

Strong Smart Healthy Green Fair Safe

# Disability Support Policy

## A Social Inclusion Approach



Keep South Australia  
Moving Ahead



South  
Australian  
**Labor**

We believe in the fundamental right of people with a disability to have access to services they need and to have greater control over the decisions that impact on their lives.

To help ensure this, we are developing a more socially inclusive approach to supporting people with a disability, as well as their families and carers.

Our Social Inclusion Board, chaired by Monsignor David Cappo, has been asked to develop a blueprint for the long-term reform of disability services in South Australia.

It is a responsibility this Government takes very seriously.

Since coming to office in 2002, we have increased spending on disability services by 87 per cent, from \$124 million a year when we were first elected to \$233 million in 2008-09.

Last December, we announced an additional \$31 million to be invested in disability services over four years to give families more respite and greater in-home support.

The recent Productivity Commission Report on Government Services showed that we are providing help to a higher proportion of people with a disability than any other State.

We are making sure that children with a disability have greater access to specialised support in local schools, and we are making available equipment needed by adults and children to meet their needs now, and into the future.

This policy details our commitment to build six new special education units to cater for an extra 120 students with a disability, and to provide additional funds to Independent and Catholic schools to support students with a disability.

We will ensure your child with Autism can be diagnosed and get access to critical early intervention services sooner.



We will also clear waiting lists and increase funding for equipment and home modifications for all South Australians with a disability.

Our State has a long and proud history as a champion for social justice issues.

We will further enhance that reputation by investing an additional \$34.75 million to support people with a disability, their families and carers.

It's part of our commitment to deliver a fairer South Australia for everyone in our community.

**Mike Rann**

Premier of South Australia

March 2010

## What This Policy Means For You

If you have a child with a disability, there will be greater access to specialised support in a Special Education Unit at a nearby State school

If you are concerned that your child may have Autism, you will get the assessments and access to support sooner

Students with a disability attending non-government schools will also benefit from extra funds targeted to cater specifically for their needs

Adults and children with a disability who require equipment or home modifications will be able to receive them when they need them with the clearing of waiting lists and with a significant increase in ongoing funding

### ACTION

- ▶ We will build six new special education units for children with a disability on State school grounds to cater for an extra 120 students, creating a network of 26 units in South Australian schools
- ▶ Two of these units will have a specialist focus on Autism Spectrum Disorders, becoming centres of best practice in ASD learning
- ▶ Expand the Big Buddy Scheme to bring more students with a disability into contact with students in mainstream classes
- ▶ We will provide extra funds to Independent and Catholic schools to support students with a disability
- ▶ With an additional investment of \$1 million per year families will be able to get assessments and access to services sooner
- ▶ To clear waiting lists we will increase funding for equipment and home modifications for adults and children with a disability by \$17.5 million

## Rann Government Achievements

### Increased funding for disability support services

The Rann Government is very aware of the ever-growing demand for disability support services. This is why we have increased funding for disability services by 87% since 2002-03 - from \$124 million to \$233 million in 2008-09.

This support includes help with accommodation, therapy, case management, early intervention for children, day options, life skills development programs and respite. We have extended these services to an additional 4,000 people with a disability in South Australia – this is four times the national average.<sup>1</sup>

