



May 7 2002

Mr John Carter
Secretary
Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
Suite 1.61
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Carter

Re: Inquiry on the education of students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, throughout all levels and sectors of education

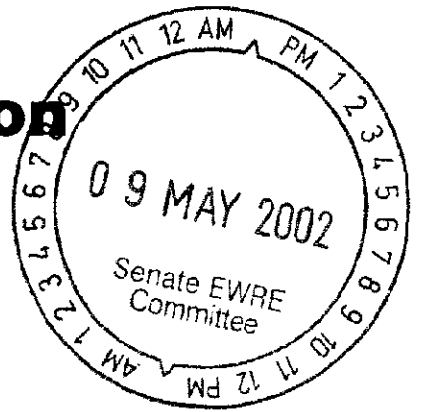
Thank you for your letter dated March 14 2002 inviting the Tasmanian Department of Education to make a submission to the above inquiry.

I enclose the Department's submission and look forward to receiving further information on site visits and public hearings once details have been determined.

Yours sincerely

Dr Martyn Forrest
Secretary

Tasmanian Department of Education



SUBMISSION

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee Inquiry into the Education of Students with Disabilities

SCHOOL SECTOR

Statement in response to the Terms of Reference of this inquiry.

a) Whether current policies and programs for students with disabilities are adequate to meet their education needs.

Background

The Tasmanian Department of Education's *Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Regular Schools Policy* (1994) states that the 'Placement of students with disabilities in regular schools is the preferred educational option in Tasmania. To the fullest extent possible, students with disabilities should be educated in the company of their age peers while also being provided with curriculum and support that effectively meets their need.' The review of this policy, undertaken between February and December 1999, indicated that there is strong support for the principle of inclusive education and that significant progress has been made since the introduction of the policy. The review also identified areas of concern regarding the application of the policy. The forty-three final recommendations arising from the review formed the basis of an implementation plan, which is being overseen by a Special Education Advisory Committee established for this purpose. (A copy of the Final Recommendations is included at **Attachment 1**)

Currently, just over 65% of students identified via the statewide Category A Moderation process as having the most severe disabilities are educated in regular schools. The remainder are enrolled in special schools, with a small number of those students undertaking part of their learning program in a regular school. There are no special units within regular schools and no special schools for students with behaviour problems. There are 6 special schools with a total enrolment of 151.6fte. The parents of students with significant disabilities have the right to request a placement in a special school, although the majority of children with disabilities exiting Early Childhood Intervention services around the state are being enrolled in their neighbourhood school, at the request of their parents.

With the introduction of the *Inclusion Policy*, support services were established in each of the six educational districts to enhance the capacity of teachers in regular schools to teach across a broader ability range than might previously have been required. Specialist services for students with low incidence disability are provided through a statewide support service. Details of the district and statewide support services are included in **Attachment 2**.

(i) The criteria used to define disability and to differentiate between levels of handicap

The Tasmanian Department of Education's (DoE) model of special education provision involves a two-tiered approach to the identification and resourcing of students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are supported via either 'central' special education resources and processes or 'district' special education resources and processes. This model clearly differentiates between students with the most severe level of disability, who are supported via 'central' processes and students with mild to moderate disabilities, or problems with schooling of a more general nature, who are supported via 'district' processes. The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) established in response to Recommendation 5 from the Review of the Policy on the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Regular Schools, oversees the allocation of special education resources.

Central special education resources and processes.

Central resources are administered by Equity Standards Branch in the DoE. They include resources to support students on the Category A Register (see below) as well as other special education programs which support students with disabilities across the state (eg Transport Assistance Program, Minor Works for Students with Disabilities, Information Technology for Students with Disabilities etc). The State Support Service, with responsibility for students with vision impairment, hearing impairment and Early Special Education Services, is also funded centrally.

Support and coordination of statewide services for children with autism and physical disability are also provided by the State Support Service.

Category A Register

The Category A Register identifies those students for whom the functional and educational implications of their disability are the most severe. Eligibility for the Category A Register is based on a rigorous statewide moderation process.

Further information about the Category A Register and the moderation process is included in the paper *Students with Disabilities and Difficulties with Learning*. (**Attachment 2**)

Specific areas of disability identified on the Category A Register include:

- Intellectual Disability
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Physical Disability (including Health Impairments)
- Psychiatric Disability
- Vision Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Multiple Disabilities.

There is detailed, published information in relation to each of these areas of the Category A Register which includes the eligibility criteria and information about the process and documentation required in order for students to be nominated for the Register. (This information is included at **Attachment 3**)

As a result of Recommendation 21 from the Inclusion Review, the guidelines and eligibility criteria for the Category A Register have been redrafted and distributed more widely including alternative format versions.

District special education resources and processes

Tasmania is divided into six education districts. Each education district has a district support service. Support services are responsible for the equitable provision and coordination of a range of specialist services to schools. Specialist services include speech and language pathology, guidance (educational psychology), social work, special education teachers and aboriginal education workers.

Support services work collaboratively with schools in providing a range of support with the aim of enhancing each school's capacity to provide a quality education for all students and to maximize educational outcomes for students with learning, intellectual and communication disabilities, emotional or social difficulties and for those students who present with challenging behaviour.

There are several levels of service delivery which include professional learning for staff in schools, resourcing, and case management for individual students. The support service actively promotes and brokers a range of programs, interventions and strategies which encourage students to engage in the learning process and to work independently.

Special education resources, including resources to support students who are not on the Category A Register, are devolved to district support services, so that resources can be allocated on the local level in response to identified needs of students within the district. These resources are referred to as district special education resources. The allocation of these resources is overseen by District Special Education Committees.

District special education resources are provided for students who have less severe disabilities or problems with schooling in a more general sense than students funded centrally. These students may have mild to moderate intellectual disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder, specific learning difficulties including ADHD and dyslexia, specific language problems, emotional or behavioural difficulties. These students may or may not have a specific diagnosis.

District special education resources are allocated to each district in recognition of the fact that these students can be identified, and have their needs addressed, most effectively and efficiently at a more local level. District resources are used to support individual students and to support specific purpose programs or projects designed to meet the identified needs of groups of students.

Summary

The criteria used to define disability for those students for whom the functional and educational impact of their disability is the most severe are clearly described as part of the Category A moderation process in terms of eligibility for placement on the Category A Register. **(Attachment 3)** This process also differentiates between those students with the most severe level of disability and those with less severe disabilities and problems with schooling of a more general nature. The special education processes, 'central' and 'district', used to support students with disabilities reflect this differentiation. Students with less severe disabilities are identified and supported on the basis of their educational needs via district support services.

(ii) The level of accuracy with which students' disability related needs are being assessed

Assessment of students' disability related needs, including students with learning disabilities, is undertaken using a range of strategies and processes and at different levels within the Department of Education.

At the school level the needs of students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, are being assessed using the Kindergarten Development Checklist and statewide testing and programs in the areas of literacy and numeracy. In 2001 a process of screening and assessing Prep students to identify students at risk, using the Performance Indicators in Primary School (PIPS) was trialled and has been extended to all schools in 2002 as part of an initiative under *Learning Together*, the State Government's vision for education, training and information services, released in December 2000.

As described in i) above, district support services employ specialist staff including support teachers, guidance officers (educational psychologists), social workers and speech and language pathologists who are available to assist schools in the assessment and subsequent program development and delivery for students with disabilities.

The State Support Service, which incorporates Early Special Education Services, Services for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Students, Vision Impaired Services and statewide coordinators in the specialist areas of physical impairment and autism, provides specific expertise to ensure accurate assessment and programming input to support the identified learning needs of these groups of students.

The DoE provides Early Special Education Services for children identified with disabilities or developmental delay from birth, or time of identification, till the end of their kindergarten year. This ensures that all young children with disabilities or developmental delay, and their families, have the opportunity to access appropriate assessment and educational intervention, prior to school age. The transition from Early Special Education Services to school is an integral part of the service and is managed in collaboration with the relevant support service to ensure continuity of support.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs), incorporating an 'assess-teach-review' cycle, form the basis for educational planning for students with significant disabilities in the Tasmanian context. Recommendations 16 and 17 from the Inclusion Review relate specifically to the development of IEPs, and as a result an IEP Working Party, with representatives from all key stakeholder groups, has been established and is currently working towards developing guidelines for the development, implementation and evaluation of IEPs for students with disabilities. Through this work, the system will be able to more accurately evaluate the effectiveness of the educational programs being implemented for every student with a significant disability.

The use of IEPs for the dual purpose of planning the student's educational program as well as arriving at a level of resource need is currently being re-considered. The intention is to devise a mechanism which would assess the student's level of functioning against a broad range of key indicators, with the potential to provide a more objective assessment of student need than is currently obtained and lead to more accurate matching of student need to appropriate supports/resources.

Issues relating to assessment and diagnosis

Access to assessment and diagnostic services for some disabilities is variable across the State. This has been a long-standing issue for students who have autism spectrum disorder and, whilst a multi-disciplinary

assessment and diagnosis model is recognised as the most dependable model, the availability of the range of appropriate professionals is not consistent across the state or over time. The DoE, through the State Autism Consultant, conducts functional assessments at the school level. However the difficulties involved in obtaining a diagnosis, however, is an issue that has frequently been identified by parents.

For students with mental health problems/psychiatric disorders, a similar lack of appropriate and accessible professionals is a significant barrier to timely diagnosis and intervention. This is clearly demonstrated by the disparate numbers of nominations to the Category A Psychiatric Register from different parts of the state. In the north-west, the staff of Child and Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are readily accessible to schools and a coordinated model of intervention exists, compared with the situation in the north and south of the state. The reasons for this variability of provision are the subject of current discussions between DoE and DHHS.

(iii) The particular needs of students with disabilities from low socio-economic, non-English Speaking and Indigenous backgrounds and from rural and remote areas.

Additional student needs that might arise from the compounding effects of belonging to more than one of the 'equity target' groups are addressed predominantly within the context of the school and the district.

Students from low socio-economic backgrounds

Current statistics indicate that about 40% of students in Tasmanian government schools are eligible for Student Assistance Scheme allowance (STAS). These students by definition are living in families with low incomes or which are welfare dependent.

The Early Childhood Intervention program for children 0-4 years with disabilities and developmental delay is available to people from low SES backgrounds, with charges means tested for greater access. (See section (iv) for more detail).

The funding and support mechanisms that apply to all students with disabilities take into account contextual factors, including the needs of the school, although it is recognised that the special education budget cannot fully compensate for additional pressures exerted on schools in low SES areas. Other funding allocations, particularly the Commonwealth literacy and numeracy funds through the SAISO Program, are concentrated in these schools.

Students from non-English Speaking and Aboriginal backgrounds

The allocative mechanism described in section (ii) and district and state level support take into account the context in which the student is being educated. The numbers of students from non-English speaking background are relatively low in Tasmania and each student is catered for on a case-by-case basis. In instances where a 'new arrival' student's capacity to learn English seems reduced or it is apparent that the child has an impairment, relevant support service staff are consulted.

Aboriginal students account for approximately 3% of the student population, with most schools in the state enrolling some Aboriginal students. Tasmanian Aboriginal people are dispersed through urban and rural areas rather than concentrated in any particular areas. The provisions for Aboriginal students with high support needs are therefore made through the same processes as for other students, with cross-cultural and any other Aboriginal-specific considerations being addressed at the local school and district level.

The Aboriginal Literacy Program in Early Childhood (ALPEC) is funded through the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP). Schools with a number of Aboriginal children who are failing to achieve satisfactory literacy levels have additional funds to employ an Aboriginal Education Worker to assist the teacher in the classroom as well as providing cultural input to the learning program. The effectiveness of this program is currently being evaluated. At present, 19 schools participate in the program.

In high and district high schools Aboriginal secondary students have been involved in specific targeted programs such as the Improving Numeracy for Indigenous Secondary School Students (INISSS) program over the last three years. Through this program, which trains teachers in pedagogies that are more culturally appropriate and inclusive, student achievement (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) has been significantly improved, including the achievement of students with learning difficulties.

Students with disabilities in rural and remote areas

For the most part, the needs of students in rural Tasmania can be met through the mechanisms and processes implemented for other students with disabilities. Although Tasmania is relatively geographically compact, the population of less than half a million is dispersed widely and thinly across the state. State and district support service staff provide a service to rural and remote schools on a regular and equitable basis.

The service provided by Distance Education Tasmania is available for students in locations where access to schools is limited. Students with disabilities in those locations are eligible for enrolment although the enrolments of students with disabilities have always been low.

Rural outreach services - Early Childhood Intervention

When a child has a range of developmental delays and is living in an isolated area, the services for children with sensory impairment work in partnership with Early Special Education to provide the most appropriate early intervention service. The Early Special Education service offers outreach programs in isolated areas of the state.

Therapy issues in some rural areas

Access to some therapy services is problematic particularly in the northwest and west of the state. Problems relate to attracting and retaining therapists, particularly paediatric-trained therapists, in these areas. Pro-active strategies have been implemented by Department of Education at the district level to attract speech pathologists. These have been effective to varying degrees.

The service provided by Speech and Language Pathologists in every district is supplemented by the Speech Aide Program, which adds a layer of support to rural schools by allocating funds for the employment of a teacher aide to work on a regular and on-going basis with children identified with the highest level of need. Training for the TAs is provided by the senior Speech and Language pathologist in the relevant district.

Issues relating to provision of mental health services in rural areas

Liaison between school guidance officers, social workers and the local mental health workers is considered crucial if intervention and support for young people with mental health problems are to be effective. Where this works well and a coordinated approach is adopted better outcomes are achieved. However, recent experience of Department of Education officers in rural areas indicates that lack of mental health services negates the

potential benefits of a coordinated approach.

It is hoped that the recent Commonwealth-funded *More Allied Health Services (MAHS) Program* which aims to increase rural GPs access to allied health services might go some way to address this problem.

(iv) The effectiveness and availability of early intervention programs

Early intervention for children from birth to 4 years

Early Childhood Intervention is a long-standing provision of the Tasmanian Department of Education, forming part of the birth to 18 years education continuum. Services are co-ordinated through the State Support Service, providing direct and consultancy service to children and families, and to associated schools, services and community organizations. The service is a centralised, statewide provision catering for students with low incidence disabilities.

Early Childhood Intervention services are provided to children, aged between birth and school entry age, who

1. have diagnosed disabilities or identified developmental concerns
2. are deaf or hearing impaired
3. are blind or vision impaired

The three service areas responsible for the above provision work together to integrate and co-ordinate direct services. In addition, specialist consultative services are provided to children with physical impairment and those with autism spectrum disorder.

Nature of Service Provision

- **Services to children with developmental delays**

The service operates across the six DoE districts, from four centres, located in Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie.

Referrals are made by family members, medical and health professionals, children's services workers, educators and community and voluntary organizations. Following determination of eligibility / appropriateness of referral, families are offered a service which is responsive to age and developmental needs of the child. It should be emphasised that waiting lists do not operate for access to services.

A combination of Centre and home-based family-focused programs are provided from the centres to all parts of Tasmania. Service provision to families in rural and remote locations through outreach programs is a significant component of Early Special Education's operation. A collaborative approach to program provision is utilised, with specialist and generalist input from educational and therapy areas, in meeting the individual needs of child and family.

The service provided is essentially free of charge although there is a means tested cost to families of between \$10 and \$50 per year, dependent upon child age and frequency of involvement.

Support to children who have participated in Early Special Education programs is also provided in their first year of school (Kindergarten), as part of the transition to school process. Consultative and funded support is available, dependent upon individual need. Funding to provide teacher assistant support, ranging from 1 to 9 hours per week (for 10 hours per week kindergarten attendance), is available for individual children, dependent upon educational needs. In the 2002 school year, approximately

60 percent of children entering Kindergarten from Early Childhood Intervention programs are receiving such support.

Caseloads for full-time teaching staff operate at approximately 25 to 30 children per year.

- **Services for deaf and hearing-impaired students**

The service operates across the state.

Referrals are made by Australian Hearing and through private audiologists. A child must have a diagnosed hearing loss to be eligible for service. Following receipt of an audiogram, and initial assessment of the child's level of functioning, families are offered a service that is responsive to age and developmental needs of the child. Waiting lists do not operate for access to services.

A combination of centre-based and home-based programs is provided. Home-based programs are a significant component of service provision. The service operates as part of provision from diagnosis to 18 years of age. Group focused programs specific to children with hearing loss and their families operate within metropolitan areas. Within isolated areas and when a child has a range of developmental delays, the service works in partnership with Early Special Education to provide the most appropriate early intervention service.

As part of pre-school to school aged service, staffing to the Early Childhood Intervention population is managed within the overall student population.

- **Services for students who are blind and vision-impaired**

The statewide service works in collaboration with Early Special Education to provide program options for young children and their families. The Vision Impairment Service respects parents' role as primary educators and ensures that families across the state can choose different styles of support. This includes home programs and centre-based Early Special Education programs. The Vision Impairment Service works to provide input from other agencies which may form part of a multidisciplinary team. The Service also offers consultative support and professional development to childcare centres working with young children with severe vision impairment or blindness.

Referrals are received from ophthalmologists, health and education professionals, and parents.

Participation in the Early Childhood Intervention service

Approximately 400 children participate each year in the range of Early Childhood Intervention services offered by the Department of Education. This represents approximately 1.25 percent of the under school aged population (0-4 years). Continuous enrolments occur over the school year, with an increase of 17 percent being recorded in Early Special Education programs between February and August 2001.

Currently, approximately 140 children are supported in their Kindergarten year.

Noteworthy features of current early childhood intervention service provision include:

- A pilot Autism Early Intervention Program (the First Links Program): a ministerial initiative focusing upon individual intervention with two to three year old children demonstrating characteristics of an autism spectrum disorder and a parent support and education program.
- Premature Babies Support and Monitoring Program
- Provision for deaf and hearing-impaired children, including playgroup and home-based programs with Deaf instructors, extends to siblings, parents, extended family and CODAs (Children of Deaf Adults).
- Students who are blind or vision impaired access braille and adapted learning materials from the Braille Transcription Unit. A range of specialised active-learning materials have been developed. These materials are utilised in home-based and centre-based programs. There has also been a strong focus on building access to quality literacy texts for young learners.

