

5.135 The Review recommended that there should be a clear definition of disability, based on the needs of the individual rather than the characteristics of disability, which is consistent across all DEET programs. This recommendation has been addressed by DEET to a considerable degree, and coding across DEET, DSS and DHH&CS will also provide more uniform data.¹⁸⁵ Skillshare's use of a scale, to determine level of need, will also help the program provide different levels of service.¹⁸⁶ The Review also recommended that SkillShare should provide a more comprehensive and coordinated response to those people with disabilities who have low to moderate levels of need. The Review proposed that those people with disabilities who have high levels of need and who require a more intensive or different response to that provided by SkillShare, should be catered for by other programs, although these were not specified. The Review concluded that it was essential that SkillShare develop more effective mechanisms for client assessment.¹⁸⁷

5.136 In response to the Review findings the number of places in SkillShare for people with disabilities were to be expanded under new initiatives; originally, one group-focussed project was to be established in each of the Department's twenty-seven administrative regions, and these projects would focus on people with disabilities having low to moderate levels of need. The Department advised the Committee early in 1992 that:

Experience has shown the group-focused projects were not geographically accessible to many people with disabilities, and that the concept of locating one of these projects in each . . . DEET Area did not always assist people with disabilities to access their services. Many of these projects concentrated on servicing people with a particular type of disability, thus limiting the ability of many people with disabilities to gain access to the project located in the relevant DEET Area.¹⁸⁸

In 1992 ten group-focussed projects will receive funding.

5.137 A second initiative was to be the establishment of Disability Access Support Units (DASUs).¹⁸⁹ In 1991 ten DASUs were funded at a cost of \$2.5 million, and these will continue to receiving funding in 1992.

185. See above Paragraphs 5.72-5.76. See also Appendix 6 and Appendix 7, Paragraph 4.20 and Attachment.

186. See Appendix 7, Paragraph 4.20.

187. *SkillShare: It's Working*, *op.cit.*, p. 9.

188. DEET letter to Committee, 21 January 1992, p. 2.

189. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 4791 (DEET).

These are located as follows¹⁹⁰:

New South Wales	3
Victoria	2
Queensland	2
South Australia (including the Northern Territory)	1
Western Australia	1
Tasmania	1

5.138 While DASUs can provide assistance to group-focused projects as well as mainstream ones, the expertise of staff in group-focused projects may mean there is less demand for some DASU services from this group of projects.

Other Commonwealth involvement in training

5.139 The National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET) is a statutory body established in 1988 which provides policy advice and information to the Minister on employment, education, training, youth affairs and research. The Minister has delegated his power to approve grants for innovative projects to the Chair of NBEET, subject to consultation between NBEET and DEET. Innovative grants have been approved to support the work of the Board and the Councils. One of the Board's priorities for the year 1990-91 was in the area of assistance to people with disabilities, and a project in 1991 involved the development of video training material for deaf people to remove barriers to communication and access to training which confront hearing impaired members of the deaf community.

5.140 This project was one of 11 funded through the Board's Employment and Skills Formation Council. Kensington Park (SA) TAFE undertook to provide material on video-conferencing as a learning tool, utilising a U.S. prototype, and eventually co-operated in the project with New South Wales TAFE. It is expected that the project will be complete by mid-1992.

5.141 Two further initiatives which enhance the training opportunities for those already in the work force have been put in place by the Commonwealth Government during the course of this inquiry. The Training Guarantee came into force on 1 July 1990. The aim of the Training Guarantee Act is 'to increase, and improve the quality of, the employment related skills of the Australian workforce so that it works more productively, flexibly and safely, thereby increasing the efficiency and the international competitiveness of Australian industry'. This is to be achieved by guaranteeing a minimum level of expenditure by employers on employment related training. Within the broad definition of eligible training, employers can choose the

190. DEET letter to Committee, 21 January 1992, pp. 1-2.

type of training which will have the maximum effect on productivity and competitiveness.

5.142 The Act is a targeted measure aimed at improving the efforts of firms which either did not invest in training or invested very little. Employers, including the Commonwealth and State governments, are subject to the Training Guarantee if their annual national payroll was at least \$200,000 in the 1990-91 financial year, indexed to \$214,000 in 1991-92.¹⁹¹ Employers must spend a minimum of 1% of their payroll on net eligible training expenditure in 1990-91 and 1991-92, rising to 1.5 per cent from 1 July 1992. Employers who fail to meet minimum levels of training expenditure are required to pay the shortfall to the Taxation Office. These payments are then paid into a Training Guarantee Fund that is redistributed through the States and Territories for training.

5.143 The exemption of some employers from the Training Guarantee, including benevolent societies, religious institutions and small businesses, may mean that sheltered workshops are not covered by the Training Guarantee.¹⁹² Section 27(4) of the Act states that an eligible training program that consists of or includes on-the-job training must include periods of instruction; and may include related periods of closely supervised practice; but cannot include any generally supervised practice or work experience.¹⁹³ Structured off-the-job programs may include programs which are currently offered at TAFE colleges. Such training may include literacy, numeracy, occupational health and safety, industrial relations, customer relations and hygiene; the responsibility for deciding whether a particular training program (such as TAFE courses of this nature) is eligible, rests with each employer.¹⁹⁴

5.144 The National Training Board Ltd (NTB) began operation in April 1990 as a joint initiative of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments. Operating as a public company, the NTB will work closely with employers, unions, training institutions and Governments, to establish nationally consistent skills standards. The role of the NTB is, in consultation and co-operation with industry, to 'develop and endorse national competency standards for occupations and classifications in industrial or enterprise awards or agreements'. These will include entry level, operative, trade, post trade, technician and para-professional qualifications. In 1990-91 six industry bodies were approved by the NTB as Competency Standards

191. The threshold will be indexed annually to Average Weekly Earnings.

192. This depends on a decision by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO); it is possible for sheltered workshops which are considered as viable business concerns to be subject to the Training Guarantee provisions if the ATO rules that they are operating as a business.

