



Consultation Summary

Background

In 2008, the State Government made an election commitment of \$11.75 million over four years build five out-of-home respite facilities for adults with disabilities.

In October 2009 the Hon Simon O'Brien MLC, Minister for Disability Services, announced the locations of two of the metropolitan facilities to be Joondalup in the northern suburbs and Rockingham in the south.

Consultations

Families, carers, people with disabilities and service providers met in September 2009 to explore respite needs and inform the design of these services. Over 90 people contributed their ideas, including 50 families and carers, by participating in one of five public forums or responding via the dedicated email address and phonenumber.

A range of views and ideas were explored in the public forums. Below is a summary of the key themes that emerged from the consultations.

Community integration

There was general agreement that the respite service needed to be well integrated into the local community. The physical location of the new building in the local area and the interface of the service with surrounding community facilities, people and programs were

considered. Families and carers felt that the building design should be homely and comfortable, and for it to look and feel like a home in the community and not to have an institutionalised feel. Access to public transport was important, so that guests (people using the respite service) could easily engage with the community and participate in work, Alternatives to Employment and/or use community facilities.

Design and space

The design of the new building needed to meet universal design standards. It would also have sufficient space to provide choice, privacy and enable different activities for individual guests through design of a range of private living spaces. Space consideration is also important for storage of bulky items, such as large wheelchairs, hoist and other equipment.

Safety

The safety and security of their family member is a key concern for all families using respite. This covers a number of aspects including safe physical spaces where people would not come to harm from their behaviours or their condition; and emotional and psychological safety for family and carers and the person in respite. Families indicated that they feel more comfortable using respite services where staff know them and their family member and are able to meet people's individual needs.

Respite availability and staffing

As well as places being available when they are needed, it was important to all families that the respite service provides a stimulating and interesting environment, where the guest is valued and has a choice of activities. Staff attitude and skill were seen as central to providing this personal approach and in being able to meet individual support requirements, needs and interests.

High support needs

Respite for people with high support needs was consistently raised. Many said that people with these needs often missed out because existing services were unable to meet high needs such as managing seizures, administering medication, gastrostomy feeds and pressure management.

Service model

Different service models were touched on but not fully developed. However, the design should have the flexibility to meet a range of needs, while providing individualised support. The type of flexibility included the capacity to take into account different support needs; gender; age; and length of stay. Particularly important is the capacity of the service to meet both planned and emergency respite needs, without emergency respite compromising planned respite arrangements. Several people suggested the possibility of having a co-located day centre incorporated into the design, while maintaining a home and community feel.

Local

The concept of 'local' was explored in each forum. Perceptions differed between north and south areas, with participants in the north indicating that 'local' equated to travel time of up to 20 minutes, while a 30-45 minute drive time was considered local in the south. One parent defined "local" not in terms of time or distance, but in terms of familiarity with the location and the existence of personal networks in that community.

Cost

Affordability was raised, with general consensus that any fee arrangements should not deter or prevent use of respite.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the service model was important to guests and their families, so they could feel confident about the availability of the service both in the short and longer term. Information about the service should be widely available and in a variety of different formats to meet different needs.