. This is in contrast to the continued decrease in separation rate for the ACTPS, which decreased from 6.8% to 6.2% in the same period.

o The ACTPS Employment Strategy for People with Disability is currently being reviewed through the comprehensive review of the Respect, Equity and Diversity (RED) Framework, to bring innovation to the way employment programs are structured within the ACTPS and promoted throughout the disability community.

Social procurement and social enterprises

o Since the ACT Social Enterprise Hub was established in 2009, 44 income streams have been established for people with disability. Read more about the ACT Social Enterprise Hub.

o The ACT Government established a Social Procurement Manager in 2012. This position promotes and facilitates social procurement by ACT Government. The Social Procurement Manager assists Directorates to develop tenders which include social procurement provisions, such as employing or contracting people with disability, young people, and people from culturally diverse backgrounds. The ACT Government, including the Community Services Directorate, continues to include social benefit requirements as part of its tendering process.

o All goods and services procurements managed by Procurement and Capital Works (PCW) (>-$200,000) are assessed for their potential to include social benefit provisions. When it is considered that a procurement offers opportunities to realise social benefit outcomes, specific social benefit evaluation criteria are included in the Request for Tender. In addition, PCW has established a pre-qualified panel of social enterprises that can provide services to
directorates on a quotation basis. To date, two social enterprises have applied for pre-
qualification. Pre-qualified social enterprises will be listed on the Shared Services
Procurement Portal for the information of directorates.

- A limited tender only open to social enterprises for the operation of the Civic Merry Go
Round was conducted in late 2013. LEAD was the successful tenderer.

Volunteering

- The Volunteer Principles Statement was launched in December 2011 to represent a whole
of government approach to supporting and recognising volunteers. Read the statement.

- In 2013-14 Volunteering ACT supported people with disability engage in volunteering
placements as part of an Inclusive Volunteering project. In June 2013, Disability ACT
committed an additional funding package of just over $50,000 to continue the program for
another 12 months.

- The project provides the opportunity to educate organisations in the process of engaging
vulnerable volunteers while assisting people with disability to increase social and economic
participation through volunteering.

- As at June 2014 the Inclusive Volunteering Program had received 119 referrals and
succeeded in placing 42 vulnerable people, including people with disability in volunteering
placements.

Demographic data

- Disability ACT continues to be involved in national discussion about data development
related to disability inclusion. In June 2012, the former Disability Policy and Research
Working Group, representing inter-governmental disability officials, offered a tender for an
Audit of Disability Research in Australia. The main aim of the Audit of Disability Research
was to produce a report that provides a comprehensive picture of the current state of
disability research in Australia. Read the Report of Audit.

- The Audit’s main finding is that the current disability research base is not ‘fit for purpose’ to
the reform agenda and is fragmented and diversified across topics and study designs. There
is not a critical mass of research on topics of priority to the National Disability Strategy, the
National Disability Research and Development Agenda and the National Disability Insurance
Scheme.

- The Disability Services National Minimum Data Set continues to be collated and now
includes data on transitioning dates of people with disability to the NDIS. This will be
included in the 2014-15 dataset. Read more about the National Minimum Data Set.

- The number of people with disability is identified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics via
the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) which is collected every three years.
Planning for the 2015 SDAC is now underway. Read the Disability, Ageing and Carers,
Australia: Summary of Findings, 2012 here.
The number of people with disability aged 0-64 who may require disability support services at some point – even if they do not use or demand those services (the ‘potential population’) is estimated by the Productivity Commission in its Report on Government Services. Read the Report on Government Services.

In 2012, a client satisfaction survey was revised and provided to all people with disability who receive services funded through or provided by Disability ACT. Approximately 1,800 client satisfaction surveys were disseminated through service providers and results indicated that 76% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the support services provided or funded by Disability ACT. The survey’s response rate was 19%. In 2014, over 1,870 people were sent the survey and 81 percent of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the service they receive. The improving rate of satisfaction is consistent with the trend since 2009-10.
Strategic Priority 3 – I want to socialise and engage in the community

To develop the strategic framework for Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014 we consulted with the community and you told us that you wanted.

- I have greater presence and participation in social, recreational and cultural activities.
- I am able to access and be involved in the community through recreational, sporting and social clubs, activities and events.
- I am actively engaged in the governance of social, recreational and cultural organisation boards and committees.

Highlights

- In November 2010 Disability ACT released the Community Development Plan which outlines how Disability ACT will work with government, business and community groups to facilitate and build opportunities for people to socialise and engage in the ACT community.

- The Companion Card 843 cardholders in the ACT with 57 linked business affiliates. Read more about the Companion Card on CSD’s website.

- 2014 is the 11th year of the ACT Chief Minister’s Inclusion Awards. In 2014 the Awards were further expanded to recognise people with disability who are leaders and excellence in enabling inclusion through supporting people with disability. Visit the ACT Inclusion Council website.

- Community Support and Infrastructure Grants continue to fund projects that support community sector viability. Read more about the grants on CSD’s website.

- In late 2013, artsACT commenced discussions with EnableCanberra to review the ACT Government’s arts facilities for inclusion on the EnableCanberra website.

- A range of disability awareness training activities have been undertaken by government and community.

- A range of partnerships delivering inclusive community, sporting, arts and recreation activities have been undertaken.

- Forum Theatre – REBUS is a mixed ability ensemble, the first of its kind in the ACT. View REBUS’ promotional video on You Tube.

- The inaugural Connect and Participate (CAP) Expo was held on Saturday 29 March 2014 at Kingston Markets. More than 6,000 Canberrans attended. The Expo showcased opportunities available for Canberrans of all abilities and ages to join groups and build social connections around common interests. Read more about the Connect and Participate Expo on CSD’s website.
o Boundless, Canberra’s first all-abilities playground was opened in October 2014, bringing the joy of play to children across the ACT. Visit Boundless Canberra’s website.

o The Everyone Everyday program, a teaching resource to help promote inclusion in the community, has been implemented in 12 mainstream primary schools involving professional development for 236 teachers and over 3000 students. Read more about Everyone Everyday on CSD’s website.

o Nican ‘Know Before you Go’ Toolkit was developed to increase the confidence and inclusion of people with disability. Read more about the toolkit on Nican’s website.

o Nican launched a geospatial smartphone application which allows people to locate around 4,000 mostly mainstream sport, recreation, arts, equipment, services and supports at the swipe of a smartphone. The app is available for free at the App Store.

o ACT Government has supported a range of leadership and self advocacy initiatives.