193. *Training Guarantee (Administration) Act 1990*, p. 15.

194. DEET Annual Report 1990-91, p. 66. See also DEET letter to Committee, 21 January 1992, pp. 6-7.

Bodies.¹⁹⁵ In 1990-91 the Commonwealth contributed \$590,000 to the NTB's operating costs.

State Government involvement in training

5.145 Responsibility for training is distributed between a range of State authorities including Training Boards, Departments of Labour and/or Industry and Community Services. The access by people with disabilities to training provided in the TAFE sector was discussed above in Chapter 4. Most State governments indicated that their training and labour market programs were directed to the unemployed or long term unemployed and therefore, to people with disabilities within this group. Generally such programs appear to share the Commonwealth government's emphasis on employment placement rather than job creation. State government involvement in training of particular relevance to people with disabilities includes special apprenticeship training, as well as specialist and mainstream programs and funding provided to community based and/or DHH&CS funded projects.

5.146 Many DSA services received State government funding, such as a CETP service at Burdekin TAFE, in Queensland, jointly funded by the Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations (DEVETIR) and DHH&CS, for potential workers with a mild or moderate intellectual disability.¹⁹⁶ Waverley Helpmates in Melbourne receive financial support from the Victorian Government. Examples of other types of community based projects funded by State governments are DEAC in Victoria and the Food for Thought coffee shop in South Australia. DEAC receives funding under the Victorian JobLink program to provide an employment assistance and placement service for long-term unemployed people. The Food for Thought coffee shop is an incorporated business operated on a commercial basis which was developed by the Vocational Resource Agency (VRA) with assistance from the South Australian Government's Office of Employment and Training. State Government assistance included an initial grant for market research and a feasibility study and the provision of a capital guarantee for a commercial loan of \$70,000 from the Commonwealth Bank to establish the business.¹⁹⁷

States – Apprenticeship training

5.147 The Disabled Apprenticeship Scheme run by the NSW Department of Industrial Relations, Employment, Training and Further Education recognises the special tuition and instruction needs of people with disabilities. Under the scheme up to 10 people each year (with a maximum of 40 people in the program at any one time) are recruited and maintained in State Government departments while they complete their apprenticeships. The Department pays the difference between the usual wage and the DAWS funding, and apprentices are able to take 1 day a week

195. DEET Annual Report 1990-91, p. 66-67.

196. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 4336 (Queensland Government).

197. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 18 (South Australian Government) and p. 171 (Vocational Resource Agency Inc.). See below for further discussion at Paragraph 6.15.

to attend courses at TAFE. The Scheme is not restricted to young people and is advertised throughout the State.

5.148 The Targeted Apprenticeship Access Program (TAAP) in Victoria provides access for women and other disadvantaged groups, including people with disabilities, to apprenticeships. Disability is defined as 'any physical or mental impairment which seriously hinders access to employment generally, but where the person is potentially capable of completing an apprenticeship successfully, even if extra help is required'.¹⁹⁸ This definition of disability is still used in 1992. It is important to note that a number of people with disabilities may not be identified as being in this program because they are listed under other headings, for example, 'women', and figures may be an under-representation of participation. In 1987-88, 4 of the 61 TAAP places offered went to people with disabilities, including people with hearing impairments and learning disabilities. The TAAP intake was 158 in 1988-89, including 6 people with disabilities. In 1989/90 the intake was 83, including 3 people with disabilities, and in 1990/91 8 people with disabilities were included in an intake of 151 people. A number of people are also referred by the Training Board to the Commonwealth Disabled Apprenticeship Wage Subsidy Scheme.¹⁹⁹

5.149 In Queensland, an early identification process administered by the then Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training targeted those apprentices and trainees with disabilities who needed assistance. Appropriate assistance is provided to the apprentices and trainees so identified in the course of their studies.²⁰⁰

States – Specialist programs

5.150 Evidence to the Committee from several State governments indicated that there was a range of training and labour market programs specifically designed to assist people with disabilities. While not exhaustive the following discussion provides an insight into the types of services currently being provided to people with disabilities presumably in response to identified needs.

5.151 The Workplace for Disabled Youth program funded 19 projects in NSW. In 1989-90 340 people with disabilities were placed in stable employment or vocational training opportunities at a cost of \$1.279 million. Another element of Workplace was Jobcoach, which was run in conjunction with the NSW Department of School Education, and targeted people with disabilities who are early school leavers to provide assistance to enable them to obtain skills necessary to seek and maintain employment. Students are targeted for this type of assistance mid-way through their Year 10.²⁰¹

198. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 5420 (Victorian Government).

199. See Paragraphs 5.91-5.92.

200. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 4311 (Department of Family Services, Queensland).

201. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 3952.

Recommendation

The Committee has made related recommendations at Chapter 4, Recommendations 7, 8 and 9.

The Committee RECOMMENDS:

11. That all people with disabilities who may require assistance to move into the workforce should be identified as requiring this assistance at least six months before leaving school and arrangements made for them to be registered and entered in training and transition programs.