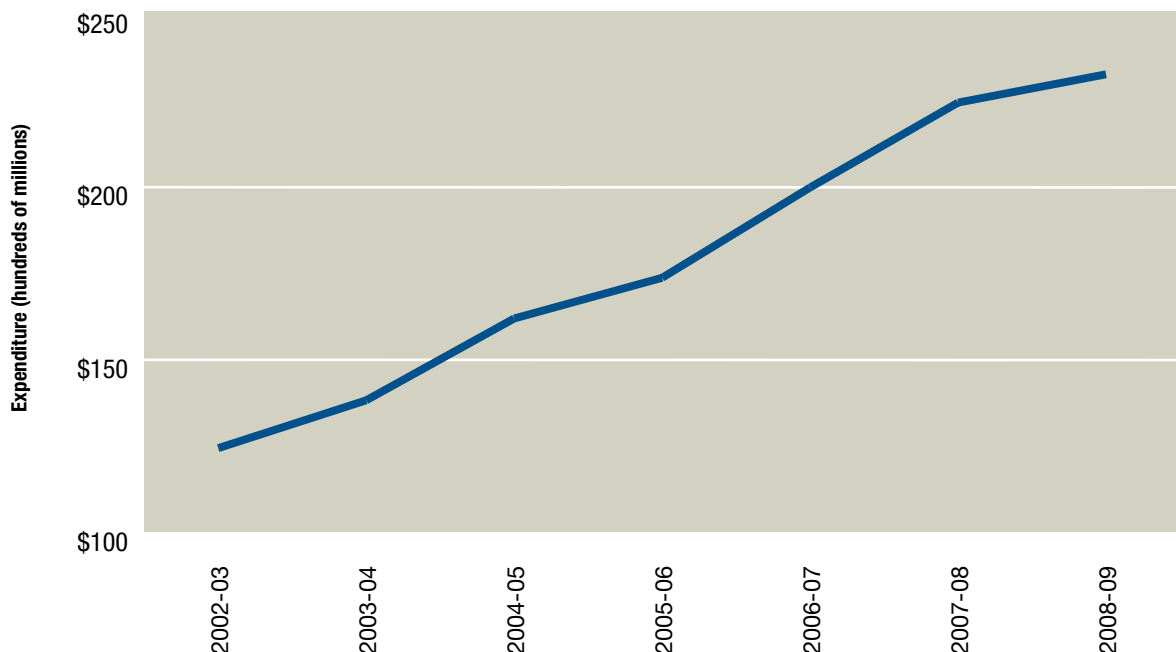
South Australia now provides services to 46% of our disability community compared to the national average of only about 32%.

We have also worked hard to ensure that the money we are spending is invested wisely. That is why the percentage of our annual spending that goes towards administration is 5.6% – almost 2% below the national average (7.4%).<sup>2</sup>

Despite these significant increases in funding, we know that there is more to do. All Australian jurisdictions have experienced significant growth in demand for disability services in recent years, and all governments are experiencing difficulty meeting this demand.

For this reason we strongly support the Federal Labor Government's investigation through the productivity commission into the establishment of a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

### Disability Funding



1, 2 Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services, 2010

## Disability and Social Inclusion

The Rann Government is committed to ongoing reform of disability services and to the way people with a disability are supported more generally in South Australia.

This is why the Premier asked the Social Inclusion Board, headed by Monsignor David Cappo, to develop a blueprint for long-term reform of disability services across the whole of government.

Since its formation in 2002, the internationally recognised South Australian Social Inclusion Initiative has provided the Government with valuable advice on how to tackle a range of social issues. Importantly, this initiative has delivered results in reducing rough sleeping homelessness, increasing school retention, and reforming mental health services.

In developing this new blueprint the Premier has asked that the social inclusion approach be applied to disability services. This approach will seek to ensure a more inclusive, people-centred system that joins the various arms of government services together. In looking across government, this work will help to ensure all services, whether they are transport, education, employment, recreation, or health services better support people with a disability, their families and carers.

The Social Inclusion Board work will also look at the factors driving demand for disability services, and seek to put the provision of disability support on a more pro-active footing. This work will be guided by a range of existing reforms already being undertaken including, for example, the first phase of self managed funding.

This will not be about tinkering with the system – but will involve a major reform of the way we support people with a disability in South Australia.

This commitment to reform was announced late in 2009 along with an injection of \$31 million in additional funding for disability services to provide 250 families more respite, more therapy and more in-home support.

## Self Managed Funding

In October 2009 the Rann Government announced the first phase of self managed funding enabling people with a disability to have greater control and choice about the services they receive. In particular, it gives a person with a disability control of the funding that has been allocated for their support needs. The Government recognises that this new way of accessing services won't be for everyone and we will continue current support arrangements for those who would prefer not to participate in this funding arrangement.

The Rann Government is committed to making self managed funding work and will continue to consult with the disability community to successfully implement this important and significant reform.

We will do this because we recognise it is an important step towards building the capacity and boosting the personal authority of people with a disability – where planning takes place around the individual, not government systems. We will also do this because we want to see a disability support system where the people don't just receive services like respite or therapy, but where people with a disability can imagine and experience a more socially inclusive life, and receive the services that helps support this.

## Education and Students with a Disability

The Rann Government has made it a priority to provide extra support to students with a disability in our State education system.

Since we were elected in 2002, \$120 million extra has been provided to cater for the growing number of students with special needs in our schools. This is additional funding.

