



Beranga

Innovative early childhood education for children with an autism spectrum disorder



SDN in partnership with Autism Spectrum Australia (ASPECT)



SDN Beranga — Services in western Sydney

Questions and Answers

What is SDN Beranga?

SDN Beranga is a project developed by SDN Child & Family Services (SDN) and Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect). Beranga is an Aboriginal word in the local Dharug language meaning 'we belong'. SDN Beranga will provide a comprehensive long day care service incorporating the following two key components, a 'lighthouse centre' in Rooty Hill and 13 satellite centres, enabling greater flexibility in meeting individual child and family needs.

The service is being funded by the NSW Department of Human Services, Ageing, Disability & Home Care (ADHC) as part of their broader commitments to supporting children with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

SDN Beranga will be a demonstration, autism-specific service that integrates early childhood intervention and mainstream early childhood education. We will offer a comprehensive and flexible approach to early childhood education and early childhood intervention for young children with an autism spectrum disorder and their families.

SDN is building a long day care centre in Rooty Hill (the lighthouse centre) that will cater for 24 children with an autism spectrum disorder per day. The children will be aged from 2–6 years.

We will also work in partnership with 13 selected child care centres operated by a range of providers (satellite centres). These centres will be in Cumberland/Prospect, Inner West, Nepean and South West Sydney areas. The satellite centres will be supported to develop autism-specific practices.

SDN Beranga staff will include: early childhood educators, a special educator, a psychologist, speech pathologist, social worker, occupational therapist, cook, service manager and a centre administrator.

Our model will be built on three layers of practice:

- high quality early childhood education and care practices;

- evidenced based best practice early childhood intervention strategies; and
- comprehensive autism-specific approaches.

Who is SDN?

SDN is one of Australia's most experienced and trusted leaders in children's services, setting the standard for early education and care. We are a not-for-profit organisation putting children first and investing any surplus in the quality of our centres and programs.

At SDN we are passionate and committed, inclusive and innovative. We employ staff from a diverse range of backgrounds with wide-ranging professional skills and experience. Since we opened our doors in 1905, we have championed the rights of all children to have access to affordable care and education, and we have long been at the forefront of early childhood education.

Who is Aspect?

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is the country's largest not-for-profit autism specific service provider with a vision to overcome the isolation of autism. Our mission at Aspect is to build confidence and capacity with people who have an autism spectrum disorder, their families and communities by providing information, education and other services.

Founded in 1966, Aspect's evidence-based approach is designed to give people a greater capacity to succeed. Our values are to aim high, seek to understand and communicate clearly, to take personal responsibility, to inspire and innovate, show empathy and to make a difference.

What do you mean by the lighthouse centre and satellite centres?

The SDN Beranga lighthouse centre will be built and operated by SDN in Rooty Hill. The centre will be a demonstration centre for the most effective and established practices in the field of early childhood education for children with an autism spectrum disorder and their families.



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The 13 satellite centres will be selected long day care centres spread across Greater Western Sydney. The satellite centres will be operated by a range of different child care providers. The satellite centres will be supported to implement high quality practices for children with an autism spectrum disorder, as demonstrated at the lighthouse centre. SDN Beranga staff will work with the satellite centres so that practices are adapted for use in the mainstream child care setting.

What will happen at the Lighthouse centre?

The SDN Beranga lighthouse centre will be for children up to (but not including) the age of six years and not attending school, who are diagnosed with, or suspected of having, an autism spectrum disorder and/or undergoing diagnostic processes. The lighthouse centre in Rooty Hill will operate 7.30 am–6.00 pm, 50 weeks per year, Monday–Friday. The staff: child ratio will be 1:4. Children will be required to enrol for a minimum of two days per week. This centre will be for children not already attending a mainstream child care or preschool service, or a Department of Education and Training early intervention support class, and where there are demonstrated significant barriers that prevent the child from attending a mainstream child care centre at the time of enrolment.

The lighthouse centre will allocate places to those children and families with the greatest need for support.

What will happen at the satellite centres?

A minimum of four children with an autism spectrum disorder will be enrolled at each satellite centre. SDN Beranga specialist staff will work with the satellite centre early childhood staff to develop a high quality early childhood education program for children with an autism spectrum disorder in their child care setting. The early childhood educators in the satellite centres will develop expertise in using specific strategies that help each child with an autism spectrum disorder become a part of the centre community, and to ensure each child with an ASD has a sustainable place in child care.