5.152 Specialist programs in Victoria included two pilot programs. An Open Employment Training program, piloted by the Office of Intellectual Disability Services has provided support and training to people with an intellectual disability who wish to undertake paid jobs in open competitive employment. The program has been operating successfully with up to five regional office programs and 11 non-government sector programs. The program will be transferred to the Commonwealth under the Disability Agreement and could be operated by the Commonwealth Victorian State office of DHH&CS from July 1992. The Work Entry Scheme, a pilot project operated by the Victorian Department of Labour, had as its objective the securing of long-term award wage employment in both the private and public sector for young adults with intellectual disabilities.²⁰² At the end of the 1990/91 financial year it was decided to wind the pilot program down. By early 1992 one worker was assisting the remaining clients, with a number of clients having been referred to other services. The pilot project had placed 54 young people into paid employment, mostly in the private sector.

5.153 The South Australian Government indicated in early 1989 that it had several programs operating over a number of years which offered training and employment options to people with disabilities, including special consideration in examinations and a range of work experience within Departments. However, participation had been 'incidental, rather than targeted, and [people with disabilities] have formed only a small percentage of participants overall'.²⁰³ More recently the South Australian Government announced a special public service employment and training program for people with disabilities. Ten people with physical disabilities and five people with intellectual disabilities were to be employed by government departments during 1990-91, mainly in clerical areas. Under the scheme, estimated to cost \$186,000, trainees would receive a six month structured training program (incorporating on and off-the-job components) and a guarantee of ongoing employment. Importantly the program also provided educational sessions with co-workers. The scheme replaces the former vocational training program and has the added advantage of providing permanent positions at the conclusion of training and

202. *Transcript of Evidence*, pp. 5422-23 (Victorian Government).

203. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 12 (South Australian Government).

also the establishment of support networks across the State public service.²⁰⁴ The project was considered to have worked successfully and is continuing in 1992 under the management of the Staffing Programs Unit in the Department of Labour. The emphasis remains on Departments giving a commitment to accepting the individual placement as a permanent employee which avoids the problem of individuals receiving training but no permanent position. Assistance is also provided with the cost of transport to work, and this has proved very successful.

5.154 DEVETIR in Queensland noted that, while the Department made limited provision for post-school and vocational options for students with intellectual disabilities, 'programs are dependent upon the circumstances of particular geographical areas'.²⁰⁵ The Northern Territory government had previously operated a program which had placed a number of people in the Territory public service. Although the project was considered to have had some beneficial outcomes, the plan for the future is to concentrate on individual placements, with nominations possibly being made by an external organisation and training and assistance being provided by different sources.²⁰⁶

5.155 Limited resources affected the extent to which the Tasmanian government was able to offer transition programs or a range of training or related services for people with disabilities, particularly those who were leaving school. However, a very successful CETP service (JobMatch) has been operating in Hobart²⁰⁷ and TAFE provision of a living skills course has been of assistance in meeting some skill development needs. In Western Australia, the Authority for Intellectually Handicapped Persons worked with a CETP service (PE Personnel) to obtain jobs for people with disabilities in the Authority.²⁰⁸

Rehabilitation – The Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service (CRS)

5.156 The Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service (CRS), which is administered by DHH&CS, provides social and vocational rehabilitation programs to clients with disabilities. CRS services provide third stage social and vocational rehabilitation, as distinct from primary and secondary medical rehabilitation which is provided by the State health services. Third stage rehabilitation provides integration back into the community and assistance with the social and vocational skills a person requires whereas acute rehabilitation services are provided at the primary stage and

204. *Link Disability Journal* June/July 1990 p. 3.

205. Additional information supplied to the Committee by the Queensland Government following the hearing on 4 October 1990.

206. See also below, Paragraph 5.255.

207. See below, Paragraphs 5.239, 5.242.

208. See below, Paragraph 5.260.

restoration of function is the focus of the secondary stage.²⁰⁹ A range of services is provided to people with disabilities of working age who are assessed as having the potential to make considerable rehabilitation gains, such as substantially improving their ability to work or to live independently. Programs may include all or any of the following goals – a place in the workforce, new levels of personal independence, and participation in family and social life. The objective of the rehabilitation sub-program is to ‘reduce the personal, social and financial cost of disability to the individual and the community’.²¹⁰ The CRS assists compensation recipients (along with private rehabilitation providers), although priority in the provision of its services is given to people eligible for pensions and benefits.

The Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service has historically had very close links with the Department of Social Security. Up to 60 per cent of its clients are pensioners and beneficiaries and these continue to be the single [most] significant target group for the Service.²¹¹

5.157 The CRS participated in the Disability TaskForce, and in a number of pilot projects in conjunction with DSS and DEET. These projects explored ways to improve the coordination of Commonwealth programs by improving the referral mechanisms between DSS and the CRS and to ensure that people with disabilities ‘have access to the services most beneficial to their social and economic independence’.²¹² ‘Rehabilitation programs are provided free of charge to Pensioners and Beneficiaries not covered by compensation arrangements, and to others who cannot meet the cost of their rehabilitation programs. The CRS recovers the cost of programs provided to clients covered by compensation arrangements ...’²¹³

5.158 During 1990-91 the CRS assisted 24,746 people, which was in excess of the target of 21,000 and 4,257 people achieved ‘employment outcomes’. Thirty-six per cent of clients were compensable. The total number of CRS units around Australia is now 140, compared with 120 in 1989-90. An additional 11 specialist units were commenced, six of which are co-located with existing units.