In that time, the number of students with a disability has increased 25% from 11,862 in 2002 to 15,126 in 2009.

More than \$200 million is provided every year to support students with a disability.

Over the past eight years, we have funded new facilities and upgraded services for students with a disability, including:

- Seven Inclusive Preschool Programs for students with a disability and high support needs
- Rebuilding the Regency Park special school for 80 students adjacent to the Ocean View College Campus at Taperoo
- Provided specific recognition of students with Autism and Asperger's Disorders to streamline support for these students
- A new way to identify and support students with learning disabilities, allowing funds to reach children immediately
- More specialist classes for children with a disability in State schools
- Redevelopments and upgrades of special education schools and units, including Woodville Special School (\$3.1m), Kilparrin/Townsend House (\$6.2m), Gordon Education Centre at Mount Gambier (\$3.8m), Modbury Special School (\$2.9m), Victor Harbor High School Special Education Unit (\$2.2m) and Para Hills High School Special Education Unit (\$1.1m)

We will build on these achievements and provide more special education options alongside mainstream schools.

## Autism

In collaboration with the Commonwealth Government, the Rann Government has developed the largest package of reforms in the State's history for people with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

New programs and service models have been implemented for children with a disability and families of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. This includes intensive case management and respite for children with significant and complex health needs.

New programs and service models implemented include:

- The Preschoolers with Autism Program
- Senior Developmental Programmers in country South Australia who provide post diagnostic support, group programs and intensive interventions
- Intensive case management during transition to school for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and their families

## Day Options

As part of South Australia's Strategic Plan, we have set a target of increasing by 400 the number of people with a disability involved in day options by 2014. Our day option program is targeted towards those school leavers with Autism Spectrum Disorder or an intellectual disability. We are well on our way to meeting this target having increased the number of people involved in day options by 209 to 1258 in 2008-09.

## Accommodation for People with a Disability

Ensuring people with a disability have access to appropriate accommodation remains a significant priority for the Rann Government.

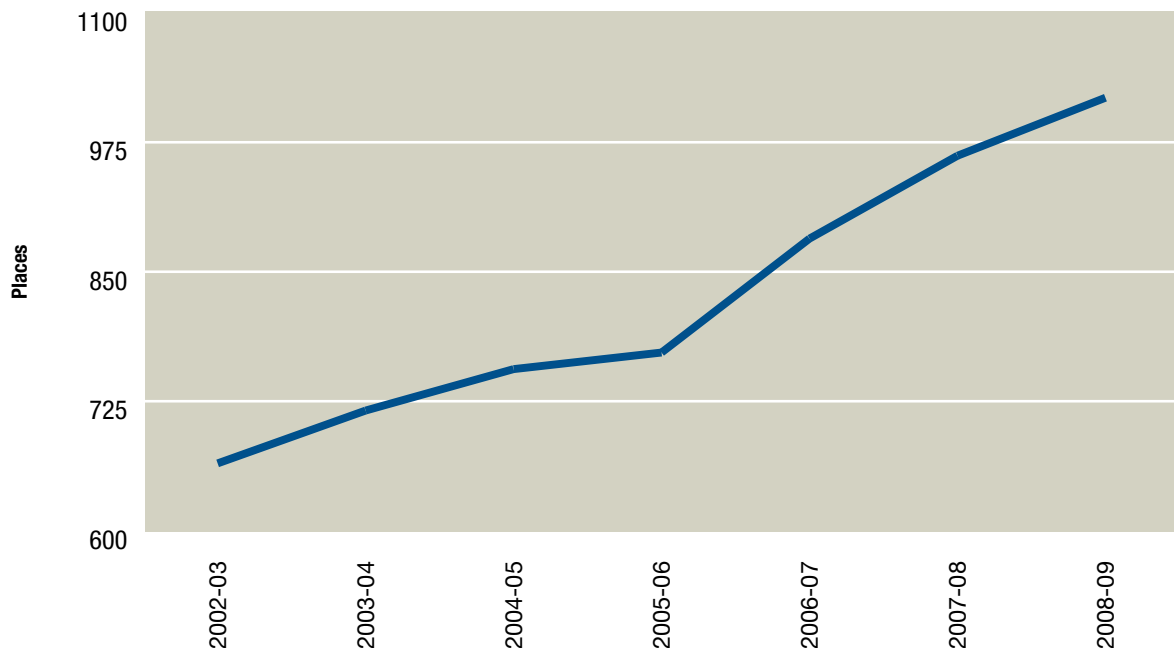
This is why, as part of South Australia's Strategic Plan, we have set a target to double the number of people with a disability who are appropriately housed and supported by 2014. We are on track to meet this target. Since 2002, the Government has increased the number of group home places from 665 to 1018 in 2009.

