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# Goulburn Post

# P3

MEET THE 20-YEAR-OLD RUNNING FOR COUNCIL

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Friday June 29, 2012

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# Field of dreams opens

## Innovative facility to help people achieve aspirations

By TOM SEBO

**A**FTER almost a decade of hard work, a group of determined locals have helped to change the way the State cares for people with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities.

On Wednesday afternoon, Minister for Disability Services Andrew Constance and Member for Goulburn Pru Goward officially opened NSW's first Abbeyfield Disability House, which will provide 10 young adults with full time accommodation.

The State contributed \$1.8 million toward the project and has already committed to using the same model in Narrabri.

"This house is unique in its approach to supported accommodation because it focuses on independent living, rather than the traditional care model for residents," Minister Constance said.

"A home like this gives people with a disability the opportunity to be more independent and learn to be less reliant on their parents."

The house will have a live in carer, or house keeper, who will provide residents with two nutritious meals a day and make sure they are okay.

However, that will be the end of their duties. The house mates will be responsible for looking after themselves and have daily chores to complete.

The model is also financially self-reliant.

Each resident pays 70 per cent



**UNVEILING:** Minister for Disability Services Andrew Constance, Member for Goulburn Pru Goward and Abbeyfield chairperson Annemarie Athea officially opening Abbeyfield Disability House on Wednesday. Photo Peter Oliver.

of their disability pension and their government rental assistance and this covers all of their living expenses.

While it is extremely cost effective for the government, Minister Constance says it is the "quality of life outcomes" that government cares about.

In the last 15 months, the State has committed \$2 billion in growth funding to help deliver disability services, with the philosophy of funding tailored programs as opposed to one-size-fits-all bureaucracy.

"The beauty of the Abbeyfield model is that it will help people to

achieve their aspirations..." he said.

"There are a lot of people who have aging parent carers and concerns about their future. The philosophy behind the Abbeyfield model is to generate opportunities and meet the aspirations of people with disabilities." The

project began in 2003, when a Department of Aging, Disability and Home Care employee Anne Wiggan teamed up with a group of concerned local parents to find a solution to the plight facing their children.

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