Healthy Strides Community Hub

The Healthy Strides Community Hub is the establishment of a dedicated service and program by the Healthy Strides Foundation, specifically for young people aged between 15 and 25 years living with neurodisabilities such as cerebral palsy and acquired neurological injuries or rare conditions.

The service will focus on **mobility, inclusion and engagement** in the broader community, shifting from solely a therapy lens to a socially driven preventative health approach.

Importance

The Healthy Strides Community Hub is crucial because young people with neurodisabilities face a significant "cliff" in services, community connection, and meaningful participation as they finish school and transition out of paediatric health services around 18 years of age. This lack of support can lead to sedentary routines, accelerating functional decline and mental health challenges. There is **currently a dearth of structured youth transition services for people with complex physical disabilities.**

The Healthy Strides Foundation is recognised as a world leader for our work in keeping young people with complex disabilities mobile, a capability unique to Western Australia. This project addresses a well-documented gap in services and aims to provide essential "healthy strides" for this population, as there are no other specialised services offering this kind of community-based support.

Stakeholder Involvement

The Community Hub will operate under The Healthy Strides Foundation and involve its dedicated and highly skilled team of physiotherapists, occupational therapists, rehabilitation assistants as well as technical and administrative staff. A core component is extensive co-design with parents and young people who have lived experience.

Specific individuals actively involved in shaping the service include Palmer (17 years of age with cerebral palsy), Jana (16 years of age with cerebral palsy), Diana (mother of Lincoln, a 15-year-old with a rare condition), Grace (16 years of age with cerebral palsy), Barbara and Adam (parents of Winnie, a 6 years old with a complex neurodisability) to name just a few.

The project will also leverage existing partnerships with organisations such as Kids Rehab and Rare Care at Perth Children's Hospital, community therapy providers, orthotists, the Town of Victoria Park, and the West Coast Eagles.

Service offerings

The service will be structured around a dedicated Youth Transition Coordinator role embedded within a newly established youth and young adult program. The program will draw on well-established frameworks already adopted in other clinical areas of tertiary care.

We will implement a five-phase transition methodology including:

1. Early Preparation and Engagement (15–16 years)
2. Capacity Building and Skill Development (17–20 years)
3. Transition Readiness Planning (18–20 years)
4. Transfer and Handover (21–25 years), and culminating in;
5. Post-Transfer Support and Community Participation (23–25 years).

The model is designed to foster independence and continuity of care, linking young people with adult systems and providing ongoing access to mobility opportunities and community connection during a critical time in life. While actively seeking a dedicated purpose-built space, the Healthy Strides Community Hub will start by supporting transition discussions and education immediately from our existing services and premises.

Expected Outcomes

The Healthy Strides Community Hub anticipates several key outcomes:

- A seamless, supported transition into adult health and disability systems, ensured by starting the service at age 15 years of age.
- Sustained physical activity and reduced risk of sedentary-related decline, addressing the documented irreversible mobility decline that can occur around age 22 years of age.
- Greater autonomy, participation, and life satisfaction for young adults with neurodisabilities.
- Improved health and emotional well-being through continued mobility access.
- The creation of a community of practice and belonging for young people who often experience isolation after leaving school.
    - The Community Hub will directly impact 63 youth and young adults (those serviced at Healthy Strides alone in 2024 who will need or will soon be needing this service) and indirectly impact at least 130 people, including parents and siblings within the 18 months.

The Healthy Strides Community Hub will be a transformative, inclusive space that redefines what is possible for young people living with physical disabilities. Grounded in clinical excellence, co-design, and research-led innovation, this Hub will be the gold standard for youth transition services in Western Australia. With a proven track record of sustainable impact, we are not just meeting a need—we are leading a movement. Funding this initiative means investing in a future where every young person, regardless of ability, can move, connect, and thrive with dignity and purpose. This is not just a service—it is an urgent call to action, and the time to act is now.