

## **Senate Community Affairs Legislative Committee**

### **Question on Notice, Public Hearing 14 October 2016**

- **Witness name: Dr Ken Baker**
- **Question 1 from Senator Kakoschke-Moore**

#### **Answer**

Senator, you are correct that there have been changes affecting disability-related courses. Under the previous VET FEE-HELP scheme, individual students could seek FEE-HELP loans for certain Certificate IV courses as part of a trial. The exact courses varied across States but the Certificate IV Disability was included in several States. This trial will end under the new VET Student Loans scheme from January 2017.

The new VET Student Loans list contains courses at Diploma and above only. Diplomas in Community Services, Mental Health, Youth Services, Early Childhood Education and Care and the Advanced Diploma of Community Sector Management (among others) are relevant to the disability sector.

In general, NDS supports the Government's efforts to tighten practices around student loans and reduce abuses that have led to students being enrolled in unsuitable programs, high non-completion rates and a high burden of debt for students.

We support and advocate for employer training subsidies for existing workers who are undertaking VET courses, as we believe these have stronger educational and vocational outcomes. State and Territory governments are increasingly recognising this reasoning in their local skills lists and subsidy programs.