

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2010-2011**

Outcome 2 - Schools

DEEWR Question No.EW0854_11

Senator Nash provided in writing.

Question

AT RISK YOUNG PEOPLE

According to the departmental guidelines, service providers are required to provide case management services to "at risk young people". Is there a national definition of what constitutes "at risk"? How does the Department define "at risk"? How are the service providers required to identify young people "at risk"? Do service providers have the authority to work directly with schools to identify those that are at risk? Are there any privacy considerations?

Answer

AT RISK YOUNG PEOPLE

Is there a national definition of what constitutes 'at risk'? How does the Department define 'at risk'?

'At risk' is defined in the Youth Connection Program Guidelines as 'most at risk of disengaging from education or training and therefore not attaining Year 12 or equivalent and not making a successful transition to further study, training or work.' In practice, this means young people who are at risk of, or already have become early school leavers.

How are the service providers required to identify young people 'at risk'?

Young people may be referred to a Youth Connections provider through:

- schools
- other education and training providers
- other providers of services or programs involving young people
- self-referrals
- family members or guardians
- Centrelink
- Job Services Australia providers
- other young people
- other avenues.

Youth Connections providers will also proactively identify and connect with at risk young people through their re-engagement and outreach activities.

Youth Connections providers are responsible for confirming a young person meets the eligibility criteria before registering them as a participant. To be eligible, a young person must be;

- identified as being at risk
- an Australian citizen, permanent resident or on a humanitarian visa
- within the specified age range for the state or territory.

Young people who are eligible for the program will undergo a face to face individual assessment to identify the appropriate service for them. This assessment will gather information on the young person's personal and education circumstances, identify aspirations, goals and whether referrals to other specialist service providers are required.

Providers must have a process in place to ensure a consistent approach to assessments.

Do service providers have the authority to work directly with schools to identify those that are at risk?

Yes, Youth Connections service providers must build and maintain effective relationships with government and non-government schools within their Service Region. In most instances Youth Connections providers will work directly with schools, however depending on the state and territory specific requirements, needs of the region and the other available services, other local arrangements may be in place. For example, in Western Australia, Youth Connections service providers work closely with the State Government Participation Coordinators.

Are there any privacy considerations?

Youth Connections providers are bound by the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988*. Contracts with providers require the provider to comply with the Information Privacy Principles (IPPs) set out in Section 14 of the *Privacy Act 1988* which prescribe the rules for handling personal information.

Providers, their employees, and persons who are in possession or control of records containing personal information collected for the purposes of Youth Connections must ensure that they abide by the IPPs and the *Privacy Act 1988* when handling that information.

Provider obligations are further outlined in the Contract and Program Guidelines.

Each Youth Connections participant (or their parent/guardian) is required to sign a Registration Form which explains that personal information will be collected and lists the organisations who may have access to this information. On this form there is consideration for schools and parents.

Where schools refer to Youth Connections, the young person would need to agree to participate in the program before any personal information is collected.