Issues

- **Appropriate levels of therapy provision across all disability groups.** Access to therapy services and their integration with educational services, in meeting the needs of child and family, is variable. Differences exist at a regional level that reflect systemic prioritisation for delivery of service.
- **Diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders.** As noted earlier in this submission, diagnosis of children within the pre-school years is principally the responsibility of health sector organizations. Currently, practices vary around the state and there is an uneven pattern in the approaches taken to identification, assessment, family support and intervention.
- **Speech and language provision** for children with communication disorders is a responsibility of the health sector. Differing contractual arrangements for delivery of service in regions of the state results in access and availability difficulties for children who do not have other developmental issues.

Effectiveness of Early Childhood Intervention provision

Provision of Early Childhood Intervention by the Department of Education recognises the crucial role of early intervention in the lives of students with disabilities, and significant developmental issues, and their families. The placement of such services within the education sector further emphasises the importance of early learning and smooth, planned transitions for future outcomes.

The Review of the Policy on Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Regular Schools concluded that “parents, who appreciated the holistic approach taken, universally praised this service. Particular support is provided during the kindergarten year, when children are moving out of the ambit of Early Special Education and into schooling...”

An indicator of the effectiveness of the service provided is found in participation in regular and special schools. In the past decade, the percentage of children entering neighbourhood schools from Early

Intervention programs has increased from approximately 90 percent to 98 percent.

Transition planning as an early intervention strategy

Transition support for students with disabilities moving from school to post school options

Early intervention to enhance the life-chances of young people with disabilities is increasingly regarded as essential. The range of options for Tasmanian young people with high support needs was deemed to be inadequate by a Legislative Council Inquiry conducted in 2000. Under the Education Act 1994, students are eligible for 12 years of schooling, with a year 13 available at the discretion of the principal acting within guidelines under the Act.

The 2000 Tasmanian Legislative Council Select Committee Inquiry into Post School Options for Young Adults with Disabilities recommended that 'Departments take appropriate action and provide sufficient resources to ensure that transition planning is undertaken.'

The Department of Education has participated in an interagency committee of management with responsibility for the Post School Options Project. The project was initiated in 1999 with one-off Commonwealth funding over a three-year period to provide assistance in the post school period for people with disabilities, including transition from school to further study and work.

Operational responsibility for the project lies with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The Institute of TAFE Tasmania, the State Disability Liaison Officer, the Department of Family and Community Services, along with DoE and DHHS, are represented on the steering committee.

The project provides a valuable coordinating mechanism to support the transition process for young people with significant disabilities. Funding has adequately matched the level of applications meeting eligibility criteria. The interdepartmental committee has identified issues reflecting regional differences in availability of options and identified pathways for young people with disabilities. A review of the project, which reaches the end of the 3-year funding period in mid 2002, is currently underway.

DHHS has indicated its intention to assume funding responsibility beyond the current funding term.

Transition planning during the school years

The Legislative Council report identified the need for the schooling sector to adopt a more proactive approach to identifying pathways for students with disabilities and planning as early as possible for smooth transitions. Increased effort has occurred on the part of support service staff and teachers in secondary schools to improve this aspect of provision. However, further development in this area is still required.

The State Disability Liaison Officer has forged links with school and support staff, and a model of transition planning developed and disseminated in Tasmanian schools in the mid-1990s is being more widely utilised, with modifications to meet local and changed contexts.

The recent Commonwealth decision to fund a 0.5fte Disability Coordination Officer through *Australians Working Together* funds is welcome. This officer will be located in the north/north-west of the state.

Early intervention for students not on the Category A Register

Early intervention programs for students with less significant disabilities and other learning difficulties, including behaviour problems.

Literacy and numeracy

As indicated under term of reference (ii), the skill levels of young children are assessed through two mechanisms – the Kindergarten Development Checklist in kindergarten and the Performance Indicators in Primary School (PIPS) in Prep.

- The main intervention program to improve performance is *Flying Start*, through which an additional teaching allocation is provided to every school for years Prep to grade 2, proportionate to enrolment, at a total cost of \$8,200,000 per year. The staffing component of the Flying Start program is funded by the State, with Commonwealth SAISO funds totalling approx \$400,000 being used to provide professional development, resources and local Flying Start centres based in schools. The 138 teachers engaged in the program receive professional development in structured approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy in the early years.
- Other systematic, structured approaches to address the needs of students with learning disabilities and difficulties with literacy being introduced progressively in DoE schools are *Reading Recovery* in primary schools (22 schools in 2001; 25 in 2002) and the *Spalding Method*, predominantly in primary schools. Several hundred teachers are now trained in the latter method, and 3 centres have been established in schools across the State.

Social skills development and behaviour management –

The DoE recently released a policy on *Education Provision for Students with Challenging Behaviour* and a strategic plan for 2002-3, (**Attachment 4**) which provide direction for schools in managing students, including preventative or early intervention programs.

Social workers, guidance officers and support teachers in district support services, support schools in their work with students who display anti-social and other problem behaviours in early years and throughout their schooling. Ideally, these officers operate predominantly in proactive mode. However, the imperative of responding to difficulties among older students reduces their capacity to work in preventative mode.

To address this issue and to enhance the capacity of schools in this area, the DoE has established a Behaviour Support Team which began operation this year. This team of 7 teachers, allocated to districts, has teacher professional learning as its main brief. The policy and plan at Attachment 4 provide more information on this initiative.

These budget allocations must be considered within the context of a school age population in the Tasmanian public sector of approximately 70,000 students in 218 schools.

In 2001, as a direct result of the Review of the Policy on the *Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Regular Schools*, there was an increase of \$1.3 million into the state government special education budget, for the purpose of addressing specific areas of need identified in the review process. Areas targeted for additional funding include additional support for students on the Category A Register; additional funds to support the learning need of

(v) Access to and adequacy of funding and support in both the public and private sectors

Public Sector

students with specific learning difficulties; on-line teaching resources for teacher and teacher aides in relation to inclusive practice; professional learning for teacher aides; support for students with challenging behaviour; and professional development for school staff in relation to inclusive practice. A breakdown of allocation of this additional funding is attached. **(Attachment 5)**

Despite an increase of \$750,000 to support the needs of students on the Category A Register in 2001, there has continued to be a shortfall between support requested and available funds. This shortfall however, needs to be considered within the context of increasing funding levels over time.

During the five year period from 1998 to 2002 there has been a 51% increase in the available budget to support the needs of students on the Category A Register. Over this period there has been a 15% increase in the number of students on the Register and a 12% increase in salary costs. Across this period, therefore, the average support provided for students on the Category A Register has increased by 32%.

The trend towards ever-increasing requests for support inevitably results in budget shortfalls. A Special Education Resources Working Group established under the auspices of SEAC to address Recommendations 22, 23 and 24 from the review of the Inclusion Policy, is currently considering alternative allocative models to assist in the equitable allocation of available resources. The work of the IEP working group, as described in (ii) will also lead to more accurate matching of student need to appropriate resources/support.

Attachment 6 identifies Commonwealth and state funds, totalling \$8,995,973, used to support students with disabilities in the public sector. Of that total, \$5,714,614 is expended on salaries for teacher assistants for in-class support for students on the Category A Register. Attachment 6 also identifies the range of programs funded from within the special education budget. In addition to this amount, \$75,000 is allocated annually to provide information technology to students with disabilities in regular schools.

In addition to the fiscal resources identified in Attachment 6, **Attachment 7** provides details of the significant staffing quota, at a cost of \$19,219,365 allocated from state resources. The figures include the salary costs for

- 45.8fte guidance officers (\$2,816,700);
- 27.6 speech and language pathologists (\$1,697,400);
- 22 social workers (\$1,353,000); and
- 217 special education teaching staff (\$13,352,265)

The special education support teachers and speech pathologists are specifically allocated to support students with disabilities and learning difficulties. The guidance officers work predominantly in that role and social workers less so, although the contribution they make is critical and significant.

A description of the range and types of support provided by district support services and State Support Services has been provided under number i) and in Attachment 2 '*Students with disabilities and difficulties with learning*'.

Issues

- Despite significant increases in State funding, a gap remains between available resources and funding requests.
- The difference in Commonwealth funding levels for students with

disabilities in government and non-government schools is a serious concern. Currently, per capita funding is \$522 for students in non-government schools compared with \$102 for students in government schools.

- As no common definition is used across sectors, there is no way of ascertaining that the students in both sectors have comparable special education needs. The Government sector is mandated to provide education for all, and it is generally acknowledged in Tasmania that the majority of students with disabilities are enrolled in Government schools. Therefore, the Commonwealth funding arrangements, based on a percentage of students in both sectors, regardless of level of need, is patently inequitable.
- In Tasmania, an apparent increase in the incidence of students exhibiting signs of mental illness has not been reflected in the numbers of students being nominated for the Category A Psychiatric Disorder Register. Specific purpose funding of \$100,000 (recurrent) has been earmarked in special education resources to investigate reasons for this, and to support these students and their teachers. A discussion paper developed by an interdepartmental DoE/DHHS (Mental Health Services) working group is soon to be released.

Therapy services and equipment and technology support for students with disabilities

Areas identified within the Tasmanian context as receiving less than adequate funding and support are

- therapy provision and
- essential technology and equipment to enable students with disabilities equitable access to the curriculum are.

The provision of occupational therapy and physiotherapy is primarily the responsibility of the Department of Health and Human Services.

A range of critical supports necessary to enable access to educational programs by students with disabilities is provided by non-government centres and organisations in Tasmania. The services they provide include:

- specialised equipment and technology for students with physical disability (Equipment and Technology Library) or vision impairments (Royal Guide Dogs for the Blind and Equipment Library),
- orientation and mobility services (RGDB), and
- occupational therapy and physiotherapy services (St Giles Society, Calvary Rehab, Australian Physiotherapy Association).

Funds for the purchase of these services from non-government agencies are derived from the Commonwealth Targeted Schools Program and from supplementary funding from the DoE special education budget.

Issue:

The changed Commonwealth funding arrangements for the 2001-4 quadrennium whereby funds for the "Special Learning Needs Programme, Capital Grants" have been allocated to each state on a per capita basis rather than being allocated by DEST on a submissions basis, as happened previously, has resulted in significantly reduced funds being available to Tasmanian Non-Government Centres for the support of students with disabilities.

The funding available for allocation in 2001 and 2002 was \$57,500. This is significantly less than in previous years. (The combined amount attracted by the Equipment and Technology Library and Royal Guide Dogs for the Blind Association of Tasmania over previous years was \$134,990 in 2000; \$175,000 in 1999; and \$298,796 in 1998.)

This reduction in funding results in a decreased capacity by these organisation to provide equipment and technology for students with disabilities in Department of Education schools.

(vi) The nature, extent and funding of programs that provide for full or partial learning opportunities with mainstream students

Detailed information has been provided under the background section and previous terms of reference, including i), ii) and v) detailing the nature, extent and funding of programs that provide for learning opportunities for students with disabilities in mainstream settings. Recommendation 12 from the Inclusion Review also provides support for flexible enrolment arrangements for students, including dual enrolment in both regular and special schools if appropriate.

A more integrated model, whereby support services and special schools will offer coordinated service along a continuum of provisions, is currently being formulated by a working group, in response to recommendations 11,12 and 13 of the Inclusion Review. The nature, extent and funding of those provisions are still being considered.

(vii) Teacher training and Professional Development

Teacher training

(Pre-service teacher training is focussed on in this section; in-service training is dealt with under 'Professional Development'.)

Teacher training occurs through the Faculty of Education at the University of Tasmania, with the Bachelor of Education (B.ED), a four-year undergraduate degree being offered in Launceston and the two-year post-graduate Bachelor of Teaching (B.Teach) degree being taught in Hobart.

Building stronger links between the DoE and the Faculty of Education is currently the subject of considerable discussion, after a review of the B.Teach last year identified the need for a more collaborative relationship.

Concerns about the skills, knowledge and experience developed in both courses in relation to teaching students with disabilities and other difficulties with learning have been identified. The Inclusion Review identified this as an issue and recommended that a compulsory unit of disability-related work be included in pre-service courses.

(Recommendation 36) In addition, it recommended that all student teachers should have practical experience in a class where a student with high needs was included. (Recommendation 37)

Training in the provision of supportive, inclusive classrooms and in positive approaches to managing student behaviour have also been identified by DoE as critical course components in the pre-service courses.

A recently established DoE/Faculty of Education high-level committee (Peak Educational Advisory Committee) has recently been established through which these and a number of other initiatives will be progressed. This committee consists of the Dean of the Faculty of Education and program managers as well as DoE deputy secretaries and directors.

Professional development

Professional learning needs for Department of Education staff are addressed through Individual Professional Learning Plans, which are negotiated by staff members and their line managers. These are subject to regular review and reflect individual, school and system priorities.

Professional learning and development for staff working with students with disabilities was identified as a key area in the Review of the Policy on Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Regular Schools. Six recommendations of the review addressed in-service professional development for principals, teachers and teacher aides.

Prior to the Review, the professional learning needs of staff working with students with significant disabilities, managed at district level, was supported through a recurrent funding allocation from the Central Special Education Budget to District Support Services (\$40,000 in the 2002 school year).

Additional recurrent funding is now available to support the professional learning of teachers and teacher aides working with students with high support needs, and for principals. A total of \$100,000 is managed at district level, enabling appropriate and timely response to local issues and needs.

Within this initiative, the professional learning needs of principals will be addressed through the Tasmanian Principals Institute and professional associations, with funding in the current year to assist sponsorship of a keynote speaker to the Tasmanian Primary Principals Association Annual Conference.

Teacher aide training

A statewide audit of current teacher aide training has been initiated to establish current provision and to assist in identification of priority areas. Training provided within districts in the current year will particularly assist teacher aides working in regular schools which are enrolling students with significant disabilities and associated high support needs for the first time, and will also link to the Teacher Aide Competency Framework for individual teacher aides. Through this link, teacher aides who so wish will gain accreditation through a nationally accredited Framework released in 2001.

Online support materials

A project developing web-accessible learning support materials for inclusive classrooms is currently underway. The project targets teachers and teacher aides who are working with students with disabilities. The website under development will contain specific information, teaching strategies and links to current curriculum guidelines across all learning areas. Active teacher participation will be available through the site's forum. This will promote development of skills and knowledge in teachers and teacher aides, and will provide opportunities for the formation of support networks.

In-service accredited training for teachers

A Competency Framework for Inclusive Practice is currently in development through the Tasmanian Educational Leaders' Institute. A Reference Group, consisting of members within and outside the Department of Education, has guided the development of the Framework. The document is a companion to the Managing Student Behaviour

Competency Framework, which has recently received national accreditation. The Inclusive Practice Framework will provide a basis for the ongoing development of expertise for school-based staff;

Curriculum Resource - *Who's Included?*

A collaborative initiative in 2000 involving disability associations, other stakeholders and the Department of Education resulted in a curriculum resource for schools entitled *Who's Included?* (**Attachment 8**).

Responsibility for professional development in using this resource has been assumed by the DoE Principal Education Officer for Studies in Society and the Environment.

Behaviour Support Team

Professional development is the main focus for the work of the new Behaviour Support Team. It was seen as crucial that this team had a set of shared understandings and high-level skills. Whilst the officers were selected on the basis of their demonstrated expertise in the area, they are all undertaking a Graduate Diploma/Masters course of study through Newcastle University, by distance learning.

They are also participating in programs to develop positive approaches to managing behaviour along with many school-based teachers during 2002.

Supportive School Environment Policy

Since 1989, The DoE has had a policy in place to provide direction and guidelines to schools in the establishment of school environments that are supportive, safe and caring. This policy is currently being refocussed to take account of the many relevant developments both within the DoE and external to it since the policy was disseminated. One of the most obvious changes since 1989 is an increased focus on the inclusive nature of schooling, in which diversity is recognised and celebrated and the individual needs of students are identified and addressed.

A document describing promising practice in ten DoE schools will soon be released. Within that document will be a framework and a set of key factors by which schools will be able to assess the quality of their provision.

A new website will be launched concurrently with the release of the new document. Through this mechanism, schools will have the opportunity to share their practice and access useful support resources.

(viii) The legal implications and resource demands of current Commonwealth and state and territory legislation

The *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* are the key pieces of legislation relating to this area of work.

The DoE, through its set of relevant Commonwealth and State policies and guidelines, endeavours at all times to comply with legislative requirements. To that end, for example, the DoE has recently updated the Disability Service Plan, as recommended by HREOC. The Plan sets out the access needs of every student with physical disabilities, and the building modifications that will be necessary for them to be able to enrol in their local school.

The proposed Education Standards under the DDA are not perceived by the DoE as having any significant resource implications additional to those arising from the requirements of the DDA itself, other than the costs associated with informing staff of the content and intent of the Standards.

b. The proper role of the Commonwealth and states and territories in supporting the education of students with disabilities.

It is the view of the Tasmanian Department of Education that the proper role of the Commonwealth and State Governments in supporting the education of students with disabilities should be the same as for all students: that is, a collaborative partnership in which the State accepts responsibility for day-to-day educational matters, including policies and strategies to improve access and success, and the Commonwealth accepts responsibility for those elements of education that are broader concerns and beyond the scope of a single state.

The following areas of increased Commonwealth commitment would be welcomed in Tasmania:

1. The Commonwealth could demonstrate an increased commitment to the education of students with disabilities by adopting a pro-active stance in support of the implementation of the DDA. For example:

- Support in the form of targeted funding for the provision of intensive professional development for school-based and support personnel to enhance their skills and knowledge in inclusive practice would meet a frequently identified need.
- There is a continued shortage of teachers with the requisite skills and experience in special education. The relatively small numbers of these teachers required at any one time precludes the provision of on-going training courses at the local level. One-off funding to enable small jurisdictions such as Tasmania to train teachers of students with low-incidence disabilities would go some way to address this issue.

2. Issues relating to assessment and diagnosis have been highlighted in this submission. It is the DoE's view that Commonwealth assistance to provide equitable access to rigorous, current and flexible assessment and diagnosis services would greatly improve the effectiveness of interventions.