**Key achievements**

**Implementation of Community Development Plan**

o In November 2010 Disability ACT released the Community Development Plan which outlines how Disability ACT will work with government, business and community groups to facilitate and build opportunities for people to socialise and engage in the ACT community. The Disability ACT Community Development Officer worked with a number of organisations to develop tools and held events to strengthen the links between people with disability and their community.

o The outcomes of this engagement are spread throughout the report and reflected in the development of some key community initiatives such as: the Volunteering ACT Inclusive Volunteering Program; the NICAN phone app; Disability Awareness Training; coordination of and participation in key annual events such as I-Day activities; Developing a Buddy programs in 2012 with Cranleigh and Fraser Schools in partnership with Softball Australia; a series of Digital Story Telling projects over 2012 and 2013; and the development of a siblings support group.

o The Siblings Group develops the capacity of siblings to connect with each other and develop good lives for their siblings with disability. Workshops and social gatherings have been undertaken throughout 2014 and will continue in 2015.

**Companion Card**

o The ACT Companion Card scheme enables people with disability with attendant carers to participate at community venues and activities without having to pay for a second ticket for their attendant carer. As at June 2014, there were 843 cardholders in the ACT with 57 linked business affiliates. Read more about the Companion Card.
**ACT Chief Minister’s Inclusion Awards**

- Now in its 11\textsuperscript{th} year, the 2014 Chief Minister’s Inclusion Awards were further expanded with additional awards recognising people with disability, and also recognising excellence in enabling inclusion through supporting people with disability.

- The last ACT Chief Minister’s Inclusion Awards were presented at the Great Hall of Parliament House on 11 December 2013. To mark the occasion and to commemorate the Centenary of Canberra, an additional award category was included for the Most Inclusive Centenary Event.

- The breadth and number of nominations in the annual ACT Chief Minister’s Inclusion Awards has continued to grow and diversify, with a record 79 nominations received in 2014. In 2013 the Awards received 63 nominations, an increase from 55 nominations in 2012.

- Read more about the Inclusion Awards and the 2014 and 2013 finalists.

**Accessibility of community facilities**

- The Community Services Directorate continues to offer the Community Support and Infrastructure Grants to fund projects that support community sector viability; provide for community inclusion; assist small organisations to access information technology resources or improve the environmental sustainability of facilities. Read more about the grant and grant recipients.

- In late 2013, artsACT commenced discussions with EnableCanberra to review the ACT Government’s arts facilities for inclusion on the EnableCanberra website ([www.enablecanberra.com](http://www.enablecanberra.com)). The website was initially developed with Centenary of Canberra funding to provide accessibility information about venues for people with access needs. The EnableCanberra website receives over 1,000 visits each month and is a useful planning tool to assist people with information about a venue’s accessibility before visiting it.

- Ainslie Arts Centre will be reviewed in 2015 following upgrades to the centre, scheduled to commence shortly. The review for Gorman House Arts Centre may also be updated at this time, to take into account upgrades to Gorman House.

- Upgrades to the Street Theatre were completed in 2013 and include improved foyer space and new seating and box office, providing better access for all members of the community.

- Tuggeranong Arts Centre upgrades were finished in 2013. The work includes new gallery space, a new foyer and the provision of a lift. It improves the accessibility of the centre and provides better opportunities for community members of all abilities to use the facility.

- In 2012 the Belconnen Arts Centre was recognised at the Chief Minister's Inclusion Award as an excellent example of a community facility that has been successfully designed for people with disability in mind. The Belconnen Arts Centre was opened in 2009 and is a multi-purpose arts facility designed to maximise accessibility for people with a disability. The
facility has no steps, and has a hearing loop and LCD screens which include captions for hearing impaired visitors. The Centre’s programing is designed to maximise access for people with a disability as audience members and artists.

Disability awareness training

- Disability ACT has carried out disability awareness training for teams from different community organisations and ACT Government directorates, including staff from the Bimberri Youth Justice Centre, Disability ACT, ACT Ambulance Officers, Australian Federal Police Force, Legal Aid, Greening Australia and The Canberra Hospital, as well as graduate medical students from Monash University.

- The Community Development Officer has delivered training to government and community service support staff as part of the CSD training schedule, and across a number of ACT schools.

- The Disability Professionals Learning Network (DPLN) works collaboratively to provide Disability Support Workers in the ACT with opportunities to enhance networks through the sharing of knowledge, ideas, resources and training. The DPLN also ran the Disability Support Worker Awards from 2008-2013. In March and April 2014, ACT’s Professional Learning and Development Network held two information sessions about the NDIS. These sessions were targeted to direct support workers.

- A disability awareness training module was developed with Capital Careers in 2013 and has been utilised as a training tool in 2014. It will be available on the Disability ACT website in 2015.

- REBUS Forum Theatre is a mixed abilities ensemble initially funded under an Innovations grant that is highly inclusive and an appropriate way to explore key concepts relating to inclusion of people with disability. It is theatre with a social benefit and a skills benefit for the participants as well as the audience.

- Forum Theatre involving people with disability has not previously been done in Canberra. REBUS developed two shows about the challenges around disability awareness which was well attended. View REBUS’ promotional video to find out more about Forum Theatre as an education tool.

Increased range of partnerships delivering inclusive community, sporting, and recreation activities

Arts

- In December 2010, Disability ACT supported the Human Rights Commission and the ACT Community Arts Office to screen Beautiful, a Canberra made short film about love and acceptance made by people with and without disability in collaboration with award winning Director Genevieve Clay. Beautiful was created through the Through a Different Lens Project; an inclusive film making project inspired by Melbourne's the Other Film Festival,
which presents new cinema by, with and about people with disability. Read about the other film festival here.

- In 2013, the Other Film Festival was invited to present a “best short films” program at the United Nations in New York. It was a 60 minute program screened at the Sixth Conference of Signatories to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability. The movie Beautiful was selected to screen as part of this.

- **Mirrorball** was a documentary filmed in October 2011 and produced and edited in 2012. Families and young people with disability were filmed talking about disability and relationships. An advanced screening was held in August 2012. DVDs were produced and distributed as resources to create discussion about disability and sexuality. The final DVD was released in March 2013 and is available through Sexual Health and Family Planning and Disability ACT.

- **Mirrorball** prompted work on developing a draft Disability Relationships and Sexuality Policy template that was circulated to community service organisations and Disability ACT. The policy template provides a framework for disability specific services to develop their own policies either by adopting or modifying the template, or using it as a guide for considering the issues in the context of staff professional development, or governance and risk management. The template is available through Sexual Health and Family Planning or Disability ACT.

- In 2012 the ACT Government released the ACT Arts Policy Framework. A key principle of the Framework is to facilitate community participation in and access to the arts. A key focus is in facilitating in-house and outreach programs, activities and events that foster social inclusiveness and engagement among those in the community most at risk, particularly people with a disability and those most vulnerable. Visit the Community Cultural Inclusion website.

