

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION SERVICES, FUNDING INCREASE

217. Mr A.P. O'GORMAN to the Minister for Disability Services:

I was delighted to hear the announcement by the Premier and the minister of a \$108 million boost in funding for people with disabilities. Can the minister please outline how the increase for disability accommodation services relates to the level of known unmet need for accommodation services?

Ms S.M. McHALE replied:

I thank the member for Joondalup for his question. Clearly the announcement on Sunday that the Premier and I made at a Nulsen Haven Association facility was excellent news for people with disabilities and their families, news which they have been waiting for and which we were able to deliver. On Sunday we announced that an extra \$108 million will be allocated over the next four years to services for people with disabilities, of which \$68 million will be allocated to the disability portfolio and \$40 million to the education portfolio. I commend the Minister for Education and Training for his leadership and determination to get more funds for schoolchildren who have disabilities.

All members have been lobbied about accommodation support by individual families in their communities. We all know a family that has been struggling. I am delighted to announce that, specifically in relation to accommodation services, the single largest funding increase ever will be made to disability services in the next four years. That money will enable the Government to support more than 446 people over the next four years. We have proved in the past two years that, with vacancies, we can help other families; therefore, with that money and our vacancies, an estimated 525 people with disabilities will be supported with accommodation services - the most critical need for families. This is an unprecedented quantum of money in the history of the Disability Services Commission. In this budget we are addressing the recommendations for the growth in unmet need in our accommodation strategy - which I released about 18 months ago and is referred to as the accommodation blueprint - and also the independent estimate of unmet need for accommodation by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

Let us take it right down to the families. This now means that families can feel hope and can have better planning, and some of the pressure that they have felt can be taken off them and, in particular, older parents. Our Government stands for supporting people who are vulnerable in our community. Members have delivered to me some of the case studies of families. We have listened to those case studies and we have delivered the support needed by the families of people with disabilities. I am very proud that this Government has responded to the accommodation blueprint and has put the money in the forward estimates for the next four years.