5.159 As part of the Disability Reform package the role of the CRS will be expanded. The CRS will provide an extra 4,500 places a year by 1993-94 to cope with the extra demand expected to result from the introduction of the more active employment strategy for people with disabilities as part of the Disability Reform. In addition, the CRS will establish six special rehabilitation units specifically designed to provide rehabilitation services to people with psychiatric and related drug and

209. *Transcript of Evidence*, pp. 1513 and 1528 (DHH&CS).

210. CRS Annual Report 1990-91, p. 1.

211. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 1514 (DHH&CS).

212. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 97 (S.A. Group Enterprises Incorporated).

213. CRS Annual Report 1990-91, p. 1.

alcohol disabilities.²¹⁴ To be established on a trial basis initially, these units will provide an additional 1200 places per annum and significantly increase the capacity of the CRS to assist people with psychiatric disabilities.

5.160 In 1991-92 the CRS will be involved in the Assessment Panels which will assess the workforce potential of persons applying for Disability Support Pension.²¹⁵ 1500 places will be provided by CRS over 1991-92 for DSS clients who have not previously used CRS services. Overall the Service's target for 1991-92 is to provide services for 26,000 people and increase the vocational outcome rate to 50 per cent of those who complete programs.²¹⁶ The Committee has noted the particular difficulties of access to service provision for people with disabilities in rural and remote areas²¹⁷ and believes that the CRS is an essential element in the equitable distribution of services for people with disabilities.

3. EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

5.161 Epic Employment Service, a CETP service in Brisbane, was one of the most forthright witnesses giving evidence to the Committee. The organisation, while clearly successful in placing clients, was also aware of factors which inhibited the development of employment options for others.

We cannot presume to know the answers to the problems disabled people must face or the difficulties that specialised resources must overcome when looking at employment prospects.

All we can do is use whatever means possible to highlight deficiencies in the present system and suggest "seemingly" appropriate mechanisms to assist changes and overcome . . . obstacles.²¹⁸

5.162 Because employment is not 'work' in a vacuum, the effectiveness of a number of government employment and training programs/services cannot be judged purely in terms of productivity levels and cost-effectiveness, but must take into consideration the other benefits which they offer to people with disabilities. A number of programs operate successfully in some ways, but are not cost-effective; others which appear to balance the books may have very little benefit in other terms and many are difficult to measure in terms of qualitative outcomes.

5.163 As suggested above, training courses especially designed to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups may not operate successfully if they are so general they cannot

214. *ibid*, p. 2.

215. See above, Paragraph 5.82.

216. DHH&CS Program Performance Statement 1991-92, pp. 150-2.

217. See Paragraphs 2.37-2.42.

218. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 4182 (Epic Employment Service, M.O.R.E. Inc.).

meet key specific needs that make the difference between success and failure. Training courses, operating as an integral part of sheltered employment, may produce more meaningful skills²¹⁹ than courses which reinforce differences through students repeating them continually without noticeable progression, or 'job' programs that students cannot even get to because of physical barriers.

5.164 In the remainder of this chapter and in Chapter 6 the current employment options available to people with disabilities are examined and the benefits and disadvantages of these are outlined. This is done in a manner which seeks to relate broad needs to available services/programs and which leads, therefore, to suggestions about future employment options and how those might meet the needs both of the individual and of different groups of people with disabilities.

NEW EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

5.165 The *New Directions* report noted that the importance of paid employment had been a theme which was constantly reiterated by people with disabilities during the Handicapped Programs Review and reflected the high value society placed on vocational activity in determining an individual's status.²²⁰ The *Disability Services Act 1986* was formulated in the light of this review as well as of the broad changes that had occurred in the community's perceptions and expectations of people with disabilities. One of the goals of the Act is to increase the opportunities for people with disabilities to undertake worthwhile work in return for a fair wage and the Act provides for assistance to eligible organisations to provide employment services 'which will offer wage generating work with appropriate conditions such as job security and career advancement'.²²¹ The Competitive Employment Training (and) Placement (CETP) and the Supported Employment (SE) programs are designed to provide complementary services, taking 'account of the differing circumstances, aspirations, needs and disabilities of potential employees'²²², with the primary focus of both service types being the provision of **real, paid work**. Thirty-four new services were developed in 1990-91, providing places for 543 people, 21 CETP services (311 people) and 13 Supported Employment services (232 people). As part of the Disability Reform package 4000 places will be created over 3 years, including 1334 places for 1991-92 at a cost of \$7.7 million. Those will be targeted to young school leavers.²²³

219. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 442. The Spastic Society of New South Wales stated that it had no trouble placing people in open employment if they could produce at an award rate – their training, therefore, would appear comprehensive on a number of levels, at least for some of their clients.

220. *New Directions, op.cit.*, p. 34.

221. DCSH, *Disability Services Program – Service Type Descriptions – Competitive Employment Training and Placement Services*, p. 1. (Attachment to Submission No. 178 (Department of Community Services and Health) 1989).

222. *ibid.*

223. DHH&CS Program Performance Statement 1991-92, p. 137.

5.166 In 1989 evidence to the Committee, the Director of the Employment Section in the then DCSH, noted that the focus on the availability of 'real choices' for people with disabilities by those groups who had some reservations about the objectives of the DSA overlooked the fact that, before the DSA, people with disabilities had not had any effective choices.