- The Community Cultural Inclusion Program administers the ACT component of the Regional Arts Fund (RAF). Between 2009 and 2012 approximately one third of ACT RAF funding was allocated to dedicated disability arts projects. Activities include:
  - **Visible/Invisible**, an aromatic painting workshops offering ‘sensory painting’ at Amaroo School.
  - In July 2014 the Tuggeranong Arts Centre, through the Community Cultural Inclusion Program and the Canberra Blind Society presented **Touch**, a tactile art installation at the Courtyard Studio, Canberra Theatre Centre. Read more about the Tuggeranong Arts Centre and Touch.
  - In 2012 the Canberra Symphony Orchestra community project **HeartStrings** teamed with Cochlear to offer a series of concerts in the Canberra region for the hearing impaired to experience a full orchestra. Read more about the project.
  - The Belconnen Arts Centre hosts an annual exhibition for artists with a disability to coincide International Day of People with Disability.
• In 2014 Black Mountain School participated in its 11th consecutive season of the Youth Dance Festival. Black Mountain School has participated in the festival since 2004, alongside almost all ACT Government high schools and colleges. The Youth Dance Festival, an initiative of Ausdance, is a non-competitive celebration of dance encouraging creativity, team work, building relationships and understanding differences.

• The ACT Government continues to support a number of Key Arts Organisations including the Belconnen Arts Centre, Canberra Potters Society, Music For Everyone, PhotoAccess, Tuggeranong Arts Centre, Warehouse Circus, Megalo Print Studio and the Canberra Symphony Orchestra to provide programs for artists and community members with a disability to access and participate in arts activities. The ACT Arts Fund continues to support arts projects for individual artists with a disability, as well as organisations providing arts opportunities for people with a disability.

• In February 2014 the Australia Council, in conjunction with artsACT held an information session at the Belconnen Arts Centre on its new funding program for artists with disability. In its inaugural funding round two ACT artists were successful in receiving grants in this category.

**Sporting**

• The ACT Government continues to assist ACT sport and recreation providers and clubs to increase their capacity to provide participation opportunities for people with disability. In 2013, the ACT Government’s Sports and Recreation Grants Program supported sailing boats for the Buoyed Up program, table tennis tables for the developing ACT Table Tennis Disability program and support for 25 para-athletes in the Athletics ACT Junior Talent Squad.

• Disability ACT provided in-kind and administrative support to the biennial INAS Conference and General Assembly which was held in Canberra in April 2011. INAS is the International Sports Federation for athletes with an intellectual disability. 55 delegates from 24 countries attended the event in Canberra. [Read more about INAS.](#)

**Connect and participate expo**

• The inaugural Connect and Participate (CAP) Expo was held on 29 March 2014 at Kingston Markets. More than 6,000 Canberrans attended. They were entertained by a range of groups, including choirs, dancers, performing artists, ancient arts fellowship, bands, storytellers and ukulele groups to name a few. More than 90 stalls were at the Expo.

• While the event was for all Canberrans to enjoy it was estimated that approximately 20% of Expo patrons had a disability, making the Expo a truly inclusive community event.

• The CAP Expo was organised by Disability ACT’s Community Development Team, with financial and organisational support from Belconnen Community Service, Northside Community Service, Woden Community Service, Disability ACT and the ACT NDIS Taskforce.

• Following the success of this year’s CAP Expo, another CAP Expo is planned for March 2015.
Click here for a full list of participating groups at the CAP Expo.

Click here for photos from the CAP Expo on Facebook.

**Boundless All Abilities Playground**

- Boundless Canberra is the name given to the Centenary of Canberra National Playground, Canberra's first all-abilities playground in the national capital precinct.

- Boundless Canberra is arguably Australia’s premier all-abilities playground, located on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin and stage one was officially opened on 11 October 2014.

- Boundless is a gift to Canberra and the nation’s children. A gift from the public servants of Canberra as a demonstration of the spirit of service that underpins the ACT and Australian Public Service ethos, and a gift from the private sector that have helped build Canberra over the past 100 years.

- With the first stage of Boundless now complete, a new chapter is beginning in the Boundless story. Being able to play in a space such as Boundless will enable all children to interact socially with others, develop a sense of well-being and improve their muscle strength and coordination, language, cognitive thinking and reasoning abilities. Read more about Boundless.

**Nican Know Before you Go toolkit & phone app**

- Nican’s ‘Know Before You Go’ toolkit (KBYG) was launched in October 2011 to increase the confidence and inclusion of people with disability. It has been distributed to several sporting and employment agencies and the community. An extension project is also underway in Queensland, supported by the Queensland Department of Communities and Inclusion Works.

- Workshops on the use of the Toolkit were held at the DISH throughout 2012 and 2013. After its initial development, KBYG has been taken up by the Canberra community sector. Nican has run five learning circles for people with disability and as train-the-trainer opportunities. These learning circles ran for two hours a week over six weeks, and have helped around 60 people acquire the skills to build confidence in themselves and others. Read more about the toolkit.

- Nican also developed a geospatial smartphone application which allows people with disability to locate around 4,000 mostly mainstream sport, recreation, arts, equipment, services, supports and other community participation opportunities at a swipe of a smartphone. The app was an idea developed and co-designed by people with disability. It avoids disability jargon, uses simple language and invites people to ask ‘where can I find...’ a place to stay, travel and tourism, things to do, people who can help, where something is. To date the app has 400 users.
The app is located in the App Store under the Lifestyle category. To download the app search for ‘Nican’ or apps beginning with ‘N’ under Lifestyle. The app is optimised for iPhone5.

Everyone Everyday program

- The Everyone Everyday disability awareness program is a teaching resource for primary schools. The program promotes inclusion and the important role each individual has in taking action to create inclusive communities. The primary school resource, which is linked to the Australian Curriculum, consists of 35 lessons, comprehensive teacher notes and additional classroom and whole school resources.

- Read more about the Everyone Everyday program.

- 12 primary schools have been involved in the program (either the trial or delivering the final version). It has been commended by peak body Children with Disability Australia.

- 236 teachers have participated in the professional development sessions (which are Teacher Quality Institute accredited).

- Approximately 3,000 primary students have participated in the program.

- In addition, in term 4 of 2014, 30 secondary school staff received professional development through the Everyone, Everyday high school trial. The 30 secondary school students trialling the program will be performing forum theatre for their school communities with a view to raising awareness of students contributing to inclusive school communities.

- Two books which form part of the Everyone, Everyday program were published in December 2013. The first book Being Me, Being You is a picture book about valuing difference which is utilised as a kindergarten teaching resource. The second book, 101 Ways to Include People with Disability is a student inspired book full of creative ways to ensure people with disability are welcomed and valued. Proceeds from book sales continue to support the Boundless All Abilities Playground in Canberra.