- A Commonwealth initiative which would enable Tasmanian students/families to 'tap into' national provision would be an efficient solution to what is at present an insurmountable problem. Technological advances in telehealth, for example, might provide a model for an initiative of this type.

3. A national definition of disability is highly desirable. The DoE acknowledges the work currently being undertaken by the Commonwealth to arrive at a common definition for the purposes of measuring student achievement.

- This Department urges the Commonwealth to put in place a process to develop consistent definitions of learning need that are applicable across the schooling, VET and higher education sectors.

4. The Commonwealth's role in conducting research could be enhanced. Its current relevant work through the MCEETYA Taskforce on Indigenous and Other Targeted Initiatives of National Significance among others, is welcome. However, there is a need to investigate current practice at a national level to identify the most promising practices in the area of inclusive schooling.

- The Tasmanian Department of Education's strong record of success in this area makes it a leader in the field. The DoE would be keen to contribute to such research in collaboration with the Commonwealth.

4. The DoE is excited by the potential of ICT to improve the learning opportunities and outcomes of students with disabilities. A project entitled Tech Assist Online (see page 22), funded through *Networking the Nation*, is being implemented by the DoE to provide assistive technology on a loan basis to rural on-line access centres, libraries and 'day services' to increase access to the internet for adults with disabilities. At the school level, students with disabilities have access to a limited range of assistive technology.

- An initiative is recommended by which Commonwealth funds are provided to enable the TechAssist Online Project to cascade down to the school level.

5. On page 13 of this submission, the DoE expresses concern at the reduction in funding to the Commonwealth 'Special Learning Needs Program' for the current quadrennium.

Unless students with disabilities have their therapy needs met, they are not able to participate successfully in education. This is a fundamental need and limited provision creates unacceptable tensions and frustrations among families, students, teachers and other service providers. Potentially productive collaboration between families, schools and therapy providers is impeded, and students' educational and life chances are reduced.

- The DoE, therefore, urges the Commonwealth to increase therapy services for students with disabilities by re-considering the allocative formula for the Commonwealth 'Special Learning Needs Program' so that funding to the Non-Government Centre Support element can, at the very least, be restored to its previous level.

Background

In Tasmania, the Office of Post Compulsory Education and Training (OPCET) operates under the Tasmanian State Training Authority (TASTA) within the framework of the national policies and strategies agreed by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and the Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers (MINCO) to address the training needs and priorities of the Tasmania community and its industries.

OPCET is the body responsible for planning and purchasing Vocational Education and Training services for Tasmania from the one public provider (TAFE) and private providers. The only public provider of VET is the Institute of TAFE Tasmania, which is registered to provide over 1,100 accredited courses/qualifications to more than 25,000 students delivered through eleven statewide programs.

The Department of Education through VET Equity (Equity Standards Branch) provides specialist policy advice and direction on issues affecting people with a disability in the VET sector. Its aim is to increase the low participation, retention and completion rates of this equity target group, in line with the ANTA policy.

While the proportion of Australians aged 15 to 64 who participated in VET in 1999 was 11 percent, the proportion of the population with a disability aged 15 to 64 participating in VET at that time was estimated at 3.9%. Without changes to the system, ANTA estimates that the shortfall in the participation rate of people with a disability in VET will reach more than 215,000 people by the year 2005. (Source: 'Bridging Pathways - Blueprint for Implementation', ANTA, 2000.)

In response to this issue, ANTA developed a five-year national strategy for increasing opportunities for people with a disability in VET - *Bridging Pathways* which is underpinned by a Blueprint, setting out strategies and actions to achieve the strategy. Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers endorsed this in June 2000. The Australian Disability Training Advisory Committee (ADTAC) oversees its implementation.

In July 2001 the Tasmanian Minister for Education launched *Equal Partners*, the State Implementation Plan for people with disabilities developed from this national Blueprint. A State Steering Committee oversees implementation of *Equal Partners*. (**Attachment 9**)

Increasing numbers of students with a disability are participating in VET and many secondary level students with a disability have the expectation of undertaking some form of further education or training when they leave school at the end of Grade 12.

However, the low workforce participation by people with a disability represents a serious loss for the economy and the community.

The Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) believes that if 12,000 currently unemployed people with a disability were able to gain work, the economy would increase by \$300m per year. ('Gold Medal Disability Access Strategy.' Strategy Overview. FaCS, 1999)

	Tasmania	Australia
VET students reported as having a disability	3.7%	3.9%
Persons with a disability as proportion of total population	22.3%	19.3%
Persons with a disability aged 15-64 as proportion of total population (15-64)	17.1%	14.4%
VET students reported as not having a disability	80.6%	80.0%
Load pass rate of VET students reported as having a disability	71.0%	68.0% ¹
Load pass rate of VET students reported as not having a disability	84.0%	75.0%

Source: ANTA National Report 1999; figures derived using NCVET data for clients and ABS population

However, students with a disability continue to face systemic and personal barriers to participation in VET and employment. The Department of Education (Tasmania) held a forum to identify the barriers facing students with a disability in the workplace at the end of 2000. Some of the barriers identified were:

- inadequate levels of personal care and learning supports;
- inappropriate training/workplaces, technology and equipment;
- inadequate transition planning and cross-agency coordination;
- biased attitudes and assumptions about people with a disability;
- lack of vocational information and advice on career paths;
- limited professional development for trainers and employers;
- personal perceptions eg fear of failure and lack of confidence.

The above barriers contribute significantly to the under-representation of people of all ages with a disability in VET.

(i) The criteria used to define disability and to differentiate between levels of handicap.

In the VET sector the identification of students with a disability is based on self-identification upon enrolment. Disclosure of information about a person's disability, including level of handicap, therefore is a personal choice.

The definition of disability used is that contained in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 1992). This covers any permanent or temporary condition that affects a student's ability to undertake her/his studies as a result of physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological or learning disabilities. It also includes the presence in the body of a disease-causing organism and covers disabilities which people have now, had in the past,

may have in the future or which they are believed to have.

Tasmania does not believe that current identification processes need to change, but differences in the definitions of disability across sectors and across the nation is an issue that needs addressing.

The International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps as published by the WHO aligns closely with the classification system used by the ABS (and with the DoE Category A Register used in the school sector). ANTA, through the National Training Statistics Committee, is currently undertaking work to improve consistency and coverage of data.

(ii) The accuracy with which students' disability related needs are being assessed.

In the VET sector students who identify with a disability may be provided with learning supports to assist them in their learning. The accuracy with which their needs are assessed determines the appropriateness of the support services provided. The type of support may include tutoring, interpretation services, note taking and provision of support officers.

The interpretation of disability as a homogeneous rather than heterogeneous concept is problematic. Different disabilities give rise to different needs, but also involve different individual strengths and weaknesses.

Assessment of a student's need varies according to the training provider, as there are no consistent assessment tools, procedures or eligibility criteria. RTOs (both public and private) need better support and professional development to identify people at risk and provide appropriate response mechanisms.

Private providers make the point that small RTOs need better support and professional development to identify people at risk and provide appropriate response mechanisms. Most private RTOs have neither resources nor expertise to adequately assess a disadvantaged student at the time they enrol in a course.

This is especially relevant for students with literacy and/or numeracy problems and although there are support materials available for these students it is difficult for a small RTO to know of their existence. As a consequence, they tend to point out support arrangements already in place (e.g. those available in the Institute of TAFE Tasmania) but if a student chooses not to use this support, then the RTO adjusts the delivery to suit the individual as it is best able.

At present the DoE is managing the development of an Inclusive Practices Program for personnel working in the VET sector. The program will raise awareness and understanding of the needs of diverse student and trainee groups undertaking VET, and offer advice on practical, inclusive strategies and techniques to meet the needs of these students. This program should fill a gap that exists at present in terms of specific professional development materials for Tasmanian VET providers in the disability awareness area.

In the longer term, work currently being undertaken by ANTA in this area will enhance the availability of resources and materials.

(iii) The particular needs of students with disabilities from low socio-economic, non-English speaking and Indigenous backgrounds and from rural and remote

The effects of the disadvantage experienced by students with a disability who also fit into one or more of these groups are of course exacerbated.

In Tasmania provision of mainstream services in rural and remote areas, lack of supports required by students in these areas, transport difficulties and the fact that many of the students who live in non-metropolitan areas

and from rural and remote areas.

are also socio-economically disadvantaged are all factors that need consideration.

The Department of Education VET Equity Advisory Committee which acts as a support/advisory committee for the Department of Education in Tasmania, has representatives from the Online Access Centre Association of Tasmania (OACAT) representing the 64 online access centres in Tasmania, Multicultural Tasmania and from a number of Indigenous organisations and education providers to advise of VET issues associated with their stakeholder groups.

Institute of TAFE Tasmania (ITT) reports that:

- People with a disability from 'disadvantaged' backgrounds are more disadvantaged, and provision for people with a disability is inevitably more limited where there is no critical mass, for example in rural and remote areas.
- There are problems associated with using 'flexible learning' methods to offer the variety of courses that are offered in urban centres such as Hobart as they require competent literacy skills (including computer literacy) and/or access to technology.
- Lack of transport is a big issue, as it is often the case that transport is only available in the morning and the late afternoon to coincide with school hours. This makes it difficult for those students who only want to access ITT for half a day.

Tasmania has a number of private providers who cater for students with disabilities in rural and remote areas. Private providers make the point that a large number of their students with disability are also in the lower socio-economic category.

Some of the disadvantages experienced by people with disabilities in rural and remote areas are being addressed through the *Tech Assist Online* program. This is a statewide technology consultancy and support service for people with disabilities. Its aim is to assist people with disabilities with advice, hardware and software to enable them to access the Internet.

The Commonwealth Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts have funded the service for three years. It is managed by the Department of Education. Although equipment through this service is not provided to the school, training or higher education sectors, it does support libraries and Online Access Centres that can provide students with disabilities with Internet access. Whilst the project scope does not include formal, accredited training, it is anticipated that people who access the service will be more able and likely to undertake further learning, including VET, at some later time.

Equal Partners addresses the issue of learning supports for students with a disability through several of its actions under Focus Area 4. These actions, eg, support for extended time for Disability Liaison Officers in the TAFE system, will also support students who fit into one or more of these additional areas of disadvantage. Other relevant actions concern expanding pathways, eg, undertaking a review of the adequacy of current provision of life / work enabling skills (including Certificate 1 and pre-vocational courses) in order to inform the State Vet Plan of gaps and priorities in this area.

(iv) The effectiveness and availability of early intervention programs.

The Department of Education in Tasmania believes strongly in the importance of early intervention as a strategy for successfully addressing the needs of people with a disability. The Inclusion Policy in the Tasmanian schooling sector sets up expectations of students who have a disability that they will have the opportunity to undertake some form of further education or training when they leave school at the end of Grade 12.

Skills and motivation developed by students at school help them to proceed to further education, employment and training. A three year inter-agency project funded from the Commonwealth, the Post School Options project which has been running since 1999, focuses on supporting students with a disability to maximize their potential by funding flexible and innovative projects and support for transition from school to work and training. This project is to continue with funding from the State government when its present funding ceases in June 2002.

However there is still more work to be done in this area especially in the area of inter- and intra-agency service co-ordination to achieve effective transition from school to vocational education and training and then to provide pathways from training to employment.

Participation in VET in Schools (VIS) can act as a preparatory training experience to facilitate transitions between education and training for students with a disability.

- *Equal Partners* provides actions to support students with a disability for participation in VET in Schools and to gain equitable outcomes by actioning initiatives, and plans to implement relevant recommendations from the MCEETYA Taskforce on VET in Schools publication *New Framework for vocational education in school* which has just been released.
- DoE has established a state VIS Policy Committee operated through OPCET. Through this committee, Equity Standards Branch is managing a project to identify and support best practice and innovative solutions for access to VIS for students from a number of disadvantaged groups, including students with a disability. In September 2001, the DoE held a forum with VIS stakeholders to address the equity issues facing students in schools and colleges. The aim of the forum was to prioritise the barriers, identify programs that address the barriers and propose innovative solutions to the issues that are not being addressed. The key issues identified were;
 - Limitations on access,
 - Lack of learning supports,
 - Perception and lack of awareness,
 - Cost to families and individuals for undertaking VIS,
 - Discrimination and work place culture
 - Lack of coordinating pathways and workplace opportunities.
 - Lack of opportunities for students with disabilities to access school-based traineeships. With improved access to traineeships, new pathways to employment would open up for young people with disabilities.

(v) Access to and adequacy of funding and support in both the public and private sectors.

Many students with disabilities have complex needs, and if they are to access and succeed in training a series of diverse services must be in place.

Tasmania's size and organisation mean that collaboration between Equity Standards Branch, the ITT and Office of Post Compulsory Education and

Training in terms of developing purchasing arrangements for students with disabilities is facilitated. Through this Equity Standards Branch is able to

- provide advice to Office of Post Compulsory Education and Training so that the way in which training is purchased supports the inclusion of students with a disability, and
- work with OPCET and the ITT both in the development of strategies to increase participation of students with a disability in VET and outcome targets.

Quality education provision for people with disabilities will always involve higher unit costs. For example, higher staffing levels and/or smaller class sizes, interpretation services, assistive technology, wheelchair transport and course/career counselling are high cost items. In Tasmania, most private RTOs are at a disadvantage in that they lack the infrastructure to offer this sort of support, so it is left to the ITT to attempt to meet the needs of the great bulk of students with a disability.

VET delivery efficiency is judged on indicators such as unit costs. If a higher cost were acknowledged for students with disabilities, then overall activity targets could be reduced while providing enhanced support for students with disabilities. Such support is a cost to the system but could be achieved in conjunction with other strategies if Commonwealth/state business arrangements were reviewed with respect to student activity targets being set for States and territories based on the number of annual hours curriculum, which can be provided based on the current unit cost per hour.

In Tasmania, there is a Purchase Agreement between OPCET and the Institute of TAFE Tasmania (ITT). Equity Standards Branch provides advice to OPCET on the content of this agreement in terms of access and participation for students with disabilities. The agreement provides for a range of matters related to funding, which enhance access and participation for students with disabilities including

- upgrading of ITT's facilities to meet the needs of students with disabilities;
- ITT's involvement in the implementation of *Equal Partners* and the ITT Disability Action Plan;
- provision of access training for people with intellectual disabilities;
- employment of suitably qualified disability liaison officers;
- provision of assistance for students with disabilities as detailed in the Tasmanian guidelines *Support for Students with a Disability*; and
- provision of information to the Equity Standards Branch on the numbers of students assisted.

ANTA growth funds for 2002 of \$48,000 have been allocated to ITT and Northern Group Training to increase learning supports for people with disabilities in VET. These funds will increase to \$96,000 in 2003 and \$200,000 by 2004. They will be utilized to support the implementation of priority strategies in *Equal Partners*.

Lack of employment options for people with disabilities has been identified through various consultative forums as a disincentive to engage in VET. One way in which this issue can be addressed is to improve collaboration between RTOs and employment agencies, particularly specialised employment agencies. Students with a disability who complete a VET

course or gain particular competencies and are recognised as currently competent often have no employment to go to so lose those skills fairly quickly.

(vi) The nature, extent and funding of programs that provide for full or partial learning opportunities with mainstream students.

The Department of Education in Tasmania attempts to ensure that the provision of available resources is applied to provide support to increase the participation of students with a disability in mainstream training. However there is a need for an increase in research into the nature, extent and funding of programs that provide for full or partial opportunities in this area.

ITT does provide integrated programs where students with disabilities are provided with appropriate support within the mainstream class. However it identifies a significant lack of appropriate courses specifically to support people with an intellectual disability who wish to move on from Certificate 1 courses.

Appropriate courses might be

- Certificate 1 courses which include introductory competencies from generic courses providing full or partial learning opportunities with mainstream students, and
- courses suitable for students with a mild intellectual disability and/or those students with low literacy who have completed a Certificate 1 course.

As quality education provision for people with disabilities will always involve higher unit costs as mentioned previously, many private RTOs lack the resources to offer a wide scope of appropriate support, thus fewer numbers of people with a disability participate in full or partial learning opportunities with mainstream students in courses offered by private RTOs.

Teacher attitudes and lack of knowledge can also create barriers in opportunities for mainstreaming students with a disability. Professional development initiatives have been included in *Equal Partners* to address this issue, as will the ANTA professional development initiative and the Inclusive Practice package being developed through the Equity Development and Training Innovation Program for Tasmania for 2002. (See (vii) below for more detail).

Through the User Choice funding mechanism, there is opportunity for private RTOs to access funding for training on a case by case basis for students with specific disabilities. In 2001 and 2002 funding for trainees employed by RTOs that provide employment opportunities for students with an intellectual disability, (such as Oak Enterprises and the Blue-Line Laundry) was provided for

- Transport and Distribution (Warehousing), Certificate III
- Transport and Distribution (Warehousing), Certificate II
- Horticulture, Certificate III
- Horticulture, Certificate II
- Horticulture, Certificate I
- Laundry Operations, Certificate II

(vii) **Teacher training and professional development.**

The role of teachers, assessors and workplace trainers in the provision of VET to students with a disability is critical and the Department of Education in Tasmania believes that increasing the level of expertise of all those people associated with the provision of VET to students with a disability is very important.

Issues

- At present training in working with students with disabilities is not addressed in either the *Bachelor of Adult and Vocational Education (BAVE)* course, run through the University of Tasmania or the *Certificate 4 in Assessment and Workplace Training*, which is the training package required to be undertaken by VET assessors and deliverers.
- Other significant difficulties associated with provision of appropriate PD for VET providers include:
 1. the issue of time available for staff to undertake professional development
 2. the lack of understanding on the part of private trainers/assessors of the literacy supports that may be required by Training Packages.
 3. minimal professional development for teachers/trainers associated with private RTOs. Most cannot afford extensive support programs, as the employers will not pay for them and the state training money is too low to provide a reasonable return to the RTO. Professional development programs where the program is brought to the RTO (including provision of awareness workshops for RTO staff and support specialists) are most likely to be successful.

To successfully address this issue there is a need for substantial additional funding and research into the best way of provision of successful professional development.

