

MEDIA RELEASE

**Minister for Community Services
Minister for Women
The Hon. Linda Burney MP**



Wednesday 14 October 2009

MINISTER VISITS SERVICES FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN SINGLETON

Minister for Community Services and Minister for Women Linda Burney visited Singleton today to officially open the new Murrane Housing office which will provide greater support to women and children who are homeless or at risk of losing their home.

“Hundreds of women are forced out of their homes every year as a result of family breakdown, domestic violence or financial difficulties,” Ms Burney said.

“This new office will connect homeless women and children to accommodation support and help them to access other vital services, such as counselling, legal advice and health care.”

Murrane Housing provides accommodation and support for homeless women with complex needs in Singleton, Upper Hunter, Muswellbrook and Cessnock.

The service receives more than \$72,000 a year under the State Government’s Supported Accommodation Assistance Scheme (SAAP).

Ms Burney said the opening of the new office in George Street would make services more accessible to local people.

“In the past, Murrane Housing provided outreach support to Singleton from its Muswellbrook base. This new office means the service has a permanent presence in the area for the first time.

“As well as helping the homeless, the office also houses a caseworker from the Benevolent Society Brighter Futures program which offers support to vulnerable families with young children.

“I’d like to congratulate all staff and management involved in the expansion of the service and thank them for their dedication and commitment to helping women and children in crisis.”

During her visit to Singleton, Ms Burney also announced funding to improve a playground for children with special needs.

The Hunter Prelude and Outside School Hours Care Centre will receive a \$30,546 funding boost under the State Government’s Area Assistance Scheme.

“This will pay for much-needed improvements to the indoor and outdoor play areas shared by these two popular services,” she said.

“Children will benefit from a new soft-fall surface, sun shade and play equipment suitable for all ages and abilities.

“I hope this investment will ensure children can continue to play in a fun, safe and stimulating environment.”

The Outside School Hours Care centre provides daycare for up to 350 children aged five to 12. The Hunter Prelude offers therapy and education for 30 children with special needs aged five and under.

Ms Burney said 115 community groups across NSW received funding under the \$4.8 million Area Assistance Scheme this financial year. In the Hunter region, 24 projects received a total of more than \$1 million.

Community Services recently announced changes to the Area Assistance Scheme. When the new AAS funding round opens in November, the program will be known as Community Builders. For more information visit www.communitybuilders.com.au.

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