Leadership and self advocacy

- Disability ACT has supported leadership development and community capacity building by:

  - Sponsoring four young people with disability to attend the Julia Farr Youth Conference for young people with disability in Adelaide in April 2014.

  - Sponsoring 20 people with disability and families to attend the ImagineMORE An Ordinary Life conference in November 2013.

  - Funding a Leadership Program for people with disability, which supports 11 people with disability to have their voice heard and to contribute to the community.

- The Leadership Group, being coordinated by the Community Development Team has met three actions under ‘Develop Future Leaders’ in the Community Development Plan. The
The Leadership group is made up of graduates of the Leadership course, which was delivered in partnership with Capital Careers at the end of 2013. The Leadership group has provided valuable information to Housing ACT and the ‘Better Services’ section of the Strategic Reform and Governance. Initiatives being implemented by the Community Development Team have resulted in people with disability leading courses and one person gaining part-time employment as a result.

- The Emerging Leaders Better Practice Guide has been developed to foster leadership in the disability sector. It was distributed to 50 organisations that operate in the ACT disability sector, members of the Community Sector Reform Group and several community sector peak bodies in January 2014. The Guide has been incorporated into the Community Sector Reform Project Team’s workshops with community organisations in 2014. Read the Guide.

- Advocacy for Inclusion run a range of self-advocacy sessions including men’s self-advocacy, nutrition and self-advocacy, women’s self-advocacy, and supporting self-advocacy workshops. Peer-to-peer network membership has grown from 15 to 33 with one to two participants from each course indicating interest in joining the Self-Advocacy group.

- Advocacy for Inclusion run the group twice a week with two employed Self-Advocate co-facilitators. The role of the Self-Advocate has led to an increase in attendance. Three of the Self-Advocates were also guest speakers at the supported self-advocacy workshops. The group also participate in one of the National Zero Tolerance focus groups, discussing violence and safety for people with disabilities. Advocacy for Inclusion have also produced a Self-Advocacy Toolkit, Voting Information Pack and a DVD about Self-Advocacy. Click here to access Advocacy for Inclusion’s resources.

- The ACT Government allocated NDIS sector development funding in 2013 and 2014 to assist people with disability to prepare for the NDIS. A number of projects were funded to strengthen awareness of NDIS through community gatherings and targeted conversations. This included funding for Digital Story Telling, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readiness, capacity building for families and community conversations ($275,000). It also included work to develop networks, a peer workforce and training package for people with psychosocial disabilities ($88,000).
Strategic Priority 4 – I want to know what I need to know

To develop the strategic framework for Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014 we consulted with the community and you told us that you wanted:

- I am provided with clear information on the services and support options available.
- I can find my way through the system and know who to contact to get the things – services, supports and equipment – that I need.

Highlights

- The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a major reform that is changing the lives of people with disability, their families and carers. The National Disability Insurance Agency will act as a single contact point for people with disability to access information referral and planning services. Read more about how the ACT is preparing for the NDIS at Community Services Directorate website or visit the NDIS website at www.ndis.gov.au.

- $7.7 million in Enhanced Service Offer (ESO) grants were allocated to respond to priority unmet need and assist people with disabilities to prepare for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Read more about the ESO on the ACT NDIS Taskforce website.

- The ACT Government is committed to making its website accessible to as many people as possible and is working towards complying with AA accessibility checkpoints as defined in the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0. Read more about web accessibility on CSD’s website.

- In 2010 Disability ACT developed a Communication and Marketing strategy to improve the access of people with disability to information. Read the marketing plan.

- The launch of the Disability Information Support Hub (DISH) in February 2012. Read more about the DISH on CSD’s website.

- The NDIS Taskforce have provided fortnightly updates on the NDIS to its database of approximately 800 contacts including people with disability, families and service providers.

- Since 2010, the ACT Government has been funding Contact Canberra Community Information to provide advocacy, information and referral and other support services. Visit the Contact Canberra website.

- In 2010-2011, Disability ACT developed a range of resources including the Access Resource Guide and Engaging Canberrans guide.

- The National Disability Insurance Agency will act as a single contact point for people with disability to access information referral and planning services. Visit the NDIS website.

- The One Human Services Gateway opened on 1 July 2014. The Gateway provides a single access point for people to find out about a range of supports and services, receive initial
support and advice, receive a collaborative service response and where required receive a single integrated response from multiple services. Read the Human Services Blueprint on CSD’s website.

Key achievements

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

- The ACT was one of the first jurisdictions to sign up to the NDIS. We did so to provide certainty to all those living with a disability and to those who care for them.

- The NDIS is a new way of funding individualised support for people with disability (including psychosocial disability) that involves more choice and control and a lifetime approach to a person’s support needs.

- The ACT NDIS Taskforce was established with responsibility for the strategic policy and planning for the design and implementation for the NDIS in Canberra. An Expert Panel was appointed to provide strategic advice to the Taskforce on issues affecting people with disability, their families and carers.

- The NDIS trial began in the ACT on 1 July 2014 and people will gradually transition into the scheme over a two year period. Around 5,075 people with disability in the ACT will be covered by the NDIS when it is rolled out to all participants. The ACT will be the first jurisdiction in Australia to accept all eligible residents into the scheme by July 2016.

- The Commonwealth and ACT governments are investing $21.8 million to prepare the ACT disability sector and people with disabilities for the NDIS. Read more information about the NDIS on the Community Services Directorate website or visit the NDIS website at www.ndis.gov.au.

- $7.7 million was allocated for Enhanced Service Offer (ESO) grants to assist people with disability, including psychosocial disability, to prepare for the NDIS. Grants were offered for: aids, equipment and minor modifications to a person’s home or vehicle; quality of life; or for flexible supports. There were 1,456 people offered a grant from approximately 2,500 different people who applied across the two rounds. Further grant offers were made as unexpended grant funding became available.

- A range of resources were made available in 2014 to support the community sector to prepare for the NDIS. This included access to the NDIS Readiness Toolkit developed by the National Disability Services ($90,000 was committed to enable up to 60 providers to access this tool); 25 organisations received Governance and Financial Management Packages (totalling $500,000) and 20 organisations received Business Investment Package (totalling $1 million). Read more about tools to assist community service providers under the NDIS.
Communication strategy – whole of government initiatives to accessibility online

- At a whole of government level, all directorates have, or are, implementing a common look to websites that improves consistency while also reducing the incidents of accessibility errors through technical developments. This makes visiting and navigating ACT Government websites easier for those people using assistive technologies.

- All levels of government, federal, state and local, have embraced the Web Accessibility National Transition Strategy (NTS) that mandates the adoption of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2.0 (WCAG 2.0) and have made public statements and progress to that affect.