The Government has also doubled subsidies for residents of Supported Residential Facilities to ensure their sustainability and to ensure people are appropriately housed.

In partnership with Bedford, the Rann Government has contributed \$5 million towards the Homes for 100 project which is expected to built 32 homes across South Australia, accommodating up to 68 people with a disability, by July 2011.

As part of the Federal Government's Nation Building - Economic Stimulus Plan, the South Australian Government was one of the only States to set aside a number of these new houses specifically for people with a disability who are currently in unsuitable or inappropriate housing. Each of these places is accompanied by a package of support from Disability SA.

Number of Group Home Places



## Transport Support for People with a Disability

The Rann Government has also invested significantly in making it easier for people with a disability, and their carers, to get around.

Our \$2 billion public transport investment is making public transport safer, more frequent, and more accessible for all people including those with a disability.

This includes the addition of 80 new buses to the Adelaide Metro fleet. These buses come on top of our ongoing bus replacement program. All of these locally built buses are fully accessible.

South Australia is well ahead of requirements to ensure all buses are fully accessible by 2022, with 76% of the Adelaide Metro bus fleet being fully accessible as at October 2009. This is more than twice the number of fully accessible buses under the previous Liberal Government.

In addition, the Government has purchased six new trams to boost the modern tram fleet by 50%. These trams along with the existing Flexity trams are fully accessible. Our existing trains are similarly accessible and are fitted with ramps for easy boarding and alighting. The Rann Government has also committed to the purchase of new electric trains, which will be fully accessible.

In 2005 the Rann Government introduced the Plus One Companion Card to provide free transport for companions travelling with people whose disabilities prevent them from using their own transport.

The Rann Government has also improved access to the South Australian Transport Subsidy Scheme, which Labor introduced back in 1987 to provide subsidised taxi transport for people who have a severe and permanent disability. We did this by expanding the scheme and through the introduction of the On Time Bonus Scheme in 2003.

In partnership with the industry, The Rann Government has also:

- Ensured there are more Access Cabs on the roads
- Increased funding for the South Australian Transport Subsidy Scheme (SATTS)
- Instituted a new and more comprehensive training program for taxi drivers in partnership with the Taxi Council

We are also investing \$30 million to secure a new state-of-the-art ticketing system for Adelaide's growing fleet of buses, trains and trams. This new system will make boarding trains, trams and buses simpler and faster, improving the efficiency of the entire network.

## Employment and People with a Disability

To support employment opportunities for people with a disability between 2006 and 2008 the Rann Government employed an extra 169 people with a disability in the public sector. We are committed to meeting South Australia's Strategic Plan target of doubling the number of people with a disability employed in the public service by 2014.

In 2009, we also announced \$9.5 million for the new Social Inclusion Pathways Coordinator program to support more than 500 students with a disability into employment, education or training. In addition we have funded a number of other training and employment programs for people with a disability including the \$2.8 million Abilities for All program.

## Sport and Recreation for People with a Disability

Helping people with a disability access sport and recreational activities is incredibly important. That is why the Rann Government has, for the first time, introduced a specialised recreation and sport-funding program for people with a disability. In 2006, we launched the Inclusive Recreation and Sports Grants, which have funded \$2 million worth of projects to help create opportunities for people with a disability to participate in sport and recreational activities.

We have also provided significant funding to support the IX Special Olympics Australia National Games to be held in Adelaide this April.

## Arts and Disability

South Australia is developing a reputation for creating and supporting innovative arts programs that develop and celebrate the artistic and creative aspirations of people with a disability.

In 2006, the Rann Government established the \$1 million Richard Llewellyn Arts and Disability Trust for projects and initiatives that develop and celebrate the artistic and creative aspirations of people with a disability in South Australia.

South Australia's leadership in the area of arts and disability is evident in its ongoing and unprecedented funding for a range of programs and organisations including: No Strings Attached, Restless Dance Company and Tutti Ensemble.

## Our Vision for South Australia

People with a disability, like all South Australians, want to live inclusive, active, independent and fulfilling lives. But people with a disability also want greater control and personal authority in their lives.

