

## Agency Budget Highlights

### Department of Communities

#### New funds to support critical service delivery

The 2009–10 State Budget delivers significant funding for community services as part of the Bligh Government's determination to fund core services.

The Queensland Government is aware of the recent decision to increase wage levels for community sector workers. The Budget includes an extra \$414 million over four years in recognition of both the pressures on funded non-government organisations and the valuable work undertaken by community sector workers.

The State Budget allocation amounts to \$65 million in 2009–10 increasing to \$125 million recurrent funding in 2012–13.

The government is committed to ensure services continue to support dependant and vulnerable clients and, to this end, new funds will be directed, on a priority basis, to non-government organisations that provide direct services to highly dependant clients.

To clarify, funding will be prioritised towards ensuring ongoing service provision for people who are fully supported and dependant on services. This is likely to include, but not be limited to, people who are homeless and reliant on supported accommodation and/or other substantial support, women and children escaping domestic violence, young people requiring 24 hour supervised bail accommodation, children who have suffered abuse and/or neglect and are placed in out-of-home care, people with disabilities and people with a mental illness requiring substantial support to live in the community, young people with a disability exiting the care of the state, and victims of sexual assault requiring an acute response.

Funding will also be provided to maximise services to people who are vulnerable and assisted by services including, but not limited to, people experiencing domestic and family violence, children and families receiving early intervention support, individuals and families at risk of homelessness, young people of high school age who have left or at risk of leaving schooling, children and adults at risk who need specialist therapeutic counselling, and community access and other community based supports for people with a disability.

To enable this maximisation of services to high priority clients, new funds will not be provided to organisations for services that are not directly targeted to clients, or more generic services. This would include representative activities of peak organisations, services providing information and referral to clients and funding for support, advice and training to other organisations or the general public.

The specific details of the types of services that will receive funding is still being finalised and will be further discussed with relevant representative bodies.

An important point to note is that, notwithstanding the prioritisation criteria outlined above, the additional funding will be made available to eligible organisations regardless of their current industrial obligations to comply with these new pay rates. The Government is aware that the new Queensland Community Services and Crisis Award 2008 only applies to a limited category of employers at present but has chosen to allocate its supplementary funding according to this award.

Complementing this new funding are new service improvement measures that will reduce red-tape and increase administrative efficiencies within funded organisations and departments. The introduction of these measures, which will occur over the next twelve to twenty-four months, include:

- streamlined service agreements
- common intake and referral processes
- harmonised quality/licensing systems
- harmonised screening requirements
- funding for output-based service provision and reporting.

As these measures start to take effect, gains will be made in increasing effectiveness of administration effort, reduced duplication, and improved integration in client service provision.

For services assisting vulnerable clients, a higher proportion contribution will be provided in the first year. As the service improvement measures are implemented, there will be a corresponding decrease in the proportion of additional funding made available in the later years for these services.

The Government is aiming to keep the administration of this new funding as simple as possible. Non government organisations will not be required to apply for the additional funding.

Rather, each relevant funding department will determine the allocation of the funding to the non government organisation based on their current grant information and organisations will be advised in writing of the details of additional funding support to be allocated to the organisation and the payment method to be employed. The level of funding provided will depend on the client group the organisation works with and the range of services provided.

Non-government organisations will either receive the funding as an increase to their current grant through regular departmental processes or an initial lump sum before the end of the first quarter of 2009–10 and then as part of the regular funding payments.