Who will support the satellite centres?

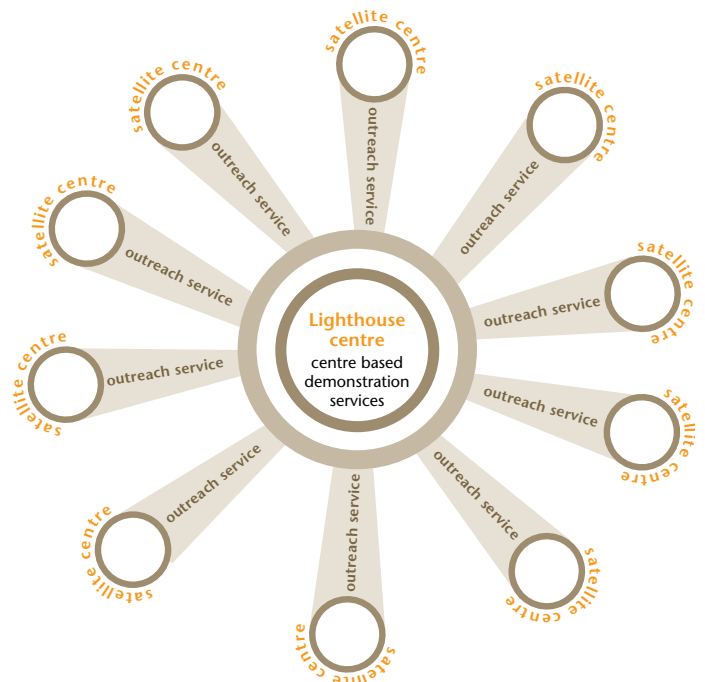
SDN will be entering into agreements with a range of child care providers in Greater Western Sydney to work with them as SDN Beranga satellite centres. SDN will not operate the satellite centres but will work in partnership with them.

How will satellite centres be chosen?

SDN is inviting eligible child care providers to express their interest in becoming an SDN Beranga satellite centre. Satellite centres will be selected based on selection criteria developed by SDN. Criteria will include a requirement to enrol a minimum of four children with an ASD, to be licensed for a minimum of 39 children per day, have at least one university qualified early childhood teacher and already be working collaboratively with their Inclusion Support Agency.

What will a satellite centre receive?

Satellite centres will receive coaching and support from the staff from SDN Beranga. The multi-disciplinary team



Autism Early Years Demonstration Service



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from SDN Beranga will support the satellite centres to develop and implement a plan. They will use coaching and capacity building approaches (including individual coaching for key staff). Satellite centre staff will be able to access:

- SDN Beranga staff for consultation and advice;
- tailored professional learning about early childhood education for children with an autism spectrum disorder;
- group reflection sessions focusing on autism-specific childcare strategies, including family-centred practices;
- a virtual hub of information about early education for children with autism spectrum disorders. Building on to the existing SDN Cumberland/Prospect Community of Learners website;
- support for the emotional well-being of satellite centre staff in recognition of the additional workload and the learning that will be required;
- assistance to support families and children in their transition to school or other services. Satellite centres will be coached to provide families and children with a supported transition and to understand and use existing transition systems.

What do satellite centres need to do?

Working with SDN Beranga and the centre's Inclusion Support Agency, satellite centres will need to develop and implement a plan for change with targeted outcomes, actions and time-frames. The plan will include strategies

for staff to work effectively with families, developing and implementing an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) with families, supporting the child and family to transition into and out of the child care environment. This work will build on the centre's existing Service Support Plan.

The satellite centre will, with support, be required to:

- make links with agencies who have direct contact with families with a child with an autism spectrum disorder who may want to access childcare;
- have a Service Support Plan in place, developed with their federally funded Inclusion Support Agency (ISA).

When will it start?

Satellite centres will start to become a part of SDN Beranga from July 2011. Information about satellite centres will be sent to everyone on the SDN Beranga register of interest database and on the SDN website (www.sdn.org.au).

I am a service provider — how can I help families to get into SDN Beranga?

The best way to help families is to help them to contact the SDN Beranga Register of Interest line on 1300 098 159.

What will happen next?

Centres can register their formal expression of interest by completing the brief application form and faxing the completed form to (02) 98972861.

Applications will then be shortlisted and those shortlisted services contacted.