This is why we are developing a more socially inclusive approach to supporting people with a disability - so that they can get the best start in life and have greater control over the decisions that impact on their lives.

We know that this requires a disability service system that enhances the dignity and independence of the individual with a disability, as well as better supporting those who care for them. We have asked the Social Inclusion Board to develop a blueprint for long-term reform of disability services across government in South Australia.

We recognise that students with a disability face extra challenges to achieve their potential. This is why we want to give these children better opportunities at school. We are committed to supporting young children with a disability to get the best start in life.

Making sure every South Australian child has the opportunity to reach their potential is at the heart of the Rann Government's vision for the future.

## Background - Special Education Units in Schools

Currently, eight in every 10 students with a disability attend mainstream classes in State schools.

While this works well for many students with a disability, the growing number of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other significant disabilities brings extra challenges to schools.

Many parents who have a child with a disability prefer a mainstream education for their child, but then find the child is unable to cope in a mainstream setting.

Special education units for children with a disability, located on the same grounds as mainstream schools, provide the best of both worlds for students.

A low student-to-teacher ratio means they get the support they need in class, and they can socialise with friends and peers in mainstream classes next door.

Regular interaction with students in the attached mainstream school can increase social opportunities and promote understanding and acceptance among students.

There are a number of support options in schools for students with a disability. The majority of students attend mainstream classes and their school attracts additional funds to provide extra support. In 2009, this funding ranged up to \$35,348 for a student with high needs. Other options include:

- *Special Classes* are located in some schools and have a smaller number of students than regular classes (up to 8 students in junior primary classes, up to 12 students in primary and secondary classes). The teacher is a specialist teacher and has additional support. The curriculum is modified and adapted to meet the needs of all students
- *Special Units* are located in schools and cater for a diverse range of students with significant intellectual and/or physical disabilities
- *Special Schools* are separate education centres, which cater for a diverse range of students with significant intellectual and/or physical disabilities

Currently, South Australia's public education system has 20 special education units for children with a disability in addition to 16 special schools, 7 Centres for Hearing Impaired and 110 special classes.

## More Special Education Units in Schools

In our next term, the Rann Government will build six new special education units attached to State schools.

Each unit will cater for up to 20 children, allowing places for an extra 120 students with a disability.

These additional units will add to the 20 existing units, creating a network of 26 special education units on State school grounds in South Australia.

Two units will have a specialist focus on Autism Spectrum Disorders, becoming centres of best practice in ASD learning with links to Autism SA to provide information and advice to families and teachers.

The construction of additional special education units will mean more children with significant disabilities can access specialised schooling closer to their homes.

These units have lower student-teacher ratios and are purpose-built with special equipment and facilities that can include special play equipment, secure play areas, and even different floor surfaces in rooms to assist children who are blind or have an intellectual disability.

The units will be located in areas of highest need, which will be determined in consultation with schools.

**ACTION ►** We will build six new special education units on State school grounds to cater for an extra 120 students with a disability, creating a network of 26 special education units in South Australian schools

**ACTION ►** Two special education units will have a specialist focus on Autism Spectrum Disorders, becoming centres of best practice in ASD learning

## Expanding the Big Buddy Program

We not only want more of our young people to be able to attend mainstream schools, we want them to be fully included in the school community.

The Big Buddy program already exists in a number of schools, but we want to expand the program to include students in these units. We will work with and support more schools to do this as we expand our network of special education units.

A buddy system between students in special units and mainstream students is a positive initiative designed to ensure students with a disability are fully included within the school community.

Through the program, students with a disability are paired with an older buddy who can then be a point of contact for them to support and participate in school activities.

It is a program that's beneficial to all participants, where the children with a disability and the mainstream students can gain an understanding and insight into each others educational and social challenges.

**ACTION ►** Expand the Big Buddy Scheme to bring more students with a disability into contact with students in mainstream classes

## Support for Students in Non-Government Schools

We recognise that Independent and Catholic schools require extra support to cater effectively for the needs of students with special support requirements.

That's why we committed an additional \$4 million per year in the 2006-07 State Budget to help these schools better support students with a disability, minimal English language skills and learning difficulties. The Rann Government will maintain that commitment.

In addition to this, we will provide a further \$1 million a year to support the specific needs of students with a disability in Independent and Catholic schools.

