Service our way
Hunter New England NSW
What is Services Our Way

- The NSW Department of Families and Community Services, Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) operates Services Our Way (SOW) which is a new service model designed to build the capacity of Aboriginal people so they have greater access to disability services and self-directed support.

- SOW implements the NSW Stronger Together program. It is a ‘Packaged Support program that assists with Aboriginal people with disability and their carers to plan and prepare current and future living and care arrangements and supports’ It does this through encouraging self-directed support, supporting the recommendations of the NSW Ombudsman report ‘Improving service delivery to Aboriginal People with a disability’, and implementing the ADHC Aboriginal Consultation Strategy and Aboriginal Policy Framework.

- The program aims to work with Aboriginal people with disability and their carers to:
  - Identify their priorities, goals and aspirations;
  - Determine what supports are needed for their physical, emotional and cultural wellbeing – now, and in the future;
  - Plan the supports; and
  - Coordinate, acquire and manage the supports.
Recognizes that Aboriginal people with a disability are the key decision makers in determining their supports and actively participate in decision-making about the planning, implementation and review of services and supports they receive.
Who is the Program for

- **Access for Services Our Way is determined as follows:**
  - Aboriginal people aged 0 – 65 years of age with a disability and their carers and families who are facing multiple barriers or are planning towards a transition.
  - Have a disability as defined within *Part 1, Section 5 of the Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW)*. The program does however include a broader definition of disability so to not preclude Aboriginal people with a disability from service access.
  - Early intervention, where there is:
    - Need to strengthen or support the person with a disability, their carer, family or circle of support; and
    - An immediate and potential benefit of the support to reduce or delay the likelihood for more intensive needs in the future.
  - The carer may be the parent, grandparent, guardian, family member, extended family member or other person with cultural obligations to provide care for the person with a disability. They may or may not be living with the person with a disability.
SOW Principles

*Services Our Way* is guided by the following eight principles

i. Family centred, incorporating all environmental impacts on an Aboriginal person with disability and their family.

ii. Promotion of family resilience and the informal supports using strengths based practice.

iii. Prevention and early intervention, enhancing eligibility to include a broader definition of disability.

iv. Collaborative partnerships with key stakeholders, including an integrated focus on working with other human service agencies and each individual Aboriginal community allowing for inclusive approaches.

v. Work to promote and strengthen the effectiveness of informal supports for an Aboriginal person with disability and to achieve an inclusive approach.

vi. Flexible practice that is responsive to individual needs, incorporating the development of comprehensive plans.

vii. Culturally respectful and appropriate service delivery, recognising diversity and choice of each individual, family and Aboriginal community.

viii. Cost effective programs with high quality positive outcomes for the person with disability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of clients</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-65</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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October 2014
Services Our Way

- Services Our Way has had positive impacts on Aboriginal people with disability and their families. The services provided have addressed some of the priorities of the people with disability and their families and enabled them to make choices in their lives that meet their needs.

- Services provided under the Services Our Way program to date have included referral to therapeutic/medical services, diagnostic services, equipment, respite, training and advocacy.

- Services Our Way staff demonstrated how government services can engage with members of the Aboriginal community using a culturally appropriate approach. This method could be shared with other staff and services, both government and non-government, to improve the appropriateness of service approaches to the priorities of the people with disability and their families.

- Aspects of the success of the program were at the personal and social network levels, which could be extended to other services. The personal level factors included developing trust relationships with the people in the program; identifying and acting on their priorities first; and responding in a timeframe specific to the person. The social network level factors included the prior relationships; the investment of time in developing relationships; and finding and supporting advocates from the communities, families with disability and leaders who understood the needs of the families.
Services Our Way

- The program was strengthened through ensuring locally based employees who know and work with the local community.