Inclusive Practice Professional Development Project

Funding from the Equity Development and Training Innovation Program for Tasmania for 2002 has been allocated to a project to develop an Inclusive Practices Professional Development Program for personnel working in the VET sector. The program will raise awareness and understanding of the needs of diverse student and trainee groups undertaking VET, and offer advice on practical, inclusive strategies and techniques to meet the needs of these students.

This program should fill a gap that exists at present in terms of specific professional development materials for Tasmanian VET providers.

ANTA funding for professional development

As part of the implementation of the national Blueprint, *Bridging Pathways*, funding of \$1 million will be made available for 2002-3 that will assist to develop skills and understandings in the areas of making reasonable adjustments for people with a disability; using flexible assessment methods; recognizing prior learning; inclusion and 'ant-bias' teaching practices; and coordination of and access to additional supports.

(viii) The legal implications and resource demands of current Commonwealth and state and territory legislation.

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) is a set of nationally agreed standards to ensure the quality of vocational education and training provision throughout Australia. Standard 6 of the Standards for RTOs sets out the access and equity requirements that must be met by training providers prior to enrolment. There are additional, specific requirements relating to access and equity issues in other sections in the Standards eg Standard 9 'Learning and assessment strategies'.

These Standards are viewed positively by the DoE in terms of their capacity to provide equitable access and services for students with a disability, as long as they are applied correctly and audited efficiently and with understanding.

Issues

- Meeting the standards requires considerable effort by RTOs. For example one of the larger private RTOs has had to develop a checklist of 24 questions which need to be answered in the development of assessment and training delivery strategies for each package they offer.
- Some smaller RTOs are finding that reducing their scope is the way to cope with the demands of the AQTF Standards. The consequence is the reduction of access to training for some students with a disability.
- There is also a fear that unless auditors are provided with support and professional development, the Standards might not ensure the intended outcomes. *Equal Partners* through the Equity Standards Branch has as one of its actions 'to assist Office of Post Compulsory Education and Training Quality Assurance auditors in relation to access and equity requirements'.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

In all aspects of its work, the DoE endeavours to comply with the Act.

The provision of Education Standards under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 will be welcomed by the Department. The Department acknowledges that there will be a need to provide awareness training for VET providers about the detail of the Standards.

b. The proper role of the Commonwealth and states and territories in supporting the education of students with disabilities.

ADTAC research indicates that a collaborative building of partnerships across all levels of government is necessary to achieve positive outcomes for students with a disability. *Equal Partners* contains a number of actions that will enable this to happen, and the implementation of the state plan is developing these partnerships in a positive way with successful results.

Department of Education in Tasmania believes that the appropriate roles of the states and territories are to participate in, and support the development and implementation of strategies and policies that enhance the access and participation of people with disabilities in VET.

In Tasmania the Department of Education VET Equity Advisory Committee has an important role to play in this. In terms of disability, this committee has representatives from training providers (public and private), disability organisations and stakeholder groups. One of the members is the convener of the Equal Partners Implementation Committee sub committee of stakeholders. This stakeholder committee was set up as one of the actions from *Equal Partners* and has been extremely useful and constructive in the strategic advice it is able to provide on further planning

of actions of *Equal Partners*.

Small jurisdictions such as Tasmania, with limited opportunities to achieve cost effective operations because of the lack of economies of scale, experience difficulties in providing adequate resources for implementation of appropriate activities. The Commonwealth/State business arrangements in place at this time do not provide an incentive to provide for target equity groups, since they are focused on reductions in unit cost and activity targets which do not take into account the additional costs of delivering successful training to those with disabilities.

In supporting the education (VET) of students with disabilities, the proper role of the Commonwealth should be:

- To directly and explicitly acknowledge, and take into account in Commonwealth/State business arrangements such as the ANTA Agreement planning, expenditure and reporting requirements, the need to provide support services and, if necessary, more costly training provision for students with a disability. The funding provisions to support the training of an individual with a disability do not take into account the extra costs borne by the RTO in providing special support or adjustment.
- To provide for development of appropriate national resources including qualifications, which take into account the needs of people with a disability.
- To reflect the agreed national objective for VET to “achieve equitable outcomes in VET” in increased Commonwealth funding provided for the purpose of increasing the systems capacity to ensure increased equity for people with disabilities over the long term.
- To promote inclusive education, training and employment options and opportunities. This requires an attitudinal change towards employing people with a disability so it might need an innovative and marketing strategy.
- To address the issue that traineeships and on the job training are amongst the most significant issues for people with a disability. Access to and availability of traineeships in Certificate 1 and 2 for people with disabilities is a priority issue.
- To change the relevant guidelines so that a person on a supported wage is eligible for a traineeship.

Finally, the DoE endorses ADTAC’s view that the role of the Commonwealth and the states is to utilise current collaborative partnerships and develop others where necessary by which increased coordination and cooperation can be achieved to improve the participation and success of people with disabilities in all aspects of their lives and most particularly in education, training and employment.

**INQUIRY INTO THE EDUCATION
OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**



Tasmania
Department of Education

Rewards and Challenges: Inclusion in Practice

Final Recommendations from the Review
of the Policy on Inclusion of Students
with Disabilities in Regular Schools



Tasmania

Department of Education

August 2000

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

That the Department of Education affirms the principles of the policy for the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Regular Schools (Inclusion Policy).

Recommendation 2

That the management and operation of the inclusion of students with disabilities, at both school and system level, is embedded in the broader concept of equity and not managed within the traditional frame of 'Special Education' and 'Special Schooling'.

Recommendation 3

That the Department of Education updates the Inclusion Policy in light of this review, the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act and the Disability Standards for Education*, and that the updated policy is made available in a variety of formats, including Braille, large-print and on the Internet.

*The Disability Standards for Education and accompanying Guidance Notes will be out for community consultation in August this year. If accepted following consultation they will have the same legal force as the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act itself.

SYSTEM AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Recommendation 4

That the Department of Education investigates means of collecting and using accurate data about the enrolments of students with significant disabilities and their educational outcomes. This information should be collected and recorded systematically over time.

Recommendation 5

That the membership and functions of the central Special Education Committee are revised and expanded.

Recommendation 6

That the Department of Education, in consultation with schools and districts, develops procedures to ensure consistency of provision for students with disabilities in all parts of the State and processes to monitor the implementation and performance of these consistent practices, and that the Department reports on these annually.

Recommendation 7

That the Department of Education works with service providers from other government agencies, and with the community and private sector, in order to develop protocols and standing arrangements for delivering a range of services to students with disabilities.

Recommendation 8

That the current Disability Service Plan is revised and updated, and that improved strategies for monitoring progress against the outcomes of this plan are developed. The outcomes of this monitoring process should be reported in the Department's Annual Report.

Recommendation 9

That the Department of Education develops a set of indicators of inclusive practice at system, district, school and classroom level in order to provide a consistent basis for on-going monitoring of system performance. These indicators should be scaled and validated through empirical, independent research.

Recommendation 10

That the equity component of the Assisted School Self Review (ASSR) process is more clearly defined, and a framework for data collection and reporting at the school level is established.

Recommendation 11

That special schools become an integral part of the District Support Services, in order to provide a specialist service that supports both the Equity in Schooling Policy and the Inclusion Policy.

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

Recommendation 12

That the Department of Education, in consultation with stakeholders, develop consistent guidelines, procedures and protocols to support flexible enrolment arrangements, including dual enrolment. Clear processes for accountability and monitoring of student progress against Individual Education Plans (IEPs) should be established.

Recommendation 13

That part of the role of special schools is to provide schooling for students with significant disabilities, who meet enrolment eligibility criteria, if requested by parents. The Department of Education, in consultation with stakeholders, should develop clear and consistent enrolment eligibility criteria to be applied statewide. This information should be widely published and accessible to all interested parties.

Recommendation 14

That clear and consistent processes for the enrolment and transition of students at different stages of schooling are developed and applied state-wide. These processes should be widely published and accessible to all interested parties, including parents and students.

Recommendation 15

That the Department of Education revises the Procedure for the Resolution of Grievances on Placement for Students with Disabilities (1998) and disseminates the revised version to schools, parents of all students with disabilities and all other interested parties. The revision should allow for more balanced representation of parents, students and non-educational professionals at the grievance meeting.

Recommendation 16

That the Department of Education develops guidelines for the development of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities. These guidelines should identify essential components to be included in the IEP but should allow for local flexibility to reflect individual student and contextual considerations. Development of IEPs within the published guidelines should be mandated. Increased emphasis should be given to addressing,

monitoring and reporting on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities. Student outcomes, as detailed in IEPs, should be reported annually at school and system level.

Recommendation 17

That existing curriculum documents and guidelines are used to develop appropriate learning outcomes for students with disabilities, and that these form the basis of learning outcomes in IEPs.

Recommendation 18

That class placement with age peers is affirmed as the preferred option for students with disabilities, with emphasis on the identification of appropriate and equitable learning and social outcomes. Whole-school programs and practices should be identified that include students with disabilities in the full range of school activities and provide effective social outcomes for all students.

Recommendation 19

That the longitudinal study of students with disabilities in regular schools is continued with a focus on the practices that lead to effective social and learning outcomes, and that an annual report of the progress of this study is published.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Recommendation 20

That the education budget not only recognises and addresses the funding shortfall that has occurred in the last two years but also provides a real increase in recurrent special education funding to address the identified needs of students with disabilities.

Recommendation 21

That the Department of Education establishes, publishes and distributes widely standard procedures and criteria against which to consider submissions for inclusion on the Category A Register and to identify the support needs of students with disabilities.

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

Recommendation 22

That the practice of allocating resources to individual students is maintained, based on the needs and learning outcomes identified in each student's IEP. Schools however, should have greater flexibility in determining how to utilise resources to most effectively support the student's learning program within their school context. Clear guidelines for schools regarding the expenditure of funds not allocated for teacher aide salaries should be developed to ensure appropriate accountability.

Recommendation 23

That schools are expected to continue to contribute resources from the School Resource Package to support specialist learning program provision for students with disabilities, in recognition of the fact that these students are important and valued members of the school community.

Recommendation 24

That, while the annual funding submission process will continue to be the most appropriate mechanism for determining the support needs of the majority of students on the Category A Register, the Department of Education investigates the feasibility of some alternative funding processes which may complement the annual submission process.

Recommendation 25

That the Department of Education investigates ways in which improved support be provided to students who are classified with intellectual and learning disabilities, including dyslexia, and autism and psychiatric disabilities.

Recommendation 26

That the provision of services for early special education, vision and hearing impairment continues to be coordinated by a State support Service.

Recommendation 27

That the Department of Education increases support for students with autism within the government school system and provides this support more pro-actively.

Recommendation 28

That the role of all coordinators within the State Support Service is clarified, and that they work increasingly with District Support Services to provide planned professional development at all levels of the Department.

Recommendation 29

That the role of District Support Services is refined and clarified, with a focus on providing specialist support, such as psychological testing and advice, speech pathology and social work, and that support teachers in District Support Services have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the provision of specialist support for students with high needs, including behaviour management and specialised curriculum development.

Recommendation 30

That a special position description is developed for support teachers, focusing on their role in the provision of specialised classroom support to students with high needs. This position description should expect high levels of experience and expertise in specialised areas of curriculum provision and classroom management. These positions should be filled on a contract or secondment basis.

Recommendation 31

That, in consultation with all stakeholders, the Department of Education investigates the possibility of increased flexibility in relation to hours of attendance and holiday arrangements for support teachers and guidance officers, with the intention that conditions of service not be compromised.

Recommendation 32

That schools recognise the conditions of employment of teacher aides, as laid down in the position descriptions.

Recommendation 33

That schools do not allow teacher aides to undertake learning programs with students in a student's home.

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

Recommendation 34

That schools provide effective leadership for teachers who are teaching students with disabilities by appointing coordinators to provide practical support. Such support could include release time for teachers to attend case conferences, reduced playground duty load or some reduction in class size, as well as organisational support such as timetabling of aides and liaising with support service staff.

Recommendation 35

That the Department of Education, in consultation with Human Resources Management Branch, monitor information relating to workers' compensation and stress leave arising from the implementation of the Inclusion Policy.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation 36

That the Department of Education liaises with the University of Tasmania to develop a compulsory unit of work for pre-service teachers about teaching students with disabilities in regular classrooms.

Recommendation 37

That the Department of Education liaises with the University of Tasmania to ensure that all pre-service teachers have the opportunity to work with a student with a disability or high support needs in a regular classroom during their course, and that this is appropriately assessed and credited.

Recommendation 38

That the Department of Education develops a program of accredited professional learning for teachers.

Recommendation 39

That all Individual Professional Learning Plans (IPLPs), as coordinated by principals, contain elements that develop the recognition of students' diverse learning needs, and the capacity for successful management of these.

Recommendation 40

That the Department of Education sets up a system of mentors or advocates for teachers and teacher aides of students with disabilities, and provides opportunities for regular networking. In addition, in each district, support service staff should work with parents of students with disabilities in an advocacy role.

Recommendation 41

That the Department of Education provides useful and easily accessible teaching materials for teachers and teacher aides of students with disabilities. This material should include both basic information about specific disabilities and practical, workable suggestions for use in the classroom. Classroom material should be linked explicitly to current curriculum guidelines, and cover all learning areas. Parents and organisations having expertise in particular disabilities should be consulted in the preparation of these resources. Material should be available in a variety of forms, including the Internet.

Recommendation 42

That the Department of Education works with the Tasmanian Principals Institute and the Department's Professional Learning Services Branch to develop professional learning programs that address the leadership qualities required to enable a school to build capacity for inclusive education in all its forms. Parents and organisations having expertise in particular disabilities should be consulted in the preparation of these programs.

Recommendation 43

That the Department of Education develops an accredited, competency-based system of teacher aide training. Courses developed should build on the content of existing courses, but should be reworked to include a set of competency based standards for assessment purposes. These courses should be funded centrally and be available to all teacher aides.

Students with Disabilities and Difficulties with Learning



Tasmania

DEPARTMENT *of*
EDUCATION

Equity Standards Branch

March 2002

Students with Disabilities and Difficulties with Learning

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What is disability?

Definitions of terms such as 'disability,' 'special education,' 'special needs,' and 'appropriate support' are subjective and often lack consistency or a shared understanding of what they might mean.

This is a major issue in developing policies, programs or support mechanisms for students with disabilities or for students with problems with schooling, when it is important to identify and define clearly the groups of students involved.

This is more than just a semantic or philosophical discussion because it becomes fundamental when resolving responsibility and resourcing.

(Equity in Schooling, Department of Education and the Arts, Tasmania, 1995, p31)

In our society definitions of 'disability' are commonly linked to the notion of 'impairment,' meaning that some aspect of a person is missing, defective or 'not working properly.'

Traditionally our society has then considered its responsibilities to people with disabilities as providing assistance to minimise the loss of functioning that results from their impairment. This can be by the use of assistive devices (such as computers or peripheral devices, a wheelchair, guide dog, hearing aids etc) or the provision of other means of assistance (eg teacher aide or personal support with tasks, educational interpreters, medication etc).

This view of disability is based mainly on the assumption that the problems and difficulties experienced by people with disabilities are a direct result of their individual physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory or behavioural impairments, that is, that the difficulty is 'within the person.'

More recently we have become increasingly aware that our social and physical environment can contribute significantly to a person's disability and can, in fact, 'handicap' the person beyond the extent of his/her disability.

To demonstrate, the following example shows how people considered disabled in our community are in fact not disabled in another community.

Martha's Vineyard

Martha's Vineyard is a small and relatively isolated community in the United States where, in the last century, there was an unusually high incidence of congenital deafness amongst the population. So prevalent were hearing impairments that signing was as common and 'normal' a mode of communication as was speech. The entire workings of the community were based on an assumption that people were unable to hear. Not only did this mean that there was no real disadvantage in being unable to hear, but also that it was quite typical for members of the community to be unaware of who had a hearing impairment and who didn't.

Clearly, Martha's Vineyard is an exceptional example of a community. The circumstances and period in which these events occurred were very different from those of most modern communities. Nonetheless, it was also clear that, given the right conditions, a community can operate in a way in which disability

Martha's Vineyard continued

not only stops being a disadvantage, but also ceases to have any real significance. This occurred at Martha's Vineyard because the needs and interests of people with hearing impairments were integral to the needs and interests of the whole community – the community functioned in a way that, as a matter of course, accommodated the needs of people with hearing impairments. While this happened mainly because of the high incidence of hearing impairment in the community, the general principle of an inclusive community should be able to be applied, no matter how small the group might be whose needs and interests are at stake.

Parsons, I. Oliver Twist has asked for more: The politics and practice of getting justice for people with disabilities. Villamanta Publishing Service, Geelong, 1994

How does 'context' impact on disability?

An understanding of the social and contextual nature of 'disability' and the resulting 'special education needs' or 'appropriate support' required is also significant in an educational context.

A child with a particular disability may be more or less 'disabled,' have more or less 'special educational need' and require more or less 'support' depending on the context in which he/she is being educated.

This is linked to the notion of 'handicap.'

A handicap is a disadvantage placed on a person with an impairment or disability because that individual must function in a physical or social environment that is limiting. For example, if a student with a physical impairment attends a school which is wheelchair-accessible, that student will be less handicapped than a student with a similar physical impairment who attends a school which is not wheelchair-accessible. In the wheelchair-accessible school, the student will be able to access all the educational opportunities enjoyed by other students, irrespective of his/her physical impairment and is therefore not being 'handicapped' by the environment.

Similarly, if a school environment is supportive and designed to accommodate a broad range of difference, including different learning styles, rates and needs, a student with an intellectual disability, for example, may be seen as less handicapped and having fewer 'special needs' than if he/she attended a school which does not cater for a diverse range of student needs.

The concept of 'special educational needs' therefore really only makes sense in relation to a particular learning context.

In many instances 'special needs' may also be subject to change over time. For students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, for example, times of transition from one stage of schooling to another are recognised as periods when there will be a need for increased support. Similarly some students with specific physical impairments may require increased support post-surgery, or until independent self-catheterisation is achieved, for example.

CONTINUUM OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

In the past it has often been assumed that there is a divide between children who require 'special education' and those who don't. In reality it is more accurate to think of a child's need for extra assistance as falling somewhere along a continuum of needs (Dessent, 1987, 7). This is represented in Figure 1.