The funding will be targeted to schools with the greatest need, to be determined in consultation with the non-government school sectors.

**ACTION ►** We will provide extra funds to Independent and Catholic schools to support students with a disability

## Background - More Autism Assessments and Services

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder affecting the manner in which development occurs. The disorder generally presents itself in the first three years of life, and is characterised by certain behavioural excesses and deficits.

The Rann Government, through Disability SA provide a range of services to support those with ASD as well as their families and carers.

We also provide funding of \$1.8 million a year to Autism SA to provide a range of specific services including: assessments; early intervention services; a school support program; counselling; an autism spectrum advisory service; day options and respite services.

In order for families to access support services a diagnosis or assessment is required.

Assessments can be done through Autism SA or at the Women's and Children's Hospital, the Lyell McEwin Hospital and the Flinders Medical Centre, as well as through a number of practitioners in private practice.

There is currently a waiting list for assessments with Autism SA and SA Health. These waiting lists delay access to early intervention services and eligibility for other support through Disability SA.

## More Autism Assessments and Services

So that families can gain access to vital services faster, a re-elected Rann Government will provide an additional \$1 million per year to conduct more assessments and provide additional early intervention services.

We will increase funding to Autism SA to provide more assessments and early intervention services. We will work with Autism SA to better co-ordinate and link up Commonwealth and State Government early intervention services – to make it easier for parents to access these new services.

We will also significantly boost the number of free assessments done in the public health system by creating an additional assessment team which will include a paediatrician, psychologist and speech pathologist. This team will work across the Women's and Children's Hospital, the Lyell McEwin Hospital and Flinders Medical Centre and will be able to provide up to 400 additional assessments a year.

Due to the range of personnel available, the team will be able to determine if the child's developmental issues are due to an Autism Spectrum Disorder or other diagnoses (e.g. Language Disorder, Learning issues, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Intellectual Disability, etc) and to make recommendations about the type of intervention that would be beneficial for the child and family.

By cutting waiting lists for autism assessments, families will be able to get access to early intervention services that are so important to improving long term outcomes. We will work with Autism SA, the Department of Education and Health SA to ensure this additional funding best supports young people with ASD and their families.

**ACTION ►** With an additional investment of \$1 million per year families will be able to get assessments and access to services sooner

## Background - Equipment for people with a disability

Since being elected in 2002, the Rann Government has invested more than \$43 million in equipment for people with a disability.

In 2008, a new single equipment program was established through the consolidation of the former programs. Adopting this approach has reduced waiting times for some items and addressed some of the unmet need.

The equipment program currently receives annual funding of \$3.6 million for aids and equipment for adults and children with a disability. This annual funding has been topped up over recent years by one-off amounts of funding.

## Equipment for people with a disability

The Rann Government will provide an additional \$17.5 million - to ensure South Australians with a disability receive the equipment and home modifications they require when they need them.

This injection of funds will clear waiting lists within 6-12 months, depending on the complexity of the equipment needed, to ensure that all South Australians with a disability are able to participate in their communities as fully and independently as possible.

We expect the \$7.7 million required to clear waiting lists will assist up to 650 adults and 400 children. This new money will help purchase almost 1,500 pieces of equipment such as wheelchairs and mobility aids as well as conducting necessary home modifications.

The Rann Government will also increase annual funding for disability equipment by \$2.36 million per year, indexed, to ensure that we are better able to keep pace with demand into the future. This will take recurrent funding from \$3.6 million in 2009-10 to over \$6 million by 2012-13.

**ACTION ►** To clear waiting lists we will increase funding for equipment and home modifications for adults and children with a disability by \$17.5 million

## Costings

### More Special Education Units in Schools

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Ongoing
Recurrent	-	-	-	-	-
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Investing	-	\$2.25 million	\$4.5 million	\$2.25 million	-

### Special Education in Non-Government Schools

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Ongoing
Recurrent	-	\$1 million	\$1 million	\$1 million	\$1 million
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Investing	-	-	-	-	-

### More Autism Assessments and Services

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Ongoing
Recurrent	-	\$1 million	\$1.04 million	\$1.082 million	\$1.125 million
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Investing	-	-	-	-	-

### Disability Equipment

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Ongoing
Recurrent	\$5.925 million	\$2.365 million	\$2.415 million	\$2.477 million	\$2.54 million
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Investing	\$1.825 million	-	-	-	-