- *Services Our Way* has been successful at providing a culturally appropriate service to Aboriginal people with disability and their families. A goal of *Services Our Way* was to engage Aboriginal families with disability into mainstream services and build on their capacity to manage their support with a view to transitioning towards the NDIS.
SOW Staff Characteristics

Aboriginal people with a disability and their families in program sites have valued the Services Our Way approach. Services Our Way staff will continue to use this approach, which is characterised by the following features:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values and attitudes:</th>
<th>Effectiveness qualities:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Committed to sustainable access, opportunity and valued social roles for Aboriginal people with a disability.</em></td>
<td><em>Creative and flexible.</em></td>
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<td><em>Recognises diversity and uniqueness of each individual and family.</em></td>
<td><em>Well-informed, knowledgeable and understanding of the ‘big picture’ – disability PCA reform.</em></td>
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<td><em>Recognises the role of the extended family.</em></td>
<td><em>Focuses on ability/strengths rather than deficits.</em></td>
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<td><em>Committed to building upon people’s existing assets and strengths to work for sustainable inclusion.</em></td>
<td><em>Provides accurate and timely information.</em></td>
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<td><strong>Relationships:</strong></td>
<td><em>Ability to explore goals and dreams.</em></td>
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<td><em>Listens/actively; ability to identify existing strengths.</em></td>
<td><em>Ability to network and link people together to build shared understanding of disability and access.</em></td>
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<td><em>Builds trusting relationships and shared partnerships.</em></td>
<td><em>Ability to empower people to assist themselves.</em></td>
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<td><em>Ability to adapt to different families and build rapport.</em></td>
<td><em>Ability to assist people to plan for a good life.</em></td>
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<td><em>Not an ‘authority’, not always having an answer.</em></td>
<td><em>Supports the empowerment of families and individuals.</em></td>
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<td><em>Non-judgemental, non-discriminatory.</em></td>
<td><em>Strong understanding and skills in advocacy.</em></td>
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<td><em>Respectful to confidentiality.</em></td>
<td><em>Strong community connections.</em></td>
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<td><em>Meets with people in their homes and community.</em></td>
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<td>*Being ‘the gateway’/‘the link’.</td>
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<td><em>Works from ‘where people are at’ – strengths based development.</em></td>
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NSW Government
Family & Community Services
Ageing, Disability & Home Care
SOW Clients
SOW STAFF ROLE

Capacity Building Role
While not limited to the following, Services Our Way’s staff role is to:

- Connect, build and maintain effective relationships with individuals, families/carers and communities in their local area.
- Provide accurate and timely information and empower individuals, families and carers to access information through a variety of means.
- Engage and identify individuals and families/carers strengths and skills to build their capabilities to identify their own needs and goals to access disability supports and self manage funding.

- Enable individuals, families and carers to build upon their existing strengths to gain the skills, confidence and expertise required to plan for the future.
- Initiate an action plan to encourage individuals, families/carers to practice accessing their own supports and services to pursue their identified goals, including use and reporting of funding.
- Support and enable individuals and families/carers’ active development, participation in, and maintenance of plans.
- Coach individuals and families/carers to develop and sustain active participation planning and be self reliant in the maintenance and ownership of their goals and funding.
## SOW VISION

**Vision**  
Aboriginal people with a disability, their families and carers will build their knowledge, skills and self-reliance to be able to exercise genuine choice and control over the supports and services they need to live a good life.

### Principles

1. Aboriginal people with a disability have the same rights as all other people to participate in and contribute to the community.
2. Aboriginal people with a disability, their families/carers are in the best position to determine their own needs and goals to plan for the future.
3. Aboriginal people with a disability have a lifelong capacity for learning and development.
4. Aboriginal people with a disability and their families/carers are best placed to be decision makers and advocates.
5. Aboriginal people with a disability and their families/carers will be provided timely and accurate information that will empower them to make informed decisions and gain more control over their lives.

1. The lives of Aboriginal people with disability and their families/carers are improved when they have capacity to determine their own preferred supports and services, and can control the required resources.
2. Aboriginal people with a disability have networks that can be a foundation of strength. Building strong networks of support enhance health and social inclusion.
3. Partnerships between individuals, families and carers, communities, government, service providers and the business sector are vital in meeting the needs of Aboriginal people with a disability.