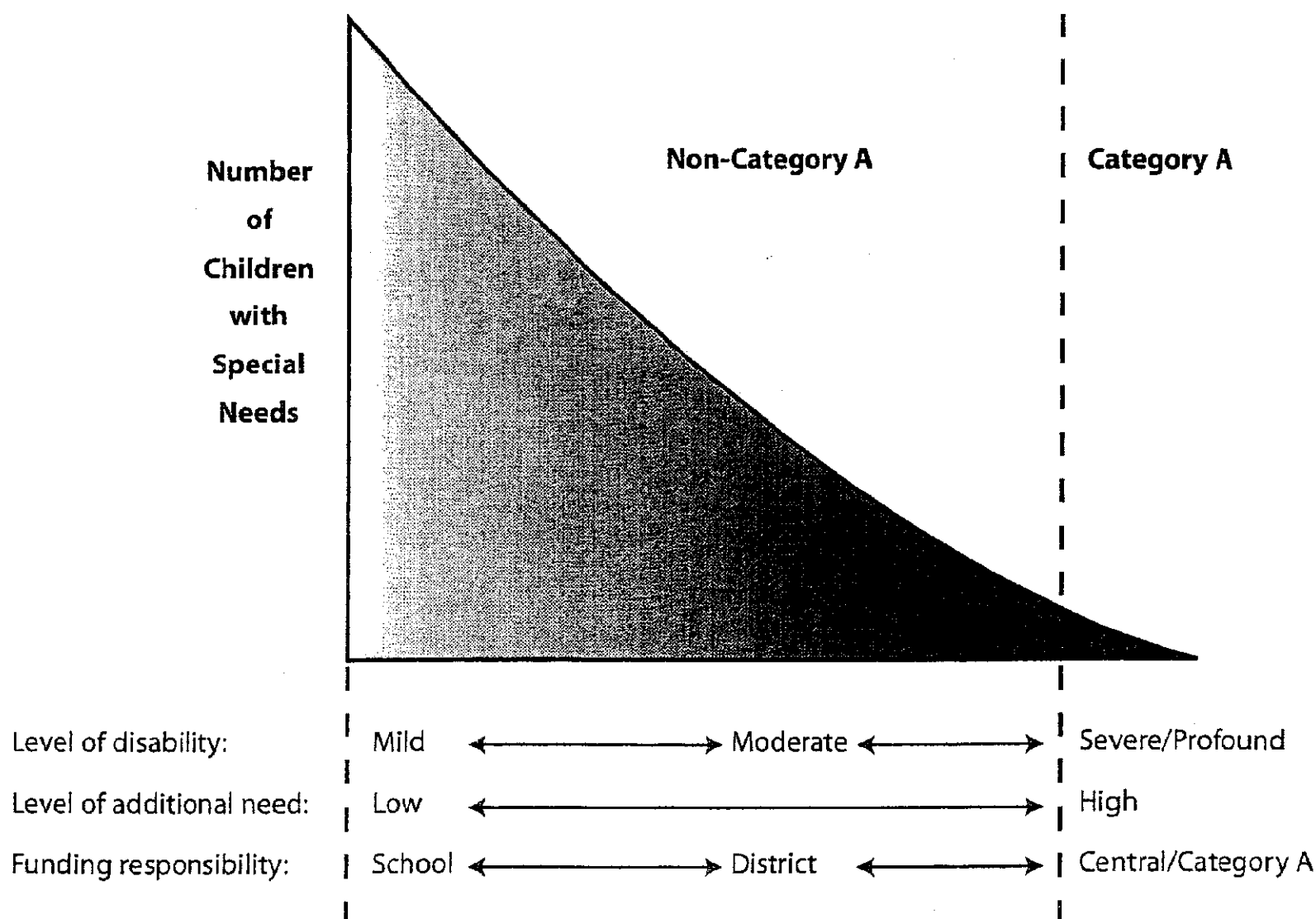
The far right of the continuum represents the very small percentage of students with clearly identifiable and very severe, lifelong disabilities resulting in very high additional support needs throughout their education and beyond. In our system, these students are identified through the Category A Moderation process and additional resources are allocated from Category A (Central) special education provision.

Moving left along the continuum, the number of students gradually increases and includes those students with moderate to mild disabilities and reducing levels of additional need.

At the extreme left, the continuum includes the much greater number of students with milder disabilities or problems with schooling of a more general nature.

This means that the further we move towards the left along the continuum, the additional needs of these students are met using district (non-Category A) special education resources and/or school-based resources and programs.

Figure 1: Continuum of Special Education Need: Tasmanian Context
(Adapted from Dessent, 1987, p7)



Whenever a line is drawn through a continuum of need for a specific purpose, such as placement on the Category A Register, it will always generate some discussion and controversy about the appropriate positioning of that line.

There will always be some students who fall just to the left of the designated line. In our system these students are supported from district special education resources. There is no definite break in the continuum between special and regular education responsibility. It is probable that all schools will have some students with mild disabilities and problems with schooling of a more general nature whose needs are most appropriately met at the school level. It is not realistic or desirable that special education resources be expected to cater for all of these students.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Tasmania is divided into six education districts: Arthur and Barrington in the North-West, Esk in the North/North-East, and Derwent, Bowen and Hartz in the South. Each education district has a district support service.

What are District Support Services?

Each district support service is responsible for the equitable provision and coordination of a range of specialist services to schools. Specialist services include speech and language pathology, guidance (educational psychology), social work, specialist teachers and aboriginal education workers.

The support service works collaboratively with schools. The aim is to provide a range of support that enhances each school's capacity to provide a quality education for all students, and to maximise educational outcomes for students who present with challenging behaviour, and for students with learning, intellectual and communication disabilities, and/or emotional or social difficulties.

There are several levels of delivery of this service. They include professional learning, resourcing, and case management for individual students. The support service actively promotes and plans a range of programs, interventions and strategies which encourage students to be part of the learning process and to work independently.

District support services work closely with the State Support Service with the aim of providing a continuum of support for those students with the highest support needs. The support services also develop networks with other community groups and government agencies involved with young people and families.

The support services work within the framework of a number of key Department of Education policies and guidelines and relevant State and Commonwealth legislation. Of particular relevance are the Equity in Schooling Policy, Inclusion of Students with Disabilities Policy, Enrolment and Attendance Guidelines, Discipline Guidelines and the *State Anti-Discrimination and Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Commonwealth Anti-Discrimination and Disability Discrimination Act 1998*.

What is the State Support Service?

The State Support Service provides a structure to unify, coordinate and manage specialist and statewide services for students with **vision impairment, hearing impairment and Early Special Education Services**.

The **State Autism Consultant** and the **Physical Impairment Co-ordinator**, also under the auspices of the State Support Service, provide specialist and statewide services in those areas of expertise, working closely with district networks.

The service is responsible for ensuring that students with low incidence disabilities are adequately supported to access appropriate education. The number of students with vision or hearing impairment is relatively small and occurs randomly across the State. The total number of students with these disabilities is too small to accurately predict numbers in each district and resource accordingly through district structures. It is therefore appropriate to provide services using a statewide, across-district model of service delivery. This ensures appropriately qualified and trained staff can be flexibly deployed across the State to meet the specialist and changing needs of this group of students.

Early Special Education Services are also the responsibility of the State Support Service with four regional centres in the State. The number of students involved is relatively small and the family-focussed service provision for 0 – 4 year olds is significantly different from school-based services.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESSES AND RESOURCES

Special education resources in Tasmania are allocated by two different processes, central resource allocation and district resource allocation.

What are central special education resources and how are they allocated?

Central resources are administered by Equity Standards Branch and are overseen by the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). They include resources to support students on the Category A Register as well as other special education programs which support students with disabilities across the State (eg Transport Assistance Program, Minor Works for Students with Disabilities, Information Technology for Students with Disabilities etc). The Category A Register is discussed more fully below.

Special education resources are also allocated centrally to the State Support Service to facilitate access to appropriate education opportunities statewide for students who are vision impaired or hearing impaired, and young children enrolled in Early Special Education Services.

What are district special education resources and how are they allocated?

Special education resources, including resources to support students who are not on the Category A Register, are also devolved to district support services, by SEAC, to allocate at the local level in response to identified needs within the district. These resources are referred to as *district resources*. The allocation of these resources is overseen by District Special Education Committees.

District (non-Category A) resources are provided for students who have less severe disabilities or problems with schooling in a more general sense. These students may have mild to moderate intellectual

disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder, specific learning difficulties including ADHD and dyslexia, specific language problems, emotional or behavioural difficulties. These students may or may not have a specific diagnosis.

District special education resources are allocated to each district in recognition of the fact that the needs of these students can be identified and addressed most effectively and efficiently at a more local level. Decisions about the allocation of district resources are made by District Special Education Advisory Committees. District resources are used to support individual students and to support specific purpose programs or projects designed to meet the identified needs of groups of students.

Each district's special education allocation is determined by a formula, which includes the total number of students in the district and the Educational Needs Index, which takes distance from centre and socio-economic status of the school into account. Each district also attracts funding specifically to support students with challenging behaviour in addition to special education funding.

What is the Category A Register and how does it work?

The Category A Register identifies those students for whom the functional and educational impact of their disability is the **most** severe. These students generally require substantial, often highly specialised, support throughout their school years in order to access appropriate education and achieve appropriate educational outcomes. Students on the Category A Register are supported from central rather than district special education resources.

Eligibility to access central special education resources is determined by a statewide **Category A Moderation Process** which determines each individual student's eligibility to be placed on the **Category A Register**.

Specific areas of disability identified on the Category A Register include:

- Intellectual Disability
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Physical Disability (including Health Impairments)
- Psychiatric Disability
- Vision Impairment
- Deaf and Hearing Impairment
- Multiple Disabilities.

Relevant, detailed information about each of these register areas, including eligibility criteria, and the documentation required to support a student's nomination is available.

How are students nominated for the Category A Register?

Students thought to be eligible for the Category A Register are nominated by their school, in conjunction with the relevant support service.

Nominations are endorsed by the relevant District Support Service Manager, or the relevant State Co-ordinator in the case of students with a vision or hearing impairment or those students who have been supported in kindergarten by Early Special Education Services, and are then forwarded to the Moderation Committee.

Moderation committees, for each of the identified disability areas, are chaired by the Manager, Disability Standards and include a range of professionals from around the State, who have specific experience and expertise relevant to the area of disability being considered.

Decisions regarding each student's eligibility are made on the basis of written documentation provided to the committee. Clear guidelines are published, detailing the information that is required by the committee in order to make fair, informed decisions about each student's eligibility. Published eligibility criteria are applied to ensure the integrity of the moderation process.

Moderation committees reserve the right to ask for additional information about nominated students to help them make the most appropriate decision about a student's eligibility. The source and content of any additional information will be recorded in the Minutes. To help make informed decisions, a representative of the Moderation committee may visit a student being nominated for the Register to observe his/her functional behaviour in the classroom.

Each Moderation committee provides feedback to the relevant District Support Service Manager or State Co-ordinator about each student's eligibility for the Register. This information can be provided to schools and parents/carers. If a student is considered ineligible for the Register, the nomination (with additional information) may be resubmitted at a future round of moderation, if the school and/or parent/carer wish.

What is the role of parents/carers?

Nominations for the Category A Register should be made with parents/carers permission and ideally with their participation and input as appropriate. Information about the moderation process and eligibility criteria should be made available to parents/carers. The information contained in this package is important for them. Parents/carers can provide written information to the committee if they wish.

As soon as possible after Moderation committee meetings, parents/carers should be advised via the relevant Support Service Manager or State Co-ordinator whether or not their child has been placed on the Register and the reasons for the decision. Documentation provided by the committee can be used for this purpose.

What does 'Review' involve?

Students placed on the Register may be subject to review to ensure the continuing appropriateness of their placement on the Register. If a review is required the Moderation Committee will usually identify the need and time frame for review when the student is placed on the Register.

It is the responsibility of the school/district to provide relevant information about students identified for review.

What is the relationship between the Category A Register and Funding?

Because of the severity of their disability, students on the Category A Register have first priority for special education resources. These students are resourced on an individual needs basis taking into account the educational impact of their disability and the context in which they are being educated.

Funding for students on the Category A Register who are enrolled in regular schools is 'tied' to the individual and subsequently moves with the student if he/she moves to a different regular school within Tasmania.

Students on the Category A Register who attend special schools are funded at the beginning of each school year using a formula that recognises the different circumstances which apply in special schools.

Placement on the Category A Register does not guarantee any particular level of funding. It identifies those students who will be resourced from central, rather than district, special education funds. It is not the purpose of the Category A Register to identify all students with disabilities. It is acknowledged that there are some students with significant disabilities or problems with schooling who are not eligible for the Category A Register. These students are supported from district special education funds. There are students who are not on the Register, who at certain times in their education, may attract more resources than some students on the Category A Register. The nature of students on the Category A Register however means that the severity of their disability is lifelong and their need for significant, often specialised, support will remain throughout their schooling.

SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFFING

What teaching support is available?

In addition to the special education funding allocated at a central or district level to support the educational needs of students with disabilities, there is also a designated quota of **216.5 special education teachers**.

These teachers are devolved to district support services, to be allocated within each district, using the following processes:

- Students on the Category A Register who attend special schools attract teacher time at a ratio of one teacher to every five students (ie one fifth, or .2 of a teacher for each student).
- Students on the Category A Register who attend regular schools attract teacher time at a ratio of one teacher to each seven students (ie one seventh, or .14 of a teacher for each student). This ratio acknowledges that a student with a disability enrolled in a regular school also attracts the Department of Education's general staffing allocation to the school in which they are enrolled.
- Each district also attracts a special education teacher staffing for non-Category A students based on a formula that includes the total number of students in the district and the Educational Needs Index.
- The State Support Service also receives a staffing allocation from within the special education staffing quota.

Category A teaching staff may have differing lines of responsibility/supervision depending on the district's and/or school's needs and circumstances, however these teachers are specifically designated to meet the needs of students on the Category A Register.

It should be noted that these processes show how the special education teacher quota is divided up. The allocations attracted by individual students however, do not go directly to schools but to the support service for appropriate allocation within the district. The way in which the special education teacher allocation attracted by each district is deployed varies depending on the support service model in place in that district.

Indicative special education teacher allocations are made to support services in November each year for the following year, and are adjusted as necessary, after the February census. Teacher allocations cannot subsequently be varied.

What other professional support is there?

Each district support service also attracts a complement of **guidance officers, speech and language pathologists and social workers.**

How these staff, along with the special education teacher allocation, are deployed within each district is determined by the district's Special Education Advisory Committee. Further information can be obtained from the relevant District Support Service Manager.

How are teacher aides allocated and deployed?

Teacher aide allocations for students on the Category A Register who are enrolled in regular schools are based on the individual students educational needs identified in their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Funds allocated centrally to support the student's program, including the purchase of teacher aide time, are tied to the individual student and move with the child if he/she moves from one regular school to another.

Students on the Category A Register who attend special schools receive teacher aide allocations based on a formula that recognises the different context of the special school. This funding is confirmed early in the school year, on the basis of the number and level of enrolled students, and is then not varied during the course of the year.

Students who are not on the Category A Register may also receive various types of support, including teacher aide allocation from district special education funds

How are teacher aides used to support students in regular classrooms?

Teacher aide time is allocated to support the inclusion of the student/s in the classroom.

This can happen in a variety of ways which could include working one on one with the student, working in a small group, which includes the student with additional needs, working with other students so that the teacher is able to work with that student or making teaching and learning materials for the student.

It is important to remember that it is not in a student's best interest to always have an adult in close proximity. This can prevent the development of independence and positive peer interactions and relationships. While teacher aide time might be allocated to support a particular student, it is the school's responsibility to determine how the resource can be best utilised to support the student's learning program. This would often be negotiated as part of the IEP process, which includes parents.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for Category A Register – Intellectual Disability a student must:

- display functional skills and adaptive behaviours consistent with a moderate to severe/profound intellectual disability; and
- have a measured intelligence greater than three standard deviations below the mean. The moderation committee has consistently used Weschler test measures below a score of 50, or the equivalent on a developmental assessment (eg Griffiths) as the cut-off point.

Performance on psychological assessment alone is not sufficient to determine eligibility for the Category A Register – Intellectual Disability. It is recognised that the level of competence and functional abilities of all students depends on their experience, their teaching and learning history and their age. A student with a diagnosis of mild intellectual disability during primary school years is unlikely to be eligible for the Category A Register – Intellectual Disability in later adolescence unless there is a constitutional or organic reason for loss of previously acquired functional skills.

Intellectual disability is a continuum with no fixed cut off points between levels. The Category A Register – Intellectual Disability identifies those students with the **most severe** level of intellectual disability.

These students often have an organic, genetic or constitutional impairment that is identified at a very early age. It is probable that they would have participated in an Early Special Education program and be known to the education system before school age.

What information is needed?

You must submit **all** of these:

1. A recent educational psychological assessment, including the test profiles for individual tests used (a developmental assessment eg Griffiths, Bayley Scales, Battelle may be more appropriate for a young child with a severe intellectual disability).
2. A current educational report describing the student's functional abilities. It is preferable that this report be written in consultation with a member of the relevant support service.
3. A language assessment including test profiles for individual tests used and descriptive interpretation.
4. Any other relevant documentation.

All information must be **current** ie less than 12 months old.

What is the nomination process?

- Nominations for the Register must be forwarded through, and endorsed by, the appropriate District Support Service Manager by the advised date. District nominations are then forwarded to the committee.

Category A Register – Intellectual Disability

- Children leaving kindergarten who have been supported by Early Special Education Services are nominated through the State Co-ordinator for Early Special Education with appropriate advice to the relevant District Support Service Manager.
- The committee's decisions are conveyed by the District Support Service Manager, or the State Co-ordinator, Early Special Education Services, as appropriate.

What are the review procedures?

- All students on the Category A Register – Intellectual Disability may be subject to review.
- It is the responsibility of the School/District to provide relevant, updated information about students identified for review. The type of information depends on the initial reason for placement on the register.
- Students on the Category A Register – Intellectual Disability on the basis of severe/profound intellectual disability are less likely to be subject to review as their status is less likely to fluctuate.