Under the *Handicapped Persons Assistance Act*, the range of employment options was limited specifically to sheltered workshops, and there were very cut and dried distinctions as to what was and what was not [available]. The *Disability Services Act* opens up a wide range of flexible options that are available to people, that will enable them to exercise their choice as to where they want to go.²²⁴

5.167 Centacare, the sponsor of one of the earliest CETP services, Direct Employment, highlighted the benefits arising from the specialisation of services; it allowed for small programs which were seen as enhancing integration opportunities and creating consumer choice.

When several specialised choices are available the service consumer has the opportunity to make the same choice that others make when evaluating employment options, making the same trade-offs among security, work, life quality and income.²²⁵

5.168 In their submission the Department denied criticisms that the DSA was forcing people into the open labour market without adequate support.

The DSA clearly recognises the individual vocational needs of people with disabilities and the varying levels of support they require to engage in paid work.

Supported employment services are designed for participants who would not be able to perform paid work at . . . award wage rates unless . . . support was provided on an ongoing basis. The aim of supported employment services is to obtain or provide employment together with training and support which is ongoing and may be intensive.

Competitive employment training and placement services, on the other hand, are designed to provide employment in the open market for participants who will be able to work on their own, or with infrequent support, after an initial intensive period of training and support. In this service type, training and support would generally be substantial

224. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 1537 (DHH&CS).

225. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 654 (Centacare).

initially, then diminish as the person becomes more proficient in the job.²²⁶

5.169 In December 1990 Dr Harmer (then First Assistant Secretary of the Disability Services program) described the Department's interpretation of matching these services to an individual's level of intellectual disability:

Quite a lot of the people in sheltered workshops have mild intellectual disabilities and the Department believes with the appropriate services and training [they] would be able to access jobs in open employment. For those who are more severely intellectually disabled, the appropriate service may well be a supported employment service where that person, with ongoing support, accesses a job in open employment. But that person has ongoing support, either through working in a work crew or an enclave or perhaps individual support.²²⁷

5.170 Services funded under the DSA frequently offer more than one mode of the 'new' services; for example independent living training and supported employment services are run in tandem by Sharing Places and Working Places in the ACT; Westwork have recently established a supported employment program to meet the employment needs of people with disabilities who require more intensive support and to complement their CETP service.

5.171 In their evidence to the Committee, as in their literature, the Department has emphasised the flexibility of the services offered under the DSA. In a series of papers explaining the service types to be funded under the DSA, the Department was at pains to stress that:

[these papers are] intended to be descriptive, not prescriptive, of the features and aspects that need to be considered in the development of service delivery models under each service type . . . These key features are derived from the Principles and Objectives of the Act and encourage diversity and flexibility of service provision within the legislative boundaries laid down for each service type.²²⁸

5.172 In a similar vein the Department perceived the financing strategies for employment services as a 'basis for negotiation',²²⁹ with existing services, but as realistic for the new services. However 'one thing we are not wanting to do is to

226. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 1499 (DHH&CS).

227. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 5934 (DHH&CS).

228. DCSH – DSP – Service Type Descriptions – CETP, p. 1 (Attachment to Submission No. 178, (DHH&CS)).

229. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 1563 (DHH&CS).

enshrine the financing strategy in legislation'.²³⁰ While flexibility in service provision is the Department's clearly stated objective, it is difficult to assess whether it is succeeding in maintaining such flexibility on the ground. The perception of a certain degree of inflexibility in Departmental officers has been one of the most consistent criticisms raised during this inquiry.²³¹ The brevity of the financing strategy document, while presumably considered by the Department as an indication of flexibility, may also suggest limited consideration or awareness of additional funding needs (such as staff training, development of business and administration skills, variation of costs depending on location) essential to the proper operation of services.²³² Similar 'flexibility' was seen as desirable by the Department in other areas:

... in view of the variety of models under each service type that will be provided, to get involved in establishing standards and looking at accreditation at this point would be to lose sight of the main objective, which is to pursue the implementation of the Disability Services Act. Certainly, further downstream it might make sense for that to be revised and to be pursued but at the moment there are so many other demands and because of the variety of models and the variety of services under those service types it would be a very, very significant task.²³³

5.173 To some extent, this flexibility was supported by established service providers.²³⁴

Even under the current funding formula we are quite supportive of the Department's attitude that, rather than putting them into regulation at this point, we use the next year or two to ensure that these costs that are the notional amounts allow the programs to be run, because we would shudder at the thought of having them in regulation and then finding out that the programs could not be run at that cost. Once again, it is a catch 22 situation. You want directions, you want guidelines and you want regulations. On the other hand, when these are put up then obviously it opens up the debate about the appropriateness or otherwise of these guidelines.²³⁵

230. *ibid.*

231. See for example, *Transcript of Evidence*, pp. 696-7 (Centacare).

232. See below, Paragraphs 5.202-5.218.

233. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 1558 (DHH&CS).

234. *Transcript of Evidence*, pp. 1459-60 (ACROD Limited).

235. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 1460 (ACROD Limited).

5.174 There has been some concern expressed about the adequacy of funding²³⁶ and about the need for other forms of monitoring and assessment of services. Many submissions to the inquiry raised general concerns with the impact of the DSA vocational types and employment models. It should be noted that these concerns were expressed by two distinct groups, those providers committed to the traditional sheltered employment model, and those providers actually involved at the coalface in delivering the 'new' employment services.