- The ACT Government is committed to making its website accessible to as many people as possible and is endeavouring to meet AA accessibility checkpoints as defined in the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0. This commitment applies only to the ACT Government website and not to websites that are linked from our pages. Compliance with web accessibility is an ongoing process which we are regularly working to improve.

- The ACT Government is committed to making website content available to all users, particularly those with disabilities including visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, and neurological disabilities. It includes making a website as accessible as possible regardless of browsing technology, i.e. for people with text-only web browsers and old browser versions.

Information provision

- In 2010 Disability ACT developed a Communication and Marketing strategy that outlined how Disability ACT would work with the community to improve the access of people with disability to information about self help resources, supports, services, research, inclusive community groups, activities and events. Read the marketing plan.

- The launch of the Disability Information Support Hub (DISH) in February 2012. The DISH provides a place for community and government services to co-locate and collaborate, making locating and accessing information easier for clients and their families. Read more about the DISH.

- In 2013-14 the Disability Information Service will have responded to over 2,650 documented enquiries from members of the community as well as public and private organisations. This is an increase of over 600 enquiries from last year. Trends in the nature of information requested have assisted Disability ACT to target its communication. Common inquiries have included:
  - The launch of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in the ACT and the Enhanced Service Offer grants.
  - Funding provided through Disability ACT, in particular the Innovation and Quality of Life Grants and changes made to grants as a result of the Enhanced Service Offer.
- Linking into respite, community access, accommodation and community support.

- In 2013-14, Disability ACT provided information to people with disability and the community through a range of methods, including: information stalls at NAIDOC on the Peninsula in July 2013; Post School Options Expo in July 2013; Multicultural Festival in February 2014; and the Connect and Participate Expo in March 2014.

- The NDIS Taskforce have provided fortnightly updates on the NDIS to its database of approximately 800 contacts including people with disability, families and service providers. They have also been involved in more than 80 engagement opportunities with people with disability, families and service providers since January 2014.

- Disability ACT hosted three information sessions for families and guardians of people living in Disability ACT Supported Accommodation. The sessions were also open to families and guardians of other supported accommodation service providers in the ACT.

- The information sessions focused on providing information to families on the NDIS and its impact on services and individuals. The Minister for Disability Children and Young People attended on 3 April 2014 when the decision on the role of government as service provider was announced. In addition, a special session was held with the Business Council of Cooperatives and Mutuals to provide information to families who may be exploring setting up cooperatives or other innovative employment mechanisms.

- An Early Intervention and Therapy Services Expo was held on 13 September 2014 to enable people with disability and development delay, and their families, to find out about the range of early intervention and therapy services they would be able to access under the NDIS from 2015. Around 50 providers were present at the Expo. Read more about early intervention and the NDIS.

- Since 2010, the ACT Government has been funding Contact Canberra Community Information (CCCI) to provide advocacy, information and referral and other support services. CCCI provides free, confidential, impartial and up to date information, referral and support to the ACT community and government services. Visit the Contact Canberra website.

- In 2010-2011, Disability ACT developed a range of resources including the Access Resource Guide and Engaging Canberrans Guide. The Access Resource Guide provides practical tips and online resources to assist with increasing understanding of the barriers that confront people with disability and provides simple strategies to be more inclusive and human rights compliant. Engaging Canberrans – a guide to communicating and engaging with people with disability provides guidance to ACT Government employees to ensure that events and communications are accessible and inclusive.

**No wrong doors approach is now being progressed by the NDIA**

- The NDIS is a major reform that is changing the lives of people with disability, their families and carers. It gives people more choice and control over their disability supports and
services and help participants increase their independence and social participation. The National Disability Insurance Agency will act as a single contact point for people with disability to access information and referral and planning services.

One Human Services Gateway (1HSG)

- The One Human Services Gateway (1HSG) commenced on 1 July 2014 to improve access to information and support in relation to child, youth and family, disability, housing and homelessness programs and services. The Gateway provides a single access point for people to find out about a range of supports and services, receive initial support and advice, receive a collaborative service response, and where required receive a single integrated response from multiple services.

- The Gateway will work to build collaboration between those service partners that work with common clients to deliver a more integrated, targeted, holistic and person-centred support to service users. The Gateway aims to respond to the needs of vulnerable people through the service continuum – from universal and targeted (early intervention) to integrated service offers.

- The first phase of the integrated service model will be provided to families and young people with complex needs, including vulnerable families with a family member who has a disability and young people with a disability. This integrated service model will see government and community providers using a common assessment process and tools to jointly assess and target the allocation of resources. This approach will seek to increase access to case-coordination and assistance for families and young people with complex needs, without having to tell their story multiple times.

- To find out more drop into the Gateway at Nature Conservation House, Corner Benjamin Way and Emu Bank, Belconnen between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

- If you have comments or questions about how the Blueprint can make a difference in the lives of Canberrans, please email HumanServicesBlueprint@act.gov.au or visit the Human Services Blueprint website.
Strategic Priority 5 – I want to tell my story once

To develop the strategic framework for Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014 we consulted with the community and you told us that you wanted:

- I control who knows what about me and my family through a central information point, and others will assist me to provide it to relevant agencies at necessary times.
- There is a common point that collects information about my needs.

Highlights

- Digital Story Telling used as a tool to tell my story once: Click here to access the digital stories on CSD’s website.
- Launch and pilot of the Human Services Blueprint, a whole of system reform agenda which will guide the ACT Government’s decisions about how human services are delivered. Read about the Blueprint on CSD’s website.
- The Strengthening Families Project has been designed to improve the effectiveness of the ACT service system. Read the final report and access videos here.
- The Strengthening Families initiative has been extended in 2014-15 to support up to 50 families in the ACT with multiple needs. Read more about Strengthening Families on CSD’s website.
- Disability ACT has developed the Principle Based Supported Accommodation Framework which includes public information sessions and workshops, an innovative housing unit to explore innovative development opportunities, and the development of a web based information sharing portal.
- Use of the Personal Outcomes Measures (POMS) Tool developed by the Council of Quality Leadership (CQL) to assess individual’s quality of life from their own point of view. Visit CQL’s website.
- Disability ACT funded the development and delivery of Local Area Coordination (LAC) services in Woden, Gungahlin, Belconnen and Weston Creek. Read more about Local Area Coordination at Belconnen Community Services website. Read more about Local Area Coordinators and the principles and obligations that guide their work with the NDIA.

Key achievements

Digital Story Telling

- The project provided an opportunity for the young people to capture their own unique stories in a short 3-5 minute video. Participants reflected on their skills, characteristics,
interests and dreams. The audio-visual snapshot can assist each young person with the goal of ‘telling my story once’. It can also be used as an introductory tool for prospective employers, involvement in activities and connecting with community. Click here to access the digital stories.