Please note

Placement on the Category A Register – Intellectual Disability does not guarantee any particular level of funding. It simply identifies students eligible for central rather than district funds.

Students with intellectual disabilities not eligible for the Category A Register – Intellectual Disability may still receive support and advice from their District Support Service. They may also receive funding from their District Special Education Committee.

The moderation committee

Members of the committee are:

- Margaret Ridgers (Manager, Esk District Support Service)
- Kerry McMinn (Manager, Disability Standards)
- Rebecca Dorney (Acting Senior Guidance Officer, Barrington)
- Alison Henty (Senior Speech Pathologist, Esk).

The committee meets in August.

Further information

Queries regarding the Category A Register – Intellectual Disability can be directed to:

Kerry McMinn
Manager, Disability Standards
Equity Standards Branch
Ph (03) 6233 7317.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for the Category A Register – Physical Disability a student must have:

1. An identifiable, severe physical disability which has highly significant implications for a student's learning outcomes, or
2. An identifiable, severe medical condition or health impairment which has highly significant learning/educational implications eg severe, uncontrolled epilepsy, severe head injury etc.

The high level of educational need characterising these students is based on their physical dependence relating to:

- movement and positioning
- communication
- eating and drinking
- toileting, and
- their ability to perform or participate in basic educational tasks and activities eg requiring a scribe or technology so they can record information.

Epilepsy

- Eligibility on the basis of epilepsy is determined by the frequency and severity of seizures at school and their subsequent educational impact.
- A diary of seizures at school is required to substantiate a nomination for inclusion on the Category A Register – Physical Disability.

What information is needed?

You must submit **all** of these:

1. A recent physiotherapy, occupational therapy and/or speech pathology report as appropriate;
2. A medical report if being nominated on the basis of a medical condition or health impairment;
3. A current education report written by the teacher or guidance officer, clearly identifying and describing the educational implications of the physical disability or health impairment according to the criteria previously mentioned;
4. Any other relevant documentation (eg seizure diary if applicable).

All information must be **current** ie less than 12 months old.

What is the nomination process?

- Nominations for the Category A Register – Physical Disability must be forwarded through, and endorsed by, the appropriate District Support Service Manager by the advised date. District nominations will then be forwarded to the committee.

Category A Register – Physical Disability

- Children leaving kindergarten who have been supported by Early Special Education Services are nominated through the State Co-ordinator, Early Special Education with appropriate advice to the relevant District Support Service Manager.
- The committee's decisions are conveyed through the District Support Service Manager, or State Co-ordinator, Early Special Education Services, as appropriate.

What are the review procedures?

- All students on the Category A Register – Physical Disability may be subject to review. For most students on the Category A Register – Physical Disability, their high level of educational need will remain throughout their education. However, for some, particularly those on the register on the basis of their medical condition or health impairment requirements may change. These students may be subject to annual review to ensure the continuing appropriateness of their placement.
- It is the responsibility of the School/District to provide relevant, updated information about students identified for review.
- The type of information depends on the initial reason for placement on the register.
- Some students will be asked to have a Full Review. Information including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and educational reports as appropriate are required.
- Review for students on the Category A Register – Physical Disability on the basis of a medical condition requires:
 - an updated medical report confirming the continuation of the medical condition, and
 - an educational report outlining the current implications resulting from the condition.

Please note

Placement on the Category A Register – Physical Disability does not guarantee any particular level of funding. It simply identifies students eligible for central rather than district funds.

Students with physical disabilities not eligible for the Category A Register – Physical Disability can still receive support and advice from their District Support Service. The Physical Impairment Co-ordinator is also available to provide assistance.

Students may also receive funding from their District Special Education Committee.

Toileting appendix

Some students, due to a physical disability or medical condition, are dependent for toileting but do not meet other eligibility criteria for the Category A Register – Physical Disability. These students may be placed on an appendix to the Category A Register – Physical Disability on the basis of 'toileting only.' They are eligible to attract teacher assistant time specifically to meet these needs only, to a maximum of five hours per week. The needs of these students will be reviewed annually. An education report is not required for students being nominated for the 'toileting only' appendix.

When required, updated information should be submitted on the student's toileting status and needs, the student's progress towards independence if not already achieved, a toileting diary, and the frequency of toileting support required by the student. Full educational information is not necessary for students on the 'toileting only' appendix only.

The moderation committee

Members of the committee are:

- Tim Keane (A/Principal, Newstead Heights School, Esk)
- Rowena Wilkinson (A/Physical Impairment Co-ordinator, State Support Service)
- Janet Potter (Derwent Support Service)
- Kerry McMinn (Manager, Disability Standards).

The committee meets in August.

Further information

Queries regarding the Category A Register – Physical Disability can be directed to:

Kerry McMinn

Manager, Disability Standards

Equity Standards Branch

Ph (03) 6233 7317.

CATEGORY A REGISTER – MULTIPLE DISABILITY

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for the Category A Register – Multiple Disability a student must:

- meet the eligibility criteria for the Category A Register – Physical Disability; and
- meet the eligibility criteria for the Category A Register – Intellectual Disability or the Category A Register – Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Schools wishing to nominate students for the Category A Register – Multiple Disability should refer to the guidelines provided for the Category A Register – Physical Disability and the Category A Register – Intellectual Disability or Category A Register – Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The student's information must go to **both** the relevant moderation committees. When nominating a student for the Category A Register – Multiple Disability therefore, the relevant information must go to **two separate committees for consideration**.

If only one educational report is being written, it must address the information requested by both committees.

What is the nomination process?

- Nominations for the register must be forwarded through, and endorsed by, the appropriate District Support Service Manager by the advised date. District nominations are then forwarded to the committee.
- Children leaving kindergarten who have been supported by Early Special Education Services are nominated through the State Co-ordinator for Early Special Education with appropriate advice to the relevant District Support Service Manager.
- The committee's decisions are conveyed by the relevant District Support Service Manager, or the State Co-ordinator, Early Special Education Services, as appropriate.

What are the review procedures?

- All students on the Category A Register – Multiple Disability may be subject to review.
- It is the responsibility of the School/District to provide relevant, updated information about students identified for review. The type of information required will be identified by the moderation committee.

Please note

Placement on the Category A Register – Multiple Disability does not guarantee any particular level of funding. It simply identifies students eligible for central rather than district funds.

Students not eligible for the Category A Register – Multiple Disability may still be eligible for either the Category A Register – Physical Disability, Intellectual Disability, or Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Students not eligible for the Category A Register may still receive support and advice from their District Support Service. They may also receive funding from their District Special Education Committee.

Further information

Queries regarding the Category A Register – Multiple Disability can be directed to:

Kerry McMinn

Manager, Disability Standards

Equity Standards Branch

Ph (03) 6233 7317.

CATEGORY A REGISTER – PSYCHIATRIC DISORDER

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for the Category A Register – Psychiatric Disorder a student must:

- have a confirmed psychiatric diagnosis from a qualified psychiatrist;
- have highly significant educational implications resulting from the psychiatric disorder. These implications must be identifiable and precisely described in functional terms;
- be receiving ongoing psychiatric treatment.

Students diagnosed with Schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders or severe psychiatric disorders eg Conversion Disorder, Bi-polar Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder and Severe Obsessive Compulsive Disorder may be considered for nomination.

Conditions associated with Disruptive Behaviour Disorders eg Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Adjustment Disorder do not qualify for consideration for the Category A Register – Psychiatric Disorder.

What information is needed?

You must submit **all** of these:

1. A recent report from the treating psychiatrist about the psychiatric condition, its implications, treatment requirements and potential prognosis;
2. A current guidance/psychological report indicating cognitive functioning and adaptive/social behaviour;
3. A current education report describing the educational implications of the psychiatric disorder and detailing functioning levels; and
4. Any other relevant documentation.

All information must be **current** ie less than 12 months old.

What is the nomination process?

- Nominations for the register must be forwarded through, and endorsed by, the appropriate District Support Service Manager by the advised date. District nominations are then forwarded to the committee.
- The committee's decisions are conveyed by the relevant District Support Service Manager.

What are the review procedures?

- Students placed on the Category A Register – Psychiatric Disorder will be subject to review.
- It is the responsibility of the school to provide relevant, updated information about students identified for the review.

Category A Register – Psychiatric Disorder

- The type of information depends on the initial reason for placement on the register, and should include:
 - an updated psychiatric report, or confirmation about the student's continuing status from a psychiatrist, and
 - an educational report outlining the ongoing implications of the psychiatric disorder on the student's learning outcomes.

Please note

Placement on the Category A Register – Psychiatric Disorder does not guarantee any particular level of funding. It simply identifies students eligible for central rather than district funds.

Students not on the register may still receive support and advice from their District Support Service. They may also receive funding from their district Special Education Committee.

The moderation committee

Members of the committee are:

- Margaret Ridgers (Manager, Esk District Support)
- Rebecca Dorney (Acting Senior Guidance Officer, Barrington)
- Alison Henty (Senior Speech Pathologist, Esk)
- Kerry McMinn (Manager, Disability Standards)

The committee meets in August.

Further information

Queries regarding the Category A Register – Psychiatric Disorder can be directed to:

Kerry McMinn

Manager, Disability Standards

Equity Standards Branch

Ph (03) 6233 7317.

Note: The guidelines contained in this document may be reviewed as a result of the deliberations of the Psychiatric Working Group, established under the auspices of the Special Education Advisory Committee.

CATEGORY A REGISTER – AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for the Category A Register – Autism Spectrum Disorder a student must have:

- a confirmed diagnosis of autism in the upper moderate/severe range from a team of professionals with expertise in this area;
- demonstrated functional abilities consistent with this diagnosis, particularly in relation to DSM IV criteria and the associated educational implications (see attached).

It is recognised that Autism Spectrum Disorder forms a continuum:

- from mild to severe, and
- from low to high functioning.

The social and functional implications and the educational impact of Autism Spectrum Disorder varies depending on the relationship between these two dimensions.

A diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder alone therefore, is not sufficient to ensure eligibility for the Category A Register – Autism Spectrum Disorder. The register identifies students for whom the learning/educational implications resulting from Autism Spectrum Disorder are the **most severe**.

What information is needed?

You must submit **all** of these:

1. Guidance officer/psychologist's report including:
 - a social and developmental case history;
 - a comprehensive cognitive or developmental assessment (eg Wechsler test, Griffiths, Merrill Palmer) including the assessment profile.
2. Behavioural observation – CARS (Childhood Autism Rating Scale) must be done by observation, and not by report. This may be completed by a professional other than the guidance officer or psychologist. Descriptive information should be included and the profile must be provided.
3. Educational report for all school age children outlining functional abilities and educational implications.
4. A language assessment including test profiles and descriptive interpretation, especially in relation to social communication skills.
5. Any other relevant documentation.

All information must be **current** ie less than 12 months old.

What is the nomination process?

- Nominations must be forwarded through, and endorsed by, the appropriate District Support Service Manager by the advised date. District nominations will then be forwarded to the committee.

Category A Register – Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Children leaving kindergarten who have been supported by Early Special Education Services are nominated through the State Co-ordinator, Early Special Education with appropriate advice to the relevant District Support Service Manager.
- The committee's decisions are conveyed by the District Support Service Manager, or the State Co-ordinator, Early Special Education Services, as appropriate.

What are the review procedures?

- All students on the Category A Register – Autism Spectrum Disorder may be subject to review.
- It is the responsibility of the School/District to provide relevant, updated information about students identified for review.
- Students placed on the Category A Register – Autism Spectrum Disorder before they reach school age should be put forward for review at the moderation committee meeting following their sixth birthday.

Please note

Placement on the Category A Register – Autism Spectrum Disorder does not guarantee any particular level of funding. It simply identifies students eligible for central rather than district funds.

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder who are not eligible for the register can still receive support and advice from their District Support Service and the statewide Autism Consultant. They may also receive funding from their district Special Education Committee.

The moderation committee

Members of the committee are:

- Margaret Ridgers (Manager, Esk District Support Service)
- Rebecca Dorney (Acting Senior Guidance Officer, Barrington)
- Alison Henty (Senior Speech Pathologist, Esk)
- Kerry McMinn (Manager, Disability Standards).

The moderation committee meets in August.

Further information

Queries regarding the Category A Register – Autism Spectrum Disorder can be directed to:

Kerry McMinn
Manager, Disability Standards
Equity Standards Branch
Ph (03) 6233 7317.

THE DIAGNOSTIC AND STATISTICAL MANUAL OF MENTAL DISORDERS IV
(DSM IV) DESCRIBES THE FOLLOWING DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA:

A

- (1) Qualitative impairments in social interaction as manifested by at least two of the following:
 - marked impairment in the use of multiple non-verbal behaviours such as eye to eye gaze, facial expression, body postures and gestures to regulate social interaction;
 - failure to develop peer relationships appropriate to developmental level;
 - lack of spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people (eg by a lack of showing, bringing, or pointing at objects);
 - lack of social or emotional reciprocity.
- (2) Qualitative impairments in communication as manifested by at least one of the following:
 - delay in, or total lack of, the development of spoken language (not accompanied by an attempt to compensate through alternative modes of communication such as gesture or mime);
 - in individuals with adequate speech, marked impairment in the ability to initiate or sustain a conversation with others;
 - stereotyped and repetitive use of language or idiosyncratic language;
 - lack of varied, spontaneous make-believe play or social imitative play appropriate to developmental level.
- (3) Restricted repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behaviour, interests, and activities, as manifested by at least one of the following:
 - encompassing preoccupation with one or more stereotyped and restricted patterns of interest that is abnormal either in intensity or focus;
 - apparently inflexible adherence to specific, non-functional routines or rituals;
 - stereotyped and repetitive motor mannerisms (eg hand or finger flapping or twisting, or complex whole-body movements);
 - persistent preoccupation with parts of objects.

B

Delays or abnormal functioning in at least one of the following areas, with onset prior to age 3 years:

- (1) social interaction;
- (2) language as used in social communication; or
- (3) symbolic or imaginative play.

C

The disturbance is not better accounted for by Rett's Disorder or Childhood Disintegrative Disorder.

CATEGORY A REGISTER – DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for the Category A Register – Deaf and Hearing Impairment a student must have:

- a hearing loss of greater than 60 dB in their better ear as measured by an audiologist at 500, 1000 and 2000 hertz.

A students' functioning in the following areas is also considered:

- audition
- language
- literacy
- academics
- social/emotional.

What information is needed?

You must submit **all** of these:

1. A recent audiological assessment
2. A profile of the student written by a teacher of the deaf in consultation with parents/carers and the school, as appropriate
3. Any other relevant documentation.

All information must be **current** ie less than 12 months old.

What are the nomination processes?

- Nominations must be forwarded through, and endorsed by, the State Co-ordinator, Services for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Students. Nominations will then be forwarded to the committee.
- The committee's decisions will be conveyed by the State Co-ordinator, Services for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Students.

What are the review procedures?

- All students on the Category A Register – Deaf and Hearing Impairment may be subject to review.
- It is the responsibility of the Services for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Students in conjunction with the school, as appropriate, to provide relevant, updated information about students identified for review. The type of information depends on the initial reason for placement on the register.

Please note

Placement on the Category A Register – Deaf and Hearing Impairment does not guarantee any particular level of funding. It simply identifies students eligible for central funds.

Category A Register – Deaf and Hearing Impairment

Students with a hearing impairment not eligible for the Category A Register – Deaf and Hearing Impairment will still receive support and advice from Services for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Students.

The moderation committee

Members of the committee are:

- Jenni Gates, (State Co-ordinator, Services for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired)
- Carolyn Rennie (Acting Manager, Disability Standards)
- Toni Douglas (Manager, Barrington District Support Service)
- Tracey Hanigan (Senior Speech Pathologist, Bowen).

The committee meets in August.

Further information

Queries regarding the Category A Register – Deaf and Hearing Impairment can be directed to:

Carolyn Rennie

Acting Manager, Disability Standards

Ph (03) 6233 7317.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for the Category A Register – Vision Impairment a student must:

- have a severe vision impairment as measured through appropriate assessment by an ophthalmologist, optometrist or orthoptist. This means a visual acuity of less than 6/48; visual field of 20 degrees or less (after best possible correction and surgical intervention);

A student's functioning and needs in the following areas are also considered:

- literacy
- curriculum adaptation and methodology
- low vision aids
- orientation, mobility and safety, and
- interplay of vision impairment with other disabilities.

These students are usually identified at an early age.

All students eligible for placement on the Category A Register – Vision Impairment require the involvement of a Resource Teacher: Vision Impairment for appropriate material presentation, teaching methodology and specialised curriculum. Some of the students are totally blind. Most students use technology/low vision aids to access learning.

The blend of information and subsequent eligibility for Category A Register – Vision Impairment status is in accordance with the 'Classification of Visual Performance: educational adaptation' from the World Health Organization.

What information is needed?

You must submit **all** of these:

1. Medical assessment;
2. Profile of the student's competencies and needs written by a Resource Teacher: Vision Impairment in consultation with the parents/carers and the School
3. Other relevant documentation.

All information must be **current** ie less than 12 months old.

What is the nomination process?

- Nominations must be forwarded through, and endorsed by, the State Co-ordinator, Vision Impairment Services. Nominations will then be forwarded to the committee.
- The committee's decision will be conveyed by the State Co-ordinator, Vision Impairment Services.

What are the review procedures

- All students on the Category A Register – Vision Impairment may be subject to review.
- It is the responsibility of the School to provide relevant, updated information about students identified for review. The type of information depends on the initial reason for placement on the register.

Please note

Placement on the Category A Register – Vision Impairment does not guarantee funding or any particular level of funding. It simply identifies students for central funds and support services.

Some students will require additional funding in some years and not others eg transition to a different physical environment, or during a period of literacy acquisition.

Students with vision impairment not eligible for the Category A Register – Vision Impairment still receive support and advice from Services to Children with Vision Impairment.

The moderation committee

Members of the committee are:

- Marg Griffin (State Co-ordinator, Vision Impairment Service)
- Carolyn Rennie (Acting Manager, Disability Standards)
- Cheryl Larcombe (Manager, Arthur District Support Service)
- Anne Kelly (Hartz District Support Service).