5.175 Given the extent of the waiting lists for services run by their affiliates, ACROD advocated 'wide-ranging and affordable'²³⁷ employment options for people with disabilities.

There is not enough money to go around now . . . A concentration on more expensive smaller models because of strongly held ideological convictions about what constitutes the best form of service for people with disabilities can in effect be detrimental to the best interests of that same group.²³⁸

5.176 The perception of an elite service for a minority has gained wide currency among many of those who are concerned about aspects of the DSA. A former member of the Committee raised this issue with the Department in 1989.

Also if we are going to go along this Rolls-Royce route that you want to put us on, and have a few people riding in Rolls-Royces instead of all of them going in Holdens, are you going to be able to fund it? That was one of the things ACROD was concerned about and I am concerned about it too.²³⁹

5.177 The Department has acknowledged that the level of funding is not adequate to meet the growing need for services but has countered these criticisms by arguing that disability services is not an 'entitlement program'.²⁴⁰

it is basically a program which funds to the capacity of the Government to fund, and we do with those funds as much as we can to meet the growing need. Clearly, there would be some people,

236. *Transcript of Evidence*, pp. 430-3 (The Spastic Society of New South Wales).

237. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 1374 (ACROD Limited).

238. *ibid.*

239. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 1539 (DHH&CS).

240. *Transcript of Evidence*, pp. 4268 (Endeavour Foundation), 4748-9 (DHH&CS). See above, Paragraph 1.21.

perhaps many, coming out of special schools that will not have opportunities in the program.²⁴¹

What we have to remember is that in the longer term those people [who go into an open employment setting], if they do settle in their jobs, will not require ongoing support; so that those people will no longer have a continuing demand on the service.²⁴²

5.178 Other concerns which were canvassed included the perception of a lack of flexibility by DHH&CS in implementing these models; the impact of the current and proposed financing strategies on service provision; the ability of people with intellectual and other disabilities to compete in the open labour market; and the nature of the work performed.

5.179 Some organisations believed that open employment was not a viable option for some people with disabilities:

While Minda has always recognised that the most appropriate workplace for disabled people is in a normal community/commercial open employment setting, the reality is that job opportunities are extremely limited, particularly for the intellectually disabled and much more difficult for those people with severe disabilities coupled with behaviour problems.²⁴³

5.180 Others, like Summit Industries in North West Tasmania, regarded open employment as a natural progression but were concerned about the constraints on the number of people CETP programs were able to assist.

The [newly established] program in Burnie will probably attend to about 18 people per year. Out of probably 50 who have disabilities we could refer 18 highly employable people today. It seems that there will be a lot of people in long-term supported employment because there is not a service with the scope to take up their open employment needs . . . We are concerned that while the program in Burnie will meet a need, it will touch only a very small number of people.²⁴⁴

5.181 The problems of adjustment to the new vocational models and concern about the emotional impact on clients were also raised. Several submissions highlighted the impact of stress on people with disabilities.

241. *Transcript of Evidence*, pp. 4748-9 (DHH&CS).

242. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 1562 (DHH&CS).

243. Submission No. 156, covering letter, p. 1 (Minda Incorporated).

244. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 5389 (Summit Industries).

[there is] concern . . . that the current focus on productive employment, wages and normal working conditions is detrimental to the welfare [of people with disabilities] . . . they are now susceptible to many of the pressures that exist in the wider workplace without having the necessary skills to cope with these pressures.²⁴⁵

Another witness made a similar point in talking about the psychological pressure faced by some workers:

It is acknowledged that in mainstream employment . . . pressure is a fact of life. However, our concern is that many intellectually disabled workers in sheltered workshops are not equipped to deal with such pressure and this . . . results in a reduction in their quality of life.²⁴⁶

5.182 Many services acknowledged the importance of support from family members or other key persons in the job seeker's life as essential to their clients' success in the new employment models. While support is important to all workers, it is recognised as being a critical determinant for a successful career for people with disabilities, so much so that its existence (in conjunction with motivation on the part of the clients) is often the main condition of registration with a service. This is true for CETP services such as PE Personnel and JobMatch.²⁴⁷

It is something that we have found that really does not work if the family or the significant others are not supportive of somebody going into open employment.²⁴⁸

The people who succeed most often in training and employment, are people who have an extremely supportive home environment, and without this support, it is almost guaranteed that the young person will not succeed.²⁴⁹

5.183 However, the majority of services appear to be aware of these problems and some services indicated to the Committee that they provided unlimited support and follow-up to their clients after they have been placed in a job and were aware of the emotional impact of major changes in their clients' working lives and the need for support:

245. Submission No. 109 (ACTIV Foundation). See also Submission No. 146, p. 1 (Emmanuel Centre for Disabled People) on the effects of stress in open employment.

246. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 5266 (AAMR-WA). See also *Transcript of Evidence*, pp. 1167-8 (Professor T.R. Parmenter).

247. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 480 (Jobsupport Inc.), p. 5207 (PE Personnel) and p. 5338 (JobMatch).

248. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 5172 (Project Employment Inc.).

249. Submission No. 98, p. 4 (Ngeringa). See also *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 5389 (Summit Industries).

