

## Newsletter No.1 October 2006

### Background

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) announced an agreement on 10 February 2006 to reduce the number of younger people with a disability living in Residential Aged Care (RAC) facilities. A bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and the State has now been signed and commits \$60.2 million in joint funding for Victoria over five years.

The COAG commitment acknowledges the increasing demand from younger people with a disability for specialist age appropriate services to meet their ongoing needs and aspirations. The aim of the initiative is to reduce the number of younger people with a disability living in RAC.

### Objectives

*my future my choice* aims to provide better living options for younger people in, or at risk of entry to, RAC. This will be achieved through the development of innovative support models that respond to complex clinical and health care needs, while also providing lifestyle and social opportunities that younger people can identify with. It has three strategic objectives:

#### 1. Provide alternative supports

Provide alternative support options for younger people with a disability in RAC settings, where it can be made available and where this is what the younger person chooses.

#### 2. Enhance disability supports within RAC

Promote a more age appropriate response via the delivery of specialist disability services to younger people with a disability who choose to remain in RAC, or for whom RAC remains the most suitable supported accommodation option available.

#### 3. Minimise future admissions to RAC

Provide alternative responses for younger people with a disability who are at risk of being admitted to residential aged care.

The initial priority is to achieve this for people aged less than 50 years, although those aged from 50 to 65 may also receive assistance. Participation will be based on choice.

### Implementation

The Department of Human Services has established a Project Board to oversee the implementation of the initiative across the department. This Board is chaired by the Secretary, and has been meeting since March 2006.

An Advisory Committee has also been established and has been meeting since May 2006. Members include departmental representatives, community members, YPINH Alliance and representatives from key stakeholder organisations.

A team has recently been established within the Community and Individual Support Unit of Disability Services Division to implement *my future my choice*. Regional offices will also have a role in implementation.

The implementation of this initiative will be underpinned by a number of important principles. These are outlined in the document 'Guiding Principles'.

### Who can get assistance?

People who meet the following criteria may be able to receive assistance under this initiative:

- aged less than 50 years, although individuals aged 50-65 years may also receive assistance
- live permanently in a RAC facility or are at risk of admission to RAC
- are eligible to receive Disability Services.

The department's guidelines for provision of disability services to compensable clients will apply. TAC funded clients who are interested in exploring alternative opportunities should contact their support co-ordinators.

### What types of assistance will be available?

Assistance will be provided to meet the three strategic objectives outlined above. People who meet the eligibility criteria may receive supports such as accommodation, personal and health care and community access. Transitional, case management and advocacy support may also be provided.

Outcomes may include:

- returning to, or remaining at home with additional supports
- moving into new residential support arrangements including living independently.
- remaining in RAC with additional supports

Where possible, the initiative will build on existing support networks and service options.

The time taken to plan and receive assistance will vary for each person, depending on the nature and complexity of their situation, and the availability of required supports.

To ensure that assistance meets individual needs, the department will work closely with people with a disability and their families and carers, as well as disability and aged care providers and other relevant organisations.

## How will the initiative proceed?

### 1. Communication

A communication strategy has commenced and will include:

- initial and ongoing contact with people with a disability in residential aged care aged less than 50 years, and their legal guardians
- contact with Aged Care providers, peak organisations and other key stakeholders
- a webpage and newsletter to provide regular updates on progress and outcomes.

### 2. Initial contact

In October 2006, all people aged less than 50 with a disability currently living in RAC in Victoria will receive correspondence and information regarding the initiative. Relevant peak organisations and other key stakeholders will also be contacted.

### 3. Planning and assessment process

A planning process will follow, commencing in early 2007. This will include a holistic and comprehensive assessment of each person's specific support, healthcare, community/lifestyle needs and aspirations, and identify preferred options or alternatives.

A Priority Access Framework will be developed to identify people who should receive priority support.

### 4. Service planning and development

Outcomes from the planning and assessment process will assist to scope both individual and aggregate need, and inform a service planning and development phase.

This phase will identify opportunities for new service development and new models of support. This will build on outcomes of a registration of interest process led by the Commonwealth Government.

### 5. Diversion strategy

Work has commenced to minimise future admissions of young people with a disability into RAC. This includes consultation across program areas within the department and with relevant external organisations including Aged Care providers, ACAS teams, rehabilitation hospitals, Disability Support providers and other stakeholders.

### 6. New residential support outcomes and options

Where suitable residential care options already exist, including where people choose to remain in RAC facilities, work will focus on securing and arranging support as required.

Where new service and care models need to be developed, lead times will vary. New opportunities to provide innovative service models will need to be explored and established.

## Further information

For general information about *my future my choice* visit: [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability/myfuturemychoice](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability/myfuturemychoice)

To receive future copies of this newsletter, please send your email address to: [myfuturemychoice@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:myfuturemychoice@dhs.vic.gov.au)

If you want to discuss your personal circumstances please call the Department of Human Services Disability Intake and Response Service on 1800 783 783 or TTY 1800 008 149 and ask to be connected to your regional service.

To request material in other languages or formats, or for general enquiries telephone: (03) 9096 8724 or email: [myfuturemychoice@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:myfuturemychoice@dhs.vic.gov.au)