Human Services Blueprint launch and pilot

○ In 2013 -14 the ACT Government worked with the community sector to co-design the Human Services Blueprint. The Blueprint is a whole of system reform agenda which will guide the ACT Government’s decisions about how human services are delivered over the coming years to enable them to better meet the needs of all people in the ACT, including people with disability. The Blueprint is designed to shape services so they are simple, respectful, easy to navigate, coordinated and matched to people’s actual needs. The reform agenda outlined in the Blueprint was designed to be consistent with Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014.

○ The Blueprint commenced rolling-out in 2014 with the introduction of three Human Services Blueprint flagship initiatives. These three initiatives have one common aim – to ensure that people are supported with the right service, at the right time and for the right duration.

- **Local Services Network in West Belconnen** which will roll out new ways to better integrate local services, including local governance, flexible funding arrangements, enhanced service coordination, and data sharing.

- **Strengthening Families initiative** will work with up to 50 vulnerable families to develop and implement an agreed family plan, supported by a tailored support package to meet their particular requirements.

- **One Human Services Gateway** will establish a service hub for people to improve access to information and self-support options, and link individuals and families into more intensive and tailored support where required.

○ The Local Services Network in West Belconnen is currently being established to road test important elements of how services will be provided across the human services sector under the Blueprint. The network will commence early in 2015. The focus will be on seeing how place-based services, local governance, data sharing and flexible funding arrangements can work. It is anticipated that new models that emerge from this initiative will assist people, including people with disability, to benefit from access to easily accessible, coordinated services. This will provide a creative and flexible way of meeting people’s needs at the local level and enhance community connections and networks of support.

○ The Better Services Team engaged with people with disability in the design of the Local Services Network to ensure that services respond to their needs. Feedback from the consultations will be incorporated into the design which will be finalised for endorsement by the Better Services Taskforce in December 2014.

○ To find out more about the Local Services Network Launch or to become involved please email the Better Services Team on betterservices@act.gov.au or call 6205 5174.
**Strengthening Families project**

- Strengthening Families is an across government intensive service initiative for families with multiple and complex needs. The new service involves identification and referral of families currently engaged with multiple services who are not achieving positive progress. Families are referred to the initiative through their service provider and matched with a lead worker from within their existing support network.

- The Strengthening Families initiative has been extended in 2014-15 to support up to 50 families in the ACT with multiple needs. In 2012-13, 50% of families involved in the piloting of the initiative had a family member/s with disability. Through Strengthening Families, assistance is provided to develop and implement an agreed family plan, supported by a tailored support package.

- The program assists families to coordinate their supports and to get the help they need without having to repeat their story multiple times. A Family Information Profile is currently being developed to enable families to tell their story once, capture and own that story, and share the story with people important to them.

- The Strengthening Families approach has been independently evaluated by the University of Canberra as reflecting international best practice. [Read the Strengthening Families evaluation.](#)

- To find out more about the Strengthening Families Program please email the Better Services Team on betterservices@act.gov.au or call 6205 5174.

**Principle Based Supported Accommodation Framework**

- Under the Principle Based Supported Accommodation Framework (the Framework) Disability ACT has been working in partnership with Housing ACT to explore housing options for people with disability. The key initiatives under the Framework are:
  - community consultations
  - the Innovative Housing Unit (IHU)
  - the development of an online Accommodation Portal.

- Community consultation on the Framework and the IHU was conducted in March and April 2014 on the Time to Talk website. Four detailed written submissions were received; each submission offered general support for the Framework and its initiatives.

- The IHU assists individuals and community members to progress their ideas and plans for innovative accommodation options. The IHU was piloted in October 2013, and has since provided feedback on various proposed housing ventures. In the future the panel plans to assess the specifications of an online Accommodation Portal.

- The Accommodation Portal seeks to be a one stop accessible web-based location for information and opportunities for people with disability who are seeking to live in the
Canberra region. The portal will offer people with disability control and choice about who they choose to live with and where they choose to live. This tool is currently under development and review with the Innovative Housing Unit members.

**Personal Outcome Measures**

- In 2010-2011 Disability ACT commenced implementing Personalised Outcome Measures (POMs), an outcomes measurement tool developed by the Council on Quality and Leadership which enables agencies to assess the quality of the life of the people who use their services from the person’s own view point. Disability ACT over the years has worked with Community Agencies to adopt this tool to enhance their own quality framework. Visit CQL’s website.

**Local Area Coordinators (LAC)**

- Disability ACT established funding for two LAC programs operating in the Belconnen and Woden areas in 2007-08. These LAC’s were briefed to engage with 120 people with disabilities and their families to help them identify their own needs and to identify the supports they require reach their identified goals. By walking alongside people; providing accurate and timely information; and on occasion advocating for individuals the LAC’s assisted people with disabilities to engage with and access both formal supports and appropriate mainstream services.
- The NDIS model includes the role of Local Area Coordinators as central to the work of the agency. The NDIA employs Local Area Coordinators (or Plan Support Coordinators) to ensure the local community is more inclusive and to ensure people with disability are linked to community life.
- A central role of the LAC is to help people with disability, including those who do not become participants, to be linked up in the community and to assist to coordinate the supports they receive through the NDIS and the supports they receive outside the NDIS.
- Read more about Local Area Coordinators and the principles and obligations that guide their work with the NDIA.

**Strategic Priority 6 – I want a quality service system**

To develop the strategic framework for Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014 we consulted with the community and you told us that you wanted:

- I want a service system that responds to my needs and the needs of my family.
- I want a service system that continuously improves by asking me if it provides programs that suit my life and goals.
**Highlights**

- The ACT Inclusion Council’s Access Plus program has been designed to assist organisations to build an accessible service. Visit the [ACT Inclusion Council website](#).

- Commencement of the Disability Confidence Canberra speaking circuit to raise awareness about people with disability within businesses and local community groups. [Read more about Disability Confidence Canberra at ACT Inclusion website](#).

- Commencement of the *Official Visitors Act 2012*. Two Official Visitors were appointed to visit up to 137 visitable places and take complaints providing a safeguard for people with disability. [Read more about the Official Visitor on CSD’s website](#).

- The Mental Health (Treatment and Care) Bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly during May 2014 and supports a ‘recovery’ approach to mental health service provision, which aims to improve the participation of people with mental illness in the community.

- Launch of the ACT Government ACT Carers Charter in October 2011 to raise community awareness about community members who have caring roles. [Read more about Caring for Carers on CSD’s website](#).

- Launch of the ACT Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children Strategy 2011–2017 on 22 August 2011. [Read more on CSD’s website](#).

- ACT Law Reform Advisory Council inquiry into operation of *Discrimination Act 1991* and review of *Guardianship and Property Management Act 1991*. [Read more about these inquiries on the Justice and Community Safety website](#).