Whatever it takes; unlimited. They have our cards which allow them to ring us at night-time at our homes because that is when the darkness is there and they are tired, things look a bit bleak. So we are on tap all the time . . . they do need that initially. I had a young lady today who had a little cry . . . She missed her friends; she was up a notch and she got left out of the conversation. They are things on which we have to go into the factories and try to get a co-worker²⁵⁰ to help.²⁵¹

5.184 In particular there was concern about the impact on many of the older people now in sheltered workshops who may not be able to participate in the new service streams. There may be a problem in 'selling' the new employment services to some older people with disabilities. JobSupport Inc, another of the early CETPs pointed out in their evidence that:

The older clients get, the fewer referrals we get. I do not believe that we would have had more than one or two referrals over 50 in the entire three years that we have been running. There would be fewer in their forties, fewer in their thirties. Most of them come straight from school or they come to us in their early twenties. Some of the early reports I heard from the work the Department did were that that was a fairly typical pattern.²⁵²

5.185 The Social Security Review noted that over the last decade there has been a decline in the proportion of older people (in the age group 55 to age pension age) who are in the labour force.²⁵³ Those who remain in the labour force and who are unemployed face additional barriers to employment, such as discrimination by prospective employers on the basis of their age and linked to this a greater likelihood of long duration on benefit extending for some until they qualify for age pension.²⁵⁴ Clearly the existence of such impediments to labour force participation by older people is not confined to those 55 and over and will have some impact on the employment prospects and expectations of other workers of mature age.

5.186 A survey by the Office of Disability in 1989 (discussed below) of workers gaining employment under the new service types showed that only 6 per cent of respondents were aged over 40. There may be a need to target this age group for

250. Several services have identified the importance of co-workers and some overseas schemes have utilised co-workers in formal structures: see Paragraphs 5.246-5.248

251. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 4481 (Australian Red Cross Society, Queensland Division).

252. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 529 (JobSupport Inc.). Data received from JobSupport in 1991 showed that the trend had been maintained.

253. Social Security Review Issues Paper No 4: *Income Support for the Unemployed in Australia: Towards A More Active System*, AGPS, 1988, p. 213.

254. Social Security Review Issues Paper No 2, *Too Old For A Job Too Young For A Pension?*, Canberra, 1986, p. 15.

promotional purposes to make them aware of the benefits they could gain from the new service types. There may also be a need for the Department to encourage service providers to ensure older workers have access to these new services.

5.187 While there have been numerous reviews and evaluations of specific agencies, no attempt had been made to undertake a full-scale evaluation of the implementation of the new service types under the DSA until 1991-92. The Committee notes that the DHH&CS undertook a study of CETP and Supported Employment services in 1991, which was expected to report by March 1992 and a study on the employment environment for people with disabilities.²⁵⁵ The Office of Disability recognised the paucity of information on the operation of the new employment initiatives in Australia and undertook a survey to provide this information to the Committee.²⁵⁶ The survey provides an interesting discussion of the advantages of CETPs (and a counterpoint to the criticisms and concerns of other interested parties) as perceived by a group of successful clients and interpreted by the Departmental officers involved in the analysis of the data.

5.188 Responses to any survey should always be interpreted in the light of the way in which the questions on the survey instrument were phrased. The Office of Disability acknowledged that the results obtained 'were fairly limited in their scope and representativeness' but were confident that they provided some broad indications of success of the CETP services.²⁵⁷ The survey covered 11 CETP and 3 SE services and covered a total of 84 workers, 73 of whom were CETP clients. The data on SE services is not regarded as reliable due to the small numbers.

5.189 It should be noted that of the persons surveyed, 81 per cent had an intellectual disability, 8 per cent had a physical disability and the remaining 11 per cent had sensory, psychiatric or multiple disabilities.²⁵⁸ The level of disability was not clearly determined, particularly in respect of the eight people with physical or multiple disabilities; of these, 'four were confined to wheelchairs, and three of these also had limited use of their hands and arms'.²⁵⁹ Of eighteen intellectually disabled people the level of disability ranged from borderline to moderate. The author of the survey considered that the majority 'were probably mildly disabled, with the rest probably falling in the borderline range'.²⁶⁰

255. DHH&CS Annual Report 1990-91, p. 406. DHH&CS Program Performance Statement 1991-92, p. 137. See also Appendix 7, Paragraphs 7.3-7.6.

256. *A Survey of the New Vocational Services in Australia: Can They Achieve Their Goals?* Office Of Disability September 1989, hereafter cited *OOD Survey*. See also *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 4745 (DHH&CS).

257. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 4745 (DHH&CS Office of Disability).

258. *ibid.*

259. *OOD Survey*, p. 4.

260. *ibid.*

However, these descriptions are not precise enough to draw any conclusions about level and type of disability and the appropriateness of different types of employment.

5.190 The survey was limited to those who had been unemployed or had previously been in sheltered employment for at least 3 months – on the basis that people coming straight from school would not be able to make valid comparisons with existing services. At the time the survey was planned no prescribed services had been transferred to Section 10 of the DSA so the most appropriate services²⁶¹ were selected for the survey. The aim of the survey was to examine the impact on people with disabilities and their families on gaining employment through services funded under s.10 of the DSA. Survey data of interest to the Committee in its deliberations included a number of areas which were also raised by numerous witnesses throughout the inquiry – the level of wages, the variety and type of work, relationships with co-workers, stress on families, and income and job security.

