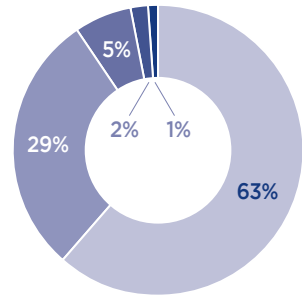


## Total value of outcomes for Participants

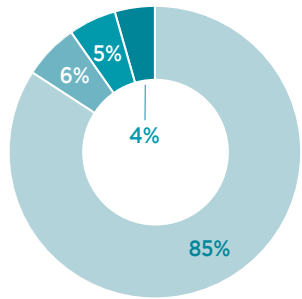
The total value of outcomes achieved for participants is estimated at \$18.25 million. This comprises:



- Increased wellbeing from accessing services to meet needs and achieve goals (**\$11.51 million**).
- Paid employment creating an increase in income (**\$5.40 million**).
- Early intervention to address the risk of homelessness (**\$0.41 million**).
- Accessing information required to meet needs (**\$1.19 million**).
- Increased income potential (**\$0.16 million**).

## Value created for communities in regional NSW

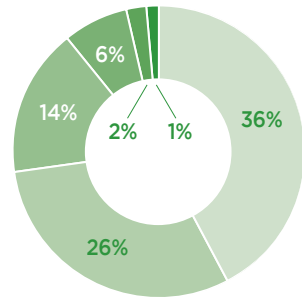
The value of Ability Links NSW to communities in regional NSW is estimated at \$11.85 million. This comprises:



- Surplus purchasing power generated for local businesses by Alliance Linkers working and residing in local communities (**\$9.98 million**).
- Additional funding to make communities in regional NSW more accessible (almost) (**\$0.72 million**).
- Productivity increase generated for business by Assisting Ability Links NSW participants gaining volunteer roles (**\$0.65 million**).
- Lower staff turnover generated by greater inclusiveness of people with disabilities leading to an improved working environment (**\$0.50 million**).

## Common outcomes for communities

These community outcomes are aligned with the NSW Government's Disability Inclusion Action Plans.



- Community organisations promoted as being actively inclusive of people with disabilities (**710 outcomes**).
- Organising or hosting education or awareness raising activities (**517 outcomes**).
- Implementing formal partnership arrangements relating to disability (**270 outcomes**).
- Delivering staff training on disability inclusion and awareness (**119 outcomes**).
- Changing internal policy documents to build-in inclusive practices (**31 outcomes**).
- Improving employment/recruitment processes to be inclusive of people with disabilities (**14 outcomes**).

## About this briefing paper

This summary document draws on the evaluation report commissioned by the North West Alliance from Ernst & Young, which was completed in February 2018. A copy of the full report is available on the Alliance Website at [nwalliance.org.au/resources](http://nwalliance.org.au/resources).

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We acknowledge the traditional owners of country throughout New South Wales where our programs are delivered. We acknowledge their continuing connection to land, water, sea and community. We pay respects to Australia's First Peoples, to their unique and diverse cultures, and to Elders past, present and future.

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An independent evaluation of the Ability Links NSW program in regional New South Wales was commissioned from Ernst & Young by the North West Alliance. It has found that, within the Alliance's footprint, Ability Links NSW has had multiple positive outcomes for people with a disability, their carers, families and the communities where the program operates.

Ability Links NSW has created benefits for government, both in terms of achieving policy goals and cost savings that free up funds for other purposes.



Main photo: The Hon. Thomas George MP for Lismore with Ability Linkers, Participants and community members at the launch of the All Ability Gymnasium in Anzac Park, Kyogle on 30 June 2016.



## About Ability Links NSW and the North West Alliance

Ability Links NSW is a NSW government funded program that provides a first point of contact for people with disabilities, their families and carers, to facilitate access to support and services in their local community. The state wide launch of Ability Links NSW in 2014 coincided with the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and now complements the NDIS.

Ability Links NSW is delivered by coordinators, or 'Linkers', who have a dual role. They work with individuals with disability, carers and families - known as 'participants' - to help them identify their goals and plan for their future, to access support and services in their local community, to build and develop strengths and skills, and to develop networks in their community.