The committee meets in August.

Further information

Queries regarding the Category A Register – Vision Impairment can be directed to:

Carolyn Rennie
Acting Manager, Disability Standards
Equity Standards Branch
Ph (03) 6233 7317.

**Policy on Educational Provision for
Students with Challenging Behaviour**

Policy statement

Students with challenging behaviour are probably the most demanding group of students for a school system. These students are at substantial risk of under-performing and of failing to benefit from being at school. They may also have a substantial negative impact on their families, other students, teachers and the wider community.

It is essential that schools and colleges have the capacity to educate and support all students, including those whose behaviour is challenging or who are at risk of developing challenging behaviour. It is also imperative that there is a system-wide, flexible approach to students with challenging behaviour that recognises the complexity of the issue and provides for a range of options and support to schools.

This policy should be read in the context of the *Equity in Schooling Policy* (1995), which states '*schools and colleges must ensure that all students have equitable access to the benefits of education...*'

Background and Rationale

A policy on educational provision for students with challenging behaviour should recognise that young people's behaviour and relationships are largely shaped by the broad social, economic and political context in which they live.

Most young people face a rapidly changing world characterised by some significant challenges:

- The structure and character of their families are changing with the emergence of new patterns of employment, smaller families with older parents, more single parent families, greater mobility and increased labour force participation of women, especially married women.
- Job opportunities are shifting from traditional areas of employment to service, communication and knowledge-based industries. Young people are conscious of an increase in the level of qualification and skills needed to gain employment. For the majority of young people, changing career direction several times in their working lives and moving between employment, self-employment and unemployment, can be anticipated.
- There are increased pressures and opportunities to partake of drugs, alcohol and other noxious substances.

- There is pressure to conform to the expectations of their peers and their families.
- There is frequent portrayal of violence, substance abuse and confrontations with authority in popular media, music and some aspects of youth culture.

Most young people cope with these challenges and negotiate school and the transitions of childhood and youth to become well-adjusted adults. However, some young people will respond in ways that cause difficulties for themselves and others. There has been a significant increase, over recent years, in the numbers of young people in schools and colleges who respond to their life context with behaviour that is very challenging. It is important to understand that this challenging behaviour is often not an individual's aberrant outbursts, but a response to this complex social and environmental context.

At the same time there has been a move away from traditional, authoritarian approaches towards young people as well as an increase in the number of international agreements about various human rights issues, including the rights of the child. Management strategies that may have been practised some years ago are now no longer acceptable or effective.

Schools have also become more flexible in their operation, with a stronger focus on strategies and programs that take individual school and student needs and local circumstances into account.

There should also be acknowledgement that the escalation of challenging behaviours has the potential to adversely affect the learning outcomes of the students in question and of other students in the same classroom. It also impacts strongly on the work of the teachers and other staff in schools in which such behaviours occur.

A policy framework and improved management and prevention strategies are required that take all of these factors into account.

Until now, the work of schools in meeting the needs of students with challenging behaviour has been undertaken without the guidance of a specific policy framework. It is anticipated that by providing this policy, accompanied by implementation guidelines, the Department will assist schools to review and revise their approaches to this complex aspect of their provision as well as detailing the range of provision that is needed at systemic level.

This policy has been developed through consultation with stakeholder groups and takes into consideration the issues and recommendations contained in the Australian Education Union report *Student Welfare and Behaviour Management*

Project: a systems approach and resource for schools and teachers released in February 2000.

The policy also takes account of the *Equity in Schooling Policy (1995)* which outlines the Department's commitment to providing fair and equitable access to the benefits of schooling for all young people and reflects the spirit and intent of the *Supportive School Environment Policy (1990)* and the *Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Regular Schools (1994)*, which provide the context within which this new policy will be implemented. It is consistent with *Learning Together (2000) Goal 3:*

'Tasmanians will have a world-class education, training and information system which matches the best anywhere. We will achieve this through safe and inclusive learning environments that encourage and support participation in learning throughout all of life.'

The policy applies from Kindergarten to Year 12. Specific initiatives directed at particular year groups will be outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Terms Used in this Policy

Challenging Behaviour

Challenging behaviour is behaviour that significantly challenges the day to day functioning of schools and the right of students and staff to function in a safe and orderly environment. Its intensity, duration, persistence or frequency is beyond the normal levels of student misbehaviour that schools tolerate and it is less likely to be responsive to the usual range of interventions for student misbehaviour. Challenging behaviour can only be defined in the context in which the behaviour occurs and according to the person or people who find the behaviour challenging. This means that behaviour defined as challenging in one school, might not be defined in this way in another school.

Alternate Provision

An alternative provision is any intervention that provides an alternative to the provision usually provided for students in the mainstream. There is obviously a continuum of alternative provisions that may be in place for students with challenging behaviour. These may be offered within the classroom, across the whole school, or at a site outside the school. They might be full or part-time, short or long term. Such provisions are designed to give opportunities for students to engage in learning activities in which they are more likely to be successful. Alternative provisions include specifically identified programs (such as Project Hahn) or social skills training, but also include any informal initiatives devised to assist students.

Case Management

Case management refers to a coordinated team approach with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The case management process manages the decision-making in relation to provision for a student and monitors the success of a course of action. Case management can involve selection of suitable resources, deciding on strategies, consulting with the student, professionals and key people in the student's life, negotiating on what is to be done and conducting case conferences and reviews.

Goals

It is intended that:

1. The school system will have increased capacity to educate and support students with challenging behaviour and students who are at risk of developing challenging behaviour, through an equitable, sustainable and system-wide approach and a range of flexible intervention strategies.
2. All school and support staff will have the knowledge, skills and confidence they require to work successfully with students who have challenging behaviour and to provide an environment that will support positive behaviour.
3. There will be increased levels of awareness and understanding in schools and the wider community concerning the complex and multifaceted nature of challenging behaviour and the need for a holistic response.

Requirements

GOAL ONE: *The school system will have increased capacity to educate and support students with challenging behaviour and students who are at risk of developing challenging behaviour, through an equitable, sustainable and system-wide approach and a range of flexible intervention strategies.*

In order to achieve goal one¹, the following strategies will be required:

- 1.1 There will be clear, well-communicated policy direction and strategic planning in areas related to the education of students with challenging behaviours;
- 1.2 Information will be disseminated widely about support services, referral mechanisms, specific initiatives, staff and parent training, aspects of best practice, research and evaluation of programs;
- 1.3 Schools will have responsibility for enrolled students, and will play a central part in the programs and interventions designed for their students;
- 1.4 Schools will be responsible for notifying their district support service manager of students of compulsory school age whose non-attendance as a result of challenging behaviour places them at risk, or in the event that they move out of their home school area;

¹ While all goals are inter-dependent and the requirements linked to all three goals, they have been grouped under their primary goal.

- 1.5 District support services will work with schools to develop strategies for students with challenging behaviour;
- 1.6 A range of preventative and responsive provisions and approaches will be available within districts for students with challenging behaviour that can be tailored to meet the varied needs of students and schools and coordinated within the district. As part of this continuum, alternative programs will be available for the small number of students with extreme behaviour difficulties; and
- 1.7 There will be systematic identification and referral processes between schools and districts, that allow students to be consistently identified and enrolled in services that best meet their needs, regardless of where they live.

GOAL TWO: *All school and support staff will have the knowledge, skills and confidence they require to work successfully with students who have challenging behaviour and to provide an environment that will support positive behaviour.*

In order to achieve goal two, the following strategies will be required:

- 2.1 Schools and classroom teachers will be the primary focus for support and assistance to educate students with challenging behaviour;
- 2.2 All teaching staff will have pre-service and in-service training in behaviour management in the context of a supportive, inclusive school environment and based on the *Competencies Framework in Managing Student Behaviour*;
- 2.3 Principals and senior staff will have access to training and support mechanisms so that they can provide leadership and support in their schools on the issue of challenging behaviour;
- 2.4 More intensive training programs will be available to support teaching staff and other staff in schools who can facilitate and support a school's response to students with challenging behaviour; and
- 2.5 Teacher Aides will have access to competency-based training related to managing students with challenging behaviour.

GOAL THREE: *There will be increased levels of awareness and understanding in schools and the wider community concerning the complex and multifaceted nature of challenging behaviour and the need for a holistic response.*

In order to achieve goal three, the following strategies will be required:

- 3.1 All schools will provide a supportive, inclusive environment with attention to curriculum, pedagogy and organisational factors that reduce the likelihood of students developing challenging behaviour;

- 3.2 Early intervention with students at risk of developing challenging behaviour and their families will be included in the range of provisions and approaches;
- 3.3 Approaches that build family and personal resilience, enhance school climate and address relationship and lifestyle issues will be included in the range of provisions;
- 3.4 All interventions will be based on a problem solving approach that allows for a long-term planning cycle of assessment, intervention, evaluation and revision;
- 3.5 There will be a coordinated, cohesive case management approach for individual students who are exhibiting challenging behaviour; and
- 3.6 Schools, families, support services and other government and non-government agencies will share the responsibility for students with challenging behaviour.

Responsibilities

Teachers will be responsible for:

- 1.1 Providing a safe and supportive classroom environment with attention to curriculum, pedagogy and organisational factors that enhance the behaviour of all students. This includes initiating communication with a child's family as early as possible to discuss concerns, suggest forms of support and encourage feedback;
- 1.2 Being skilled in identifying, and, as part of their classroom management practices, planning intervention for students who are at risk of developing challenging behaviour;
- 1.3 Participating in professional learning that contributes to their skill development and understanding of students with challenging behaviour;
- 1.4 Contributing to case management for students with challenging behaviour and undertaking assessment and interventions that the plan determines, with appropriate support and assistance; and
- 1.5 Understanding their own needs, clarifying their attitudes and building their resilience.

It is expected that Parents will be responsible for:

- 2.1 Communicating with the child's teacher or school principal concerns about their child's behaviour;

- 2.2 Contributing to management plans that concern their children and providing feedback on the results of any interventions; and
- 2.3 Cooperating with interventions that are proposed in the agreed management plan.

Principals will be responsible for:

- 3.1 Facilitating the development of a supportive school environment policy and implementation plan;
- 3.2 Leading their school in relation to the management of students with challenging behaviour and supporting staff in relation to these students;
- 3.3 Initiating and coordinating services and programs for students with challenging behaviour enrolled in their school and maintaining this responsibility if a student is attending an alternative program;
- 3.4 Facilitating access of all staff to programs of professional learning in relation to students with challenging behaviour;
- 3.5 Providing the opportunity for some staff to develop higher-level skills so that they are able to provide additional support and advice within the school;
- 3.6 Seeking outside support and advice from district support staff and members of the Behaviour Support Team, where needed;
- 3.7 Ensuring that parents are kept informed about, and are involved in, developing a case management plan for their children with challenging behaviour; and
- 3.8 Ensuring that teachers are provided with information relevant to the management of the student.

District Support Managers will be responsible for:

- 4.1 Managing the support service staff to work in collaboration with principals and teachers to enhance the capacity of schools in their district to manage students with challenging behaviour;
- 4.2 Providing advice on development of the District Behaviour Plan to accommodate the needs of students with challenging behaviour in the district and the services that are required;
- 4.3 Following up students who have extreme challenging behaviour who move out of their district, by alerting other Managers and making sure that details of assessments and programs are passed on;
- 4.4 Ensuring a coordinated, cohesive case management approach for students in the district who are exhibiting challenging behaviour;
- 4.5 Liaising with staff from other agencies that are able to contribute to the management and support of students with challenging behaviour;

- 4.6 Facilitating access of all of their staff to programs of professional learning in relation to students with challenging behaviour; and
- 4.7 Liaising with parents and families of students with challenging behaviour, in accordance with the case management plan.

The Director of Tasmanian Educational Leaders' Institute, will be responsible for:

- 5.1 Managing the performance of the Principal Education Officer, Behaviour Support Team;
- 5.2 Working in close association with district superintendents or their nominees to facilitate the work of the Principal Education Officer, Behaviour Support Team; and
- 5.3 Providing advice to the Deputy Secretary (Schools and Colleges) on the implementation of policies and strategic plans in relation to supportive, inclusive schooling and the management of students with challenging behaviour.

The Principal Education Officer, Behaviour Support Team will be responsible for:

- 6.1 Leading the Behaviour Support Team in supporting schools and districts to review and improve supportive and inclusive school environments;
- 6.2 Leading the Behaviour Support Team in supporting schools and districts to review and improve problem solving and innovative approaches to behaviour management support;
- 6.3 Providing leadership in the improvement and management of appropriate teaching and learning environments for all students, particularly those with challenging behaviour;
- 6.4 Leading and coordinating the Behaviour Support Team to support schools in building greater interdependence between schools and districts, support services and other agencies; and
- 6.5 Liaising with districts and with other departmental officers and stakeholders to determine priorities for professional learning and strategic planning.

Members of the Behaviour Support Team will be responsible for:

- 7.1 Working with districts, whole schools and individual teachers to review and improve their supportive and inclusive environments;
- Working with districts, whole schools and individual teachers to review and improve problem-solving and innovative approaches to behaviour management support;
- Assisting schools in maintaining and improving teaching and learning environments for all students, particularly those with challenging behaviour;
- Working with districts and schools to develop greater interdependence between schools, support services and other agencies;
- Assisting in the development of district behaviour management plans; and
- Organising and providing professional learning according to district and school priorities and standards of good practice.

District Superintendents will be responsible for:

- 8.1 Developing an annual District Behaviour Plan that details the levels of challenging behaviours in their district for the past year, identifies the issues of particular concern, describes the support services, specific initiatives, professional learning programs, resources, management and administration of programs and initiatives for students with challenging behaviour;
- 8.2 Planning an equitable range of programs and initiatives to support students with challenging behaviour across all districts;
- 8.3 Monitoring provision and maintaining an overview of alternative programs that are district based or cross-district based;
- 8.4 Establishing processes for equitable access to programs within their district and for cross-district programs;
- 8.5 Facilitating access for all principals and senior staff to professional learning in relation to students with challenging behaviour;
- 8.6 Ensuring that all schools have a supportive school environment policy and implementation plan that reduces the likelihood of students developing challenging behaviour; and
- 8.7 Facilitating the development of expertise in district personnel who will have higher level skills in relation to students with challenging behaviour and who are able to provide additional expertise, support and advice to schools.

Equity Standards Branch will be responsible for:

- 9.1 Developing and monitoring policy, and planning implementation in areas specifically related to supportive, inclusive schooling and students with challenging behaviour through a comprehensive consultative process;
- 9.2 Developing standards and guidelines for the establishment and management of initiatives and programs for students with challenging behaviour; and
- 9.3 Developing and revising appropriate strategic plans related to supportive, inclusive schooling and the management of students with challenging behaviour and monitoring progress towards the achievement of targets in the Strategic Plan.

The Challenging Behaviours Reference Group will be responsible for:

- 10.1 Recommending the strategies and initiatives that should be provided systemically for students with challenging behaviour;
- 10.2 Guiding the development of a Strategic Plan, every three years, that details how this policy will be implemented and resourced; and
- 10.3 Monitoring the effectiveness of the policy.

DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION



Tasmania

**Students with Challenging Behaviour
Strategic Plan
2002-2003**

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Attachment 4b

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Introduction and Background

Students with challenging behaviours are probably the most demanding group of students for a school system.

Students with challenging behaviours are at substantial risk of under-performing and of failing to benefit from being at school. They may also have a substantial negative impact on their families, other students, teachers and the wider community.

It is essential that schools and colleges have the capacity to educate and support all students, including those whose behaviour is challenging or who are at risk of developing challenging behaviour. It is also imperative that there is a system wide, flexible approach to students with challenging behaviour that recognises the complexity of the issue and provides for a range of options and support to schools.

A policy addressing the needs of these students has recently been developed to assist schools to review and revise their approaches to this complex aspect of their provision.

Working Party Membership

This plan was developed through consultation with stakeholder groups, and with the direct input of a working group.

The Students with Challenging Behaviour Policy and resulting plan have been developed through consultation with all stakeholder groups, with the direct input of a working party consisting of:

Alison Jacob (Chair)	Deputy Secretary, DoE
Phil Tyson (Exec. Officer)	Equity Standards
Libby Bailey	Tas Council of State Schools Parents & Friends
Mark Edwards	District Support Services
Lesley French	Office of Minister for Education
Felicity Gifford	Equity Standards
Dr Irene Gray	District Superintendents
Kim Harvey	Tasmanian Primary Principals Association
Cheryl Larcombe	District Support Services

Julianne Moss
Louise Nehrmann
Katherine Olubas
Shaun Pearce
Susan Rockliff
Mick Sheehan
Kate Shipway
Jean Walker

University of Tasmania
State Support Service
Secondary teacher representative
Special school representative
Tas Council of State Schools Parents & Friends
Tasmanian Secondary Principals Association
Director, Equity Standards
Australian Education Union

The working party formed four subgroups (with additional representation from some stakeholder groups) that worked on particular aspects of this plan. The membership of each working group is detailed in Appendix A.

Policy Goals

As defined in policy documents.

This plan supports the goals identified in the *Managing Students with Challenging Behaviours Policy*

It is intended that:

1. The school system will have increased capacity to educate and support students with challenging behaviour and students who are at risk of developing challenging behaviour, through an equitable, sustainable and system wide approach and a range of flexible intervention strategies.
2. All school and support staff will have the knowledge, skills and confidence they require to work successfully with students who have challenging behaviour and to provide an environment that will support positive behaviour.
3. There will be increased levels of awareness and understanding in schools and the wider community concerning the complex and multifaceted nature of challenging behaviour and the need for a holistic response.

Key Targets

Quantified statements of the intended outcomes from the cumulative actions of all initiatives or activities.

