



Northern Star (Lismore)

Wednesday 17/05/2017

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Service providers get help after the flood

MINISTER for Disability Services Ray Williams made sure he didn't forget his cheque book in a visit to Lismore disability service providers on Tuesday.

REDinc and Multitask each received \$20,000 to assist with repairing flood damage to their properties.

In a visit to Ability Links, Mr Williams expressed his excitement for the National

Disability Initiative Scheme and said 7000 eligible people in the region could access the scheme from July 1.

"For the first time in their lives they will be able to make individual choices in relation to the way they live their life. They will be able to alter their management plans, change their service providers and move accommodation," he said.

Ability Links – a \$44 million NSW Government initiative – is delivered by staff known as "linkers" who help people with disabilities, their carers and families to build on their strengths and skills in order to achieve their goals.

Mr Williams said he was working diligently on showing how effective the program was and would do

his best to continue the program past its funding end date of mid 2018.

"Every week we hear of another person with a disability who has become isolated, has connected with one of our linkers, which has enlightened them and brought them into a more inclusive society," he said.

According to independent reports by Urbis, the

program returns three dollars in economic and social benefits for every dollar invested by the government.

Lismore MP Thomas George, who joined Mr Williams on his visit, said more disability service providers would continue to be recognised as people with disabilities began to transfer to the NDIS.



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FLOOD RELIEF: From left, Lismore MP Thomas George, Kyogle Ability Linker Sandy Kelly, Ability Links participants Jacob Lorenzo (Tweed Heads) and Pam Bourke (Kyogle) with Minister for Disability Services Ray Williams during his visit to Ability Links in Lismore.

PHOTO: JASMINE BURKE