Linkers also work with communities to support and enable them to become more supportive and inclusive of persons with disabilities, including working with community organisations, service providers, businesses and individuals to meet the needs of participants.

Linkers do this through direct contact with businesses and service providers, and

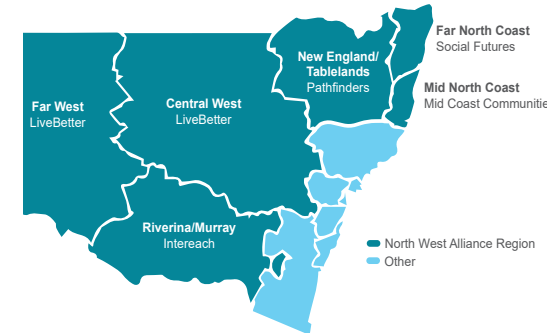
more generally by hosting and participating in community events.

Ability Links NSW is implemented by a range of different service providers across the whole of NSW, including the North West Alliance, which comprises Social Futures<sup>1</sup>, Intereach, LiveBetter<sup>2</sup>, Mid Coast Communities, and Pathfinders. Since its inception, Ability Links NSW has supported over 8,000 people with disabilities in regional NSW through the North West Alliance.

The North West Alliance footprint covers the NSW Family and Community Services (FACS) districts of Northern, Mid North Coast, New England Tablelands, Central West, Orana Far West and Murrumbidgee.

- 1 Social Futures was formerly known as the Northern Rivers Social Development Council [http://socialfutures.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/20160825\\_Media-Release\\_Social-Futures-Launch.pdf](http://socialfutures.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/20160825_Media-Release_Social-Futures-Launch.pdf).
- 2 LiveBetter was formerly known as CareWest <http://livebetter.org.au/carewest-rebrand/>

Ability Links NSW is delivered to most areas of regional New South Wales by the North West Alliance, in the regions shown here.



## Key results for financial year

FY17 (2016/17)

**3.60**

Benefit cost ratio

**\$38.97m**

Net present value

**\$42.46m**

Economic benefits

**\$11.51m**

Social benefits

**\$11.27m**

Avoided cost to government

**\$31.57m**

Benefits to participants and carers

**3,651**

New participants

**6,949**

Individual participant outcomes

Every dollar invested in Ability Links NSW has generated \$3.60 in benefits, translating to more than \$40 million in economic benefits and more than \$11 million in social benefits.

The total value of outcomes achieved by participants is estimated at \$18.25 million.



Two-thirds of participants stated they would not have achieved their outcomes without Ability Links NSW.

Ability Links NSW contributes to achieving the policy objectives of the NSW Government in a number of ways including the implementation of Disability Inclusion Action Plans.

It also generates economic benefits for the NSW Government in terms of avoided costs relating to the risk of homelessness for people with disabilities which is valued at \$0.41

million and substituting specialist services with accessible mainstream and community services.

In terms of the Federal Government, Ability Links NSW generates economic benefits through avoided welfare payments (\$10.04 million) and increased tax revenues from employment for people with disabilities (\$0.83 million).

The overall economic benefits to both NSW and Federal Governments is \$11.27 million.

Ability Links NSW also plays an active role in delivering the NDIS. It contributes to making the NDIS more productive and efficient, thereby reducing current and future unit costs.

The analysis also found that Ability Links NSW's northern NSW operations made a significant difference to the lives of the carers and families of people with a disability.

Ability Links NSW supports the carers and family members of people with disabilities by helping them to access information and make decisions for the people they care for. This often reduces stress

and allows them to engage in other activities. The economic value of this support is estimated to be \$13.32 million.

Ability Links NSW has engaged with 6,603 community organisations and community individuals since inception, with 5,970 engaged in FY17. This has had a far-reaching social impact on many communities by increasing their awareness

of disability, inclusiveness and accessibility.

Ability Links NSW has helped secure additional funding to make communities more accessible for people with disabilities (\$0.72 million). It is estimated that the total value of Ability Links NSW to the communities in regional NSW is \$11.85 million.



Ability Links NSW interacted with 4,030 participants in the 2016-17 financial year. Two thirds of participants achieved at least one outcome in terms of social goals and accessing services.