- A funded pilot of supported-decision making undertaken by ADACAS. [Read more about supported decision making on the ADACAS website](#).

- Development of an online decision making tool to assist people with intellectual disability with their decision making. [Find the online tool here](#).

- The Community Service Directorate has released its Workforce Development Strategy. Workforce planning for the disability sector is part of the strategy.

- Provision of funding support to organisations, to enable them to provide ‘equal pay for equal work’ consistent with the Equal Remuneration Case.

- Governments have agreed to the development of a national approach to quality and safeguards as part of the NDIS.

- The *Disability Services (Disability Service Providers) Amendment Act 2014* was passed in June 2014 and maintains existing safeguards and quality standards for disability services under the ACT NDIS trial.

- Introduction of the *Working with Vulnerable People Act 2011*, requiring all people who have contact with vulnerable people, including people with disability, while engaged in regulated
activities and services to register with the Office of Regulatory Services (ORS). Read more at the Office of Regulatory Services website.

- Revised National Standards for Disability Services endorsed in December 2013. Read the new national standards.

### Key achievements

#### ACT Inclusion Council access tools

- The ACT Government in partnership with the ACT Inclusion Council (formerly Business Leaders Innovative Thoughts and Solutions or BLITS) has integrated the BLITS Access Recognition Program into Disability Confidence Canberra, a new integrated speaking and education program. This program provides a Disability Confidence Canberra Information Handbook which provides business, government agencies, community organisations and local communities a toolkit for becoming more disability confident (or accessible). Disability Confidence Canberra also offers organisations who want to take it further the chance to be part of a fee paying intensive disability confidence experience. The Access Plus program has been designed to assist organisations to build an accessible service. This program is in the process of being rolled out.

#### Disability Confidence Canberra speaking program

- The ACT Government, Nican and ACT Inclusion Council (formerly BLITS) introduced Disability Confidence Canberra a new speaking program to equip business, government agencies, community organisations and local communities to understand disability. Speakers provide information and practical tools to improve access and inclusion for people with disability. Read more about Disability Confidence Canberra at ACT Inclusion website.

### Rights of people with disability

#### Disability Official Visitor

- The Official Visitor is part of a suite of safeguards for people with disability in the ACT and provides an improved monitoring and complaints system for people with disability in relation to support provided by government funded facilities.

- Following the commencement of the Official Visitors Act 2012 on 1 September 2013 one Official Visitor was appointed to February 2014 to undertake visits. From 1 March 2014, two Official Visitors were appointed for 12 months to continue visits and to receive complaints. During the reporting period, Disability ACT worked closely with the Official Visitors to develop operational guidelines for visits and complaints processes.

- There are approximately 137 visitable places under the Official Visitor Scheme for Disability Services. Visitable places include government and non government supported accommodation services, respite services for people with disability and residential aged care
facilities accommodating people with disability under 65 years in the ACT. The Official
Visitors, Ms Sue Salthouse and Ms Narelle Hargreaves, have visited over half the visitable
places.

- Visits and Complaints guidelines have been developed to support the role and functions of
  the Disability Official Visitor. The Guidelines are available here.

- Disability ACT engaged ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS) to
  produce awareness tools for the disability services component of the ACT Official Visitor
  scheme to increase community awareness of safeguards available to people with disability
  in the ACT. The Toolkit was launched in August 2014 and is available here.

- Read more about the Official Visitor Or visit the Public Trustee website.

Mental Health (Treatment and Care) Act

- The review of the Mental Health (Treatment and Care) Act 1994 has been underway since
  2006. The Bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly during May 2014 and supports a
  ‘recovery’ approach to mental health service provision, which aims to improve the
  participation of people with mental illness in the community. Consistent with the recovery
  approach, the interpretation of the Mental Health (Treatment and Care) Act 1994 under the
  Bill is based on the decision-making capacity of people with mental illness and/or disorders.
  This is outlined in the objects of the Bill and the new definition of ‘decision making capacity’.

Carers charter

- The ACT Government launched the ACT Carers Charter in October 2011 to raise community
  awareness about community members who have caring roles. The Charter consists of five
  core principles that focus on ensuring carers are engaged, supported and able to achieve
  quality-of-life in line with community standards. Read the Carers Charter.

- Establishment of the Carers Advocacy Service delivered by Carers ACT in 2011. Read more
  about the Carers Advocacy Service.

Justice and Community Safety initiatives

- The ACT Attorney General is reviewing statutory oversight bodies in the ACT. An
  independent consultant has provided a report and statutory office holders have provided
  further feedback. The ACT Attorney General is now examining potential structures further to
  the report and the views of the statutory office holders.

- The ACT Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children Strategy 2011–2017 was
  launched on 22 August 2011. The strategy identifies women with disability as a vulnerable
  group, and has listed key short term actions to:

  - Build on the work of the Women with Disabilities Accessing Crisis Services report
    undertaken by the Women’s Centre for Health Matters, Domestic Violence Crisis
    Service and Women with Disabilities ACT to increase accessibility and responsiveness
    for women with disability.
- Identify gaps in service provision for specific vulnerable communities such as children, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women with disability, women from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds, young women and older women.

o The Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC) was established under the Domestic Violence Agencies Act 1986. The objective of the DVPC is to reduce the incidence of domestic violence offences. Some of the DVPC’s functions include:
  - Assisting and encouraging agencies and organisations to promote projects and programs aimed at enhancing the safety and security of victims of domestic violence offences.
  - Promoting collaboration among government agencies and non-government organisations involved in law enforcement or the provision of health, education, crisis or welfare services to victims or perpetrators of domestic violence.
  - Collecting statistical and other information relating to domestic violence offences.
  - Advising the Minister on any matter relating to domestic violence.
  - In 2014 the DVPC is hosting a seminar series to provide opportunities for service providers to share information and experiences on specific topics connected to domestic and family violence. The seminars, which are being held at the University of Canberra’s Inspire Centre, focus on:
    - best practice initiatives for culturally and linguistically diverse victims of crime
    - the effects if the intersection of gender and disability discrimination on the incidence and nature of violence against women with disabilities
    - working with LGBTIQ people
    - working with perpetrators of domestic violence.

o The seminars have attracted strong attendance and were successful in bringing together a wide range of stakeholders to discuss unique issues relating to domestic violence.

o In 2014 the Disability and Community Services Commissioner led a project to develop a crisis response protocol to support women with disability experiencing violence. The project drew together partners in both government and the community sector to ensure both the disability support and violence related needs of women were met. A stakeholder based working group developed a paper tabled in the Legislative Assembly in August 2014. The Paper provides the framework for responding to women with disability experiencing violence.

o After a period of extensive research, the ACT Law Reform Advisory Council (LRAC) released a community consultation paper for public consultation on the scope and operation of the Discrimination Act 1991. It discussed alternative approaches taken in Australia and overseas. It considered the effect of possible changes and asked a number of questions about how the
Act should continue to operate. LRAC invited submissions on this paper for six weeks to 13 June 2014. LRAC also held five community forums at community centres across Canberra. 14 written submissions were received and have been considered by LRAC. The council is finalising its report.

