



CEREBRAL PALSY AUSTRALIA

Ground Breaking Research into the needs of Australians with Cerebral Palsy

Thursday 7 December 2006

In an Australian first, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has issued a groundbreaking study into the therapy and equipment needs of Australians with Cerebral Palsy (CP).

There are over 33,000 people in Australia with CP or similar disabilities and the cost of meeting therapy and equipment needs of these much deserving Australians has been estimated to be as high as \$59.2m.

“People with CP and their families see therapy and equipment as crucial in reducing the impact of disability thus improving the lives and health of infants, children and adults with CP” said John Knowles, President of CP Australia - the national peak body for organisations that provide assistance to people with CP.

“The Federal and State Governments across Australia must respond to this critical unmet need.” John Knowles said

“At a time when the national economy is enjoying unheralded levels of prosperity, it is critical that Government heed the compelling evidence reported by AIHW and take swift action to address the issues raised in the report” he said.

“A perfect opportunity exists to do this as the Federal and State Governments are sitting down now to renegotiate the Commonwealth State and Territory Disability Agreement. Without increased Government funding and support the future well-being of people with CP will continue to be jeopardised and the social cost to our community will only increase.” he said.

“The time for Government to act is now” John Knowles said.

MEDIA CONTACT

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Background information follows.



Facts about Cerebral Palsy

- CP is a permanent physical condition that affects movement.
- In Australia a child is born with CP every 18 hours.
- Australians under 18 are three times more likely to be diagnosed with cerebral palsy than cancer.
- There is no pre-birth test, no known cure and severity is on the increase.
- For most the cause of CP is unknown.
- CP is not a disease, it is not contagious.
- CP can be as mild as just a weakness in one hand ranging to almost complete lack of movement.
- This year CP Australia celebrates 55 years of advocacy.

About CP Australia

Cerebral Palsy Australia (CP Australia) represents individuals and organisations providing services to people with cerebral palsy and other similar disabilities and their families across Australia.

CP Australia is supported through its membership. Incorporated in 1953 as the Australian Cerebral Palsy Association, we have sought to provide a national focus for disability awareness, service development for children and adults with cerebral palsy and other disabilities and those issues reflecting community values such as integration, acceptance and valuing of people with disabilities.

In Australia, the disability sector has a history that has been heavily influenced by institutionalisation and subsequent de-institutionalisation processes. People with disabilities have been one of the most marginalised, and at risk groups in our community. CP Australia was established to ensure these issues achieved national prominence and that the risks to people, particularly at times of significant changes to public policy, reflected community values and interest.

The combined services of member organisations exceed \$200 million for over tens of thousands of people.

Member organisations include the Spastic Centre of NSW, Novita Inc, Cerebral Palsy Association of WA Inc, Community Accommodation & Respite Agency Inc, Scope (Vic) Inc, Yooralla Society of Victoria, Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland, Cootharinga Society of Northern Queensland, Leveda Inc, Community Connections Australia, Community Access Service Inc, Cerebral Palsy Tasmania and the Centre for Developmental Disability Studies