Key findings of the survey included:

- Half the respondents were in unskilled or semi-skilled production jobs, one quarter were in service industries (cleaners, laundry workers, kitchen hands, etc) while a further 11 per cent were engaged in garden maintenance.
- Most workers (89 per cent) liked their jobs, citing their work or the work environment, conditions of employment, contact with people and the pay as reasons.
- Respondents reported that their family and friends were generally pleased that they had obtained work. Negative reactions tended to be either short-lived and subsided once the worker's position became established or were confined to one member of the family.
- Almost all had made friends with people at their work. Two thirds had learnt new things as a result of their job (for example, work, living or social skills).
- Overall, workers were receiving a mean after-tax income of \$476 per fortnight (\$492 for CETP workers²⁶²) and had increased their incomes by an average of \$195 per fortnight. One quarter were receiving full or part pension payments.²⁶³

261. That is, services which were thought to have the highest probability of being eligible for section 10, or had been approved as new services under that section of the DSA, *OOD Survey*, p. 2.

262. These estimates of income appear high compared with those provided to the Committee by PE Personnel (Perth) – in 1989/90 people employed with their assistance had an average wage of \$226 per week. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 5195 (PE Personnel).

263. Wages could not be compared easily with rates of AWE because of the fact that some people were working part-time.

As is noted, the jobs were in semi-skilled or unskilled areas, and many people were not yet able to obtain the higher paying jobs.²⁶⁴

5.191 The survey also asked parents and other family members about changes in the worker's outlook or behaviour since starting in their new job. Some of the comments made included:

He's a lot more independent . . . He had no confidence – he wasn't doing anything practically, for himself – now he's quite confident – he gets himself up.

Do you think you made the right decision? Yes. He hated it there (at the Sheltered Workshop), he really hated it. It was the best thing that could have happened. I didn't think he'd get outside employment – he got the job after he went there a couple of times. He gets up and goes off himself every day.²⁶⁵

5.192 In the 1991-92 Program Performance Statement DHH&CS stated that the objectives of the 1991-92 evaluation of new models of employment services were to:

- assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the new models of employment service against the objectives of the *Disability Services Act*;
- make recommendations about those models which are most and least successful in consumer placement and in the retention of consumers at award rates in open labour market settings, taking into account level of disability;
- assess the range and quality of outcomes for consumers, i.e. appropriate wages and work conditions, employment opportunities, increased independence, raising of self esteem;
- consider the processes and costs associated with each employment model against quality of outcomes for clients;
- establish a data base for items such as characteristics of service providers and characteristics of service recipients; and
- recommend areas for further research.²⁶⁶

5.193 The Committee has referred above to a number of factors which may have an impact on access to, and use of, services. It also discusses additional factors which service providers and others consider important in the provision of effective services.

264. Paragraphs 5.253-5.254.

265. *OOD Survey*, pp. 11-12.

266. DHH&CS Program Performance Statement 1991-92, pp. 137-8. See also Appendix 7, Paragraphs 7.3-7.4.

Consequently, the Committee believes that continual evaluation of services is essential and that evaluation must define the client's needs and the ways in which the service does or does not meet these. While it may be true that one service type can be reproduced to some extent, it is also likely – as has been stated by some witnesses – that the copying of a ‘successful’ model is not in the best interests of all concerned.

Recommendations

The Committee RECOMMENDS:

12. That future evaluation of CETP and SE service types be carried out on a regular basis, and that evaluations provide information on clients, as follows:

- socio-economic background;
- level of disability;
- education;
- use of other services;
- level of support needs;
- extent of family support;
- the length of job retention (for each job if more than one);
- possibilities for promotion;
- permanency of employment;
- extent and appropriateness of part-time work;
- relationship (if any) between part-time work and type of disability;
- previous work experience;
- outcome for clients;
- areas where clients believe services are not producing useful outcomes or where clients could suggest improvements.

The Committee RECOMMENDS:

13. That evaluation of CETP and SE services and service staff be carried out regularly. Such evaluations should include an assessment of:

- number, qualifications and experience of staff;
- amount and type of training of staff, whether this level of training is appropriate and whether more resources are needed for staff training;
- availability of assistance to the service from specialist services (for example, from the NTAU²⁶⁷ or an equivalent service).

5.194 The importance of moving into valued employment has been noted by other people with disabilities. A witness to the Committee told of her experiences in seeking open employment before being placed in a job with the help of PE Personnel:

I saw the Blind Institute advertising for some people in their office. I applied and got an interview. I got the job for two weeks and did not get paid. I waited for them to get back to me and when they did not I rang them up, only to be told it was work experience . . . So the next year I applied at Para-Quad . . . I worked there for about two years and a job came up in the department I was in. I applied for it and was told that I was a sheltered employee. After believing I was a trainee clerk for two years, they turned around and told me I was a sheltered employee. I told them what they could do with the job and quit. I believed that I was exploited in both of those areas. [following PE Personnel's intervention] I was able to be placed in a part-time casual job at the Titles Office . . . I had been there for seven months. The Director came down and asked me what I wanted to do. I said computer work. They then asked me to go up to data entry as they were short staffed. **Now I am up there as permanent part-time. Everyone treats me as one of the team and feels that I make a valuable and worthwhile effort.** [emphasis added]²⁶⁸

5.195 The Committee, in the course of its hearings and inspection program, heard similar comments from many workers in the new employment services, their families and their advocates.

Competitive employment training and placement (CETP)

5.196 Competitive employment training and placement services enable people with disabilities to obtain and retain paid employment in the general workforce by identifying placement opportunities and providing appropriate training and support to enable workers to competently perform and retain a specific job. By August 1990 there were 83 CETP services receiving funding, including 50 new services,

267. See below, Paragraphs 6.68, 6.175-6.177.

268. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 5203 (PE Personnel).