○ In 2014 the ACT Attorney General requested the LRAC undertake an inquiry into the terms and operation of the Guardianship and Management of Property Act 1991 to ensure that the Act reflects best practice in guardianship law relating to adults. The review will include consideration of:

- The impact of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other international human rights instruments, on principles for guardianship and management of property in the ACT.


- Current policy trends in the area of guardianship and substitute decision-making in the ACT.

○ The Council will report to the Attorney General on its findings in 2015.

Decision making and choice by people with disability

○ In June 2012 grant funding of $50,000 was made available to two community organisations, Advocacy for Inclusion (AFI) and Aged and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS) to build the capacity and capability of people with disability. AFI undertook research on self-advocacy models for people, and developed a report ‘Ask me I make my own decisions’. ADACAS undertook to research and trial supported-decision making models of self-advocacy for people with disability, the final report is ‘Spectrums of Support’. Read the reports on the Advocacy for Inclusion website or the ADACAS website.

Workforce Strategy

○ The Community Service Directorate has released its Workforce Development Strategy. Workforce planning for the disability sector is part of the strategy. It provides: a framework for prioritising and managing a holistic approach to workforce development and optimising outcomes and benefits across the organisation; and a systemic approach to managing the size and composition of the workforce and retaining and valuing the workforce, and skilling the workforce.

○ Since its development, the Community Services Directorate’s Workforce Strategy has provided a holistic approach to workforce development, and optimised outcomes and benefits across the organisation. As part of the Directorate’s 2014-15 activities, workforce plans will be integrated into each branch’s work plan. This will ensure that each branch is able to identify its workforce needs, including retaining, valuing and skilling the people they will need in order to meet their objectives.
Disability support workers in government and community organisations are being supported to understand how the NDIS will affect them, so they can better support their clients.

Through the $12.5 million sector development funding ACT Government have been investing in workforce awareness activities. This work has included consultations with stakeholders to raise awareness and improve the provision of information about the NDIS to direct service workers.

National Disability Services (NDS) have also been working to develop the Disability Workforce Innovation Network, which is supporting disability service providers to ensure we have a sustainable workforce here in the ACT.

Red tape reduction and community reform program

- The ACT Government began providing support to eligible community sector organisations for the impact of the community sector equal remuneration case in December 2012. Support in 2014-15 will total approximately $2.3 million. Support will continue to be provided until 2020 for organisations that remain eligible.

- A community sector red-tape reduction program commenced in 2013-14. The program is focused on procurement, contracting and reporting red-tape and initiatives include an extension of the maximum term of funding agreements from three to up to five years, and to contract extensions of up to five years. Some 45% of contractual relationships have been transferred to low risk recurrent grant arrangements, with a significant administrative saving to the community sector. These moves, along with a new relationship management system, simplified audit requirements and reduced financial reporting requirements have led to total annual savings to the community sector of approximately $2.6 million, with further benefits still to be realised.

- A sector development program, funded largely through a levy on community sector funding, has delivered a number of modules including a Governance and Financial Management program worth $20,000 per organisation delivered to more than fifty community sector organisations. Other modules have addressed strategic risk and working with government.

- Programs to strengthen the capacity of the community sector to deliver services to disadvantaged Canberrans will continue through 2015-16. Greater outcomes in the delivery of these programs are being achieved by linking existing programs to the sector development initiatives that support the implementation of the NDIS. Red-tape reduction will continue to be a focus, with new contractual instruments currently under development, tools to support the maintenance of multiple compliance standards being explored, and existing mechanisms, such as the procurement prequalification system, under review.

- Funding programs are being progressively translated from a funding for outputs model to funding for outcomes in conjunction with a supporting change in service contracting, measurement and reporting. This approach will support innovative changes in service delivery designed to more closely match community requirements and will be implemented over a number of years. Additionally, the applicability of innovative social impact funding
models based on purchasing for outcomes, such as social impact bonds, are being actively explored for their potential to be applied in the ACT.

**National Quality Framework – NDIA**

- Governments have agreed to the development of a national approach to quality and safeguards as part of the NDIS. A nationally consistent quality and safeguards framework should mean that people interacting with the NDIS can expect consistent standards and safeguards wherever they live in Australia. Government officials have begun discussions about how the national approach will work and are aiming to present proposals to ministers in late 2014 or early 2015. Until the NDIS is fully implemented, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is using existing State, Territory and Commonwealth quality and safeguarding systems in making decisions regarding the registration of service providers.

**Disability Services (Disability Service Providers) Amendment Act 2014**

- The *Disability Services (Disability Service Providers) Amendment Act 2014* was passed in June 2014 and maintains existing safeguards and quality standards for disability services provided in the ACT during the NDIS trial. The amendments remove the reliance on a funding relationship and ensure that all providers of disability specialist services in the ACT are subject to consistent and transparent process to implement obligations under the Disability Services Act 1991. The amendment also enables the operation of the Disability Official Visitor in the NDIS trial environment.

- The role of the ACT Office of the Human Services Registrar was extended to include responsibility for administering and overseeing the amendments made in 2014 to the *Disability Services Act 1991*. These amendments dovetail with agreements made under the Quality Assurance and Safeguards Working Arrangements about the way in which the ACT will work with the NDIA in relation to new specialist disability service providers seeking registration.

**Working with vulnerable people**

- The *Working with Vulnerable People Act 2011* commenced in the ACT in November 2012. The Act requires people who undertake regulated activities and services for vulnerable people to register with the Office of Regulatory Services. The Act aims to reduce the risk of harm or neglect to vulnerable people in the ACT including people with disability.

- The registration requirement of the Act was phased in over two years and staff and volunteers working with people with disability were required to register prior to 8 November 2014.

- Disability Services Commissions from across Australia strongly endorse the implementation of a national Working with Vulnerable People Framework, to coincide with the rollout of the NDIS, which will be one of the options further explored by COAG.
**National Standards for Disability Services**

- In December 2013 revised National Standards for Disability Services were endorsed. [Read the new national standards.](#)

- Disability ACT worked in partnership with its funded disability providers to implement the revised National Standards. Organisations will continue to provide an annual Self Assessment against the National Standards and undergo external audits until the end of their contracted arrangements.

- In an effort to support the transition to the revised National Standards, organisations had an option in 2013-14 to either self-assess against the existing or revised National Standards. For the 2014-15 reporting period organisations will self-assess against the revised National Standards.