Target	Related Tasmania Together or Learning Together Goal (No.)	Related Policy Goal (No.)
<p>There is a small but significant group of students whose schooling is disrupted through suspension, exclusion and exemption – this Strategic Plan identifies key targets to be achieved with regard to both attendance levels, and students whose behaviour places them ‘at risk’ of not completing compulsory schooling.</p> <p>Information gathered will be used to report against both vision documents - <i>Learning Together</i> and <i>Tasmania Together</i>.</p>	<p>1. The rate of student suspensions in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Category 1 Behaviour likely to be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the staff or other students of the school; ○ Category 4 Behaviour likely to impede significantly the learning of other students; and ○ Category 5 Behaviour causing or likely to cause damage, <p>will be reduced from the level in 2001.</p> <p>2. The number of times that a student is suspended on more than 3 occasions in any school year will be reduced.</p> <p>3. The rate of exclusion will be reduced from the level in 2001.</p> <p>4. The number of expulsions will be reduced from the number in 2001.</p> <p>5. The part time and full time exemption rate will be reduced from the level in 2001.</p> <p>6. Completion rates to Year 10 will have improved from 2001, with particular reference to target groups.</p>	<p>1. 1</p> <p>2. 1,2</p> <p>3. 1,2</p> <p>4. 1,2</p> <p>5. 1,2</p> <p>6. 1,2</p>

Contributing Targets

Quantified statements of intended outputs or low-level outcomes from initiative areas or single initiatives.

<p>The following indicators, aligned in accordance with Balanced Scorecard theory, will determine the value of the initiatives outlined further in this plan.</p>	<p>Effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A survey of principals will indicate that the district Behaviour Support Team (Initiative 3) is effective in assisting schools cater for students with challenging behaviour. • The online support model (Initiative 7) will be providing services and resources to a range of client groups • Surveys undertaken within school communities will show a high level of awareness and understanding of behaviour management approaches and strategies (Initiative 5). • The Autism Early Intervention Pilot (Initiative 9) will be implemented successfully and expanded. 	<p>Efficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All resources allocated towards the management of students with challenging behaviour and supporting schools will be identifiable and linked to the Policy on Educational Provision for Students with Challenging Behaviour strategic plan and relevant district plan.
	<p>Internal Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison between the University and Department of Education (Initiative 1) will ensure improved courses for pre-service teachers. • All Districts will have an annual Behaviour Management Plan that describes the initiatives being undertaken in the districts and their contribution to 	<p>Learning and Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation from participants in the professional learning initiatives described in Activities 2 and 5 will indicate a high level of satisfaction with the activities undertaken and an increased capacity to provide an educational environment which will support positive behaviour.

	<p>achieving targets in the strategic plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives will involve youth and community agencies where appropriate (Initiative 6). • There will be a database established to identify students no longer attending school (Initiative 6). • District Superintendents will be satisfied that all schools will have a Supportive School Environment policy in place that effectively address students with challenging behaviour (Initiative 4). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The professional learning activities described in Initiatives 2 and 9 will have been provided to the target number of staff.
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Initiative Areas

A grouping of similar activities or initiatives.

Specific initiatives in this Strategic Plan are grouped with similar areas (as listed here), with each individual initiative outlined in more detail in tabular format in the later half of this document (also see Appendices if relevant)

- 1) Pre-service for teachers
- 2) Professional Learning Program
- 3) Implement District Behaviour Officers' Team
- 4) Provide a refocus on all schools having a supportive school environment
- 5) Implementation of preventative programs
- 6) Develop alternative provision for students with extreme challenging behaviour
- 7) Develop online support for planning and implementing programs for students with challenging behaviour
- 8) Management and Retention of Secondary Students at School (MARSSS)
- 9) Initiatives for students with autism
- 10) Initiatives for students with ADHD and dyslexia
- 11) Management of students with psychiatric disorders
- 12) Links with literacy and numeracy programs

Contact Information

If you would like further information on any element of this plan, please contact:

Contact Name: Kate Shipway

Title: Director (Equity Standards Branch)

Address: Level 2, 99 Bathurst Street, Hobart

☎ 6233 7035

☎ 6233 6980

✉ kate.shipway@education.tas.gov.au

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Initiatives	Related Policy Goal No.	Related Key Target No.	Responsibility	Anticipated Completion Date	Budget Allocation	Contributing Targets
All initiatives, and associated activities, are discussed in more detail in individual Project Plans.						
1) Initiative Area: Pre-Service Education for Teachers						
1.1 Initiative: <i>The Bachelor or Education and Bachelor of Teaching pre-service courses (University of Tasmania) will be reviewed to recommend future course content relating to students with challenging behaviour.</i>	2	1-6	Julianne Moss (UTas) and Tim Doe (DoE)	During 2002	Nil	Improved liaison between UTas and DoE
2) Professional Learning Program:						
2.1 Initiative: <i>The Graduate Certificate of Behaviour Management through Newcastle University will be offered to teachers and the Behaviour Support Team.</i>	2	1-6	Bill Kelly	2002	\$116,000	Professional learning activities will be provided to the target number of staff
2.2 Initiative: <i>Two different courses related to Promoting Positive Behaviour will be offered</i>	2	1-6	Bill Kelly	2002	\$93,900	Professional learning activities will be provided to the target number of staff
2.3 Initiative: <i>Empowering Educators course will be offered.</i>	2	1-6	Bill Kelly	2002	\$48,000	Professional learning activities will be provided to the target number of staff
2.4 Initiative: <i>Continuing provision of the nationally accredited Graduate Certificate in Education</i>	2	1-6	Carol Bett	Ongoing	N/A	Professional learning activities will be provided to the target number of staff

JA.

2.5 Initiative: Professional development for teacher aides	2	1-6	Di Stow, Kerry McMinn	Ongoing	\$50,000	Professional learning activities will be provided to the target number of staff
2.6 Initiative: Professional development courses for guidance officers including the upgrading to Masters level	2	1-6	Kate Shipway	Ongoing	N/A	Professional learning activities will be provided to the target number of staff
3) Implement model for District Behaviour Officers Team						
3.1 Initiative: Learning Together (Goal 3.1 Initiative 75) provides for the establishment of a Behaviour Support Team that will have one person in each district as well as a state-wide team leader who will be located at the Tasmanian Educational Leaders Institute (TELI).	2	1-6	Bill Kelly	Ongoing	\$640,000 recurrent	A survey of principals will indicate that the district Behaviour Support Team is effective in assisting schools cater for students with challenging behaviour.
4) Re-focus Supportive School Environment Policy						
4.1 Initiative: A project to refocus the Supportive School Environment Policy (including publication of good practice, informative website and revised Policy) is expected to be completed in July 2002.	1	1-5	Felicity Gifford	July 2002	\$13,000 (2000-01) \$15,000 (2001-02)	District Superintendents will be satisfied that all schools have a Supportive School Environment policy in place that effectively address students with challenging behaviour
5) Implementation of preventative programs						
5.1 Initiative: Learning Together contains a set of goals relating to the maintaining of safe and inclusive learning environments. To promote best practice in the area of behaviour support	1-3	1-6	Kate Shipway	Dec 2002	\$70,365	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys undertaken within school communities will show a high level of awareness and understanding of

<p><i>practice in the area of behaviour support, there will be provision for district and school based pilot projects</i></p>									<p>behaviour management approaches and strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation from participants in the professional learning initiatives will indicate a high level of satisfaction with the activities undertaken and an increased capacity to provide an educational environment which will support positive behaviour.
<p>6) Implementation of preventative programs</p>									<p>Initiatives will involve youth and community agencies where appropriate.</p>
<p>6.1 Initiative: Dissemination of guidelines governing alternative provision in Tasmania.</p>	1 and 3	1-6	Alison Jacob		March 2002		N/A		
<p>6.2 Initiative: Development of a database of students no longer attending school.</p>	1 and 3	1-6	District Support Service Managers		By April 2002		N/A		<p>There will be a database established to identify students no longer attending school.</p>
<p>6.3 Initiative: Review of the Education Act regarding exemptions and home education provisions.</p>	1 and 3	1-6	Alison Jacob		During 2002		N/A		
<p>6.4 Initiative: Development of guidelines for both primary and</p>	1 and 3	1-6	District Superintendents/Alison		2002		\$165,000		

<i>secondary students requiring alternative provision</i>				Jacob				
7) Development of online planning and support								
7.1 Initiative: <i>A secure online environment will be developed to support staff working with students with challenging behaviour and to provide access to suitable learning environments for disengaged students.</i>	1 and 2	1-6		Judy Bennett/Bill Kelly	Commence in 2002	\$42,635		A secure online environment will be developed that provides a single point of access to all information and services concerning students with challenging behaviour.
8) Management and Retention of Secondary School Students								
8.1 Initiative: <i>The continuation of the MARSSS program to support secondary schools in managing students whose behaviour is of serious concern and to maintain these students at school.</i>	1-3	1-6		District Superintendents	Ongoing	\$2,230,364		All resources allocated towards the management of students with challenging behaviour and supporting schools will be identifiable and linked to the Policy
9) Development of initiatives for students with autism								
9.1 Initiative: <i>Development of an Early Intervention Pilot Program</i>	1 and 2	1-6		Lynne James	2002-5 pilot operating statewide	\$80,000		The Autism Early Intervention Pilot will be implemented successfully and expanded
9.2 Initiative: <i>Development of a structured professional development</i>	1 and 2	1-6		Lynne James	Ongoing	N/A		

<i>program</i>									
10) Initiatives for students with ADHD and dyslexia									
10.1 Initiative: <i>In each district there are students with learning disabilities including ADHD and dyslexia, who are not achieving, or, who need additional support to achieve appropriate outcomes, including literacy and numeracy.</i>	1 and 2	1-6	Kate Shipway	Ongoing	\$300,000 recurrent	All resources allocated towards the management of students with challenging behaviour and supporting schools will be identifiable and linked to the Policy			
11) Management of students with psychiatric disorders									
11.1 Initiative: <i>Recurrent funding was allocated in the 2000-01 Special Education Budget for students with challenging behaviour, including those with psychiatric disorders.</i>	1 and 2	1-6	Kate Shipway	Discussion paper to be ready by March 2002	\$100,000 recurrent	All resources allocated towards the management of students with challenging behaviour and supporting schools will be identifiable and linked to the Policy			
12) Links with literacy and numeracy programs									
12.1 Initiative: <i>Links with literacy and numeracy programs</i>	1-3	6	Doug Bridge	Ongoing	Various - see Tasmanian Literacy and Numeracy Plan for specific	All resources allocated towards the management of students with challenging behaviour and supporting schools will be identifiable and linked to the Policy			

Professional Learning	Alternative Provision
<p>Katherine Olabus - Chair (Newtown High) Julianne Moss (University of Tasmania) Kate Shipway (Equity Standards) Bronwen Bowman (Hobart College) Brett Youd (Mole Creek Primary School) Sandie Sheppard (Derwent Support Service) Alan Taylor (Kings Meadows High School) Ruth Walker (Claremont High School) Louise Nehrman (State Support Service)</p>	<p>Alison Jacob - Chair (Dep't of Education) Kim Harvey (Gagebrook Primary School) Mick Sheehan (Sorell School) Shaun Pearce (Timsbury Rd School) Jean Walker (A.E.U.) Kevin Fagan (Hartz District Office) Libby Bailey (Tas Council Of State Schools P&F) Jennifer Godfrey (Elizabeth College) Susan Walkom (Barrington Support Service) Della Pyke (Bridgewater Primary School) Glenn Smith (Brooks High School)</p>
District Behaviour Support Teams	Early Intervention and Prevention
<p>Mark Edwards – Chair (Bowen Rd Primary) Alison Jacob (Department of Education) Jean Walker (A.E.U.) Lesley French (Office of the Minister) Mike Willee (Esk District Office) Stephen Jones (Collinsvale Primary) Anthony Burrows (Snug Primary) Gillian Berriman (Rokeby High School) Jenny Rayner (Port Dalrymple School) Mike Flanagan (Newstead College) Louise Nehrman (State Support Service)</p>	<p>Phil Tyson – Chair (Equity Standards) Jo Franks (Bowen Support Service) Robin Hull (A.E.U.) Sharyn Gill (Curriculum Consultation) Felicity Gifford (Equity Standards) Ann-Marie Johnson (Hartz Support Service) Leanne Wright (Claremont College) Maree Conrad (Brent St Primary) Wendy Burrows (Derwent Support Service)</p>

APPENDIX B

1. Pre-service education for teachers

Description: The Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) and Bachelor of Teaching (B.Teaching) pre-service courses (University of Tasmania) will be reviewed to recommend future course content relating to students with challenging behaviour. This will occur both through the formal mechanism of the Faculty of Education Course Advisory Boards, and liaison with the Sub-Group on Professional Learning. The Department of Education representatives on the Course Advisory Boards for the B.Ed and B.Teaching will ensure that the *Policy on Students with Challenging Behaviour* is used to support the review and development of future course content. The sub-group on professional learning will maintain a strong link with the University of Tasmania through the Department of Education Course Advisory Board representative. This person will represent the group in considering the required preparation for pre-service teachers in managing and developing curriculum for students with challenging behaviour. Any possibilities for access by pre-service teachers to expanded opportunities, especially through practical experience, mentoring from colleague teachers and school university partnerships should be developed.

Outcomes: Improved liaison between the University and the Department of Education in relation to coverage of behaviour management in both the Bachelor of Education and the Bachelor of Teaching courses.

Pre-service teachers will have an increased understanding knowledge and skill in implementing specific programs for student who present with challenging behaviours. This will include knowledge of current Department of Education policy and guidelines, legal requirements and significantly the capacity to develop as a beginning teacher a supportive classroom context connected to whole school policy.

Timeline: 2002

Budget: nil

Contact person: **Julianne Moss** **Tim Doe**
University of Tasmania Department of Education (Deputy Secretary Schools & Colleges)
☎ 6226 2550 ☎ 6233 7058
☎ 6226 2569 ☎ 6233 7784
✉ Julianne.Moss@utas.edu.au ✉ Tim.Doe@education.tas.gov.au

2. Professional Learning Program

Description: this initiative consists of a variety of professional learning programs to be provided during 2002-2003.

The initiatives that will be provided will target classroom teachers, guidance officers and support staff in schools, through offering formal qualifications, providing opportunities to participate in workshops, and by providing accreditation processes based on recognition of competencies.

1. The Graduate Certificate of Behaviour Management (Newcastle University) 20 participants; 200 relief days, plus all members of the Behaviour Support Team (no relief requirement).

Outcome : The outcome of this project will be an increased number of teachers, support staff and teacher aides with improved knowledge and understanding of management of students with challenging behaviour, through professional learning opportunities.

Budget	Relief cost	\$50,000
	HECS fees will be paid for each participant	\$56,000
	Admin, travel, accommodation for residentials	\$10,000
	Total	\$116,000

Timeline: February 2002

Contact person:

Bill Kelly

T.E.L.I.

☎ 6233 6566

☎ 62336982

✉ bill.kelly@education.tas.gov.au

2. Promoting Positive Behaviour

Two different courses will be offered in this approach by Monique Gillissen (South Australia), and Gary Radler (Victoria)

2a M. Gillissen:

This program will involve 15 teachers in each of 3 five-day regional workshops (Schools pay 3 days relief; central funds 2 days)

Relief costs	\$22,500
Presenter's fee	\$23,000
Travel, accommodation & admin costs	\$ 8,400
Total:	\$53,900

Timeline:

2b Gary Radler:

15 teachers in each of 2 three-day workshops (S/NW) (Schools pay 2 days relief; central funds 1 day)

Relief costs	\$15,000
Presenters' fees (2 presenters)	\$20,000
Travel, accommodation & admin	\$ 5,000
Total	\$40,000

Timeline:

Contact person:

Bill Kelly

T.E.L.I.

☎ 6233 6566

☎ 62336982

✉ bill.kelly@education.tas.gov.au

3. Patrice Cooke – ‘Empowering Educators’

This program will involve 40 teachers in each of 2 two-day workshops (NW/S)
(Schools pay 1 day’s relief; central funds 1 day)

Relief costs	\$20,000
Presenter’s costs (2 presenters)	\$20,000
Travel, accommodation & admin	\$ 8,000
Total	\$48,000

Timeline:

Contact person

Bill Kelly

T.E.L.L.I.

☎ 6233 6566

☎ 62336982

☐ bill.kelly@education.tas.gov.au

4. Accreditation of Teacher Competency Framework

Description: The Graduate Certificate in Education (*Managing Student Behaviour*) is a nationally accredited qualification available to teachers with several years of experience in managing student behaviour. Gaining the qualification involves demonstrating competence against the *Managing Student Behaviour* professional teaching standards. The standards describe how effective teachers establish and foster supportive, inclusive learning environments in which they use appropriate strategies and resources to work effectively with stakeholders, intervening to address inappropriate student behaviour.

Apart from using the professional teaching standards to gain the qualification, they can also be used to identify, focus and professional learning without gaining the qualification. Teachers and school leaders can use the standards to develop shared understandings and common language against a best practice model; affirm strengths and identify professional learning needs and explicit outcomes for individual professional learning plans (IPLPs).

Outcome: To gain the qualification, all five units of competence must be completed, although they may be worked through in any order. A 'Statement of Attainment' will be awarded upon achieving individual units of competence. In Tasmania, up to 50% credit transfer towards a Master of Education has been negotiated with the University of Tasmania. In addition, the Tasmanian Department of Education has granted an extra year's training for salary purposes, to teachers who gain this qualification and who are not already on the top teaching award.

Budget: For both LOTE and Computing qualifications, there is funding available and therefore teachers within the Department of Education pay no fees. All other qualifications, attract an assessment fee of \$300 per unit of competence or \$1000 for the complete qualification.

Timeline: Since individuals negotiate their own timeline, there is no specific timeframe for gaining the qualification.

Contact person Carol Bett

☎ 6233 7142

✉ 62336979

📧 carol.bett@education.tas.gov.au

5. Teacher aides

Description: Teacher aides have an important role in supporting schools to meet the needs of a full range of students, including those with challenging behaviours. Procedures for recognition of current competencies of teacher aides have been released and assessors are being trained. Teacher aides can gain recognition through participating in workshops, through a portfolio of evidence.

Outcomes: Schools, district support services and Human Resources Management Branch will collaborate in making provision for professional learning for teacher aides. There will be an audit of current programs relating to working with students with disabilities.

Budget: \$50 000 of additional funding was allocated in 2000-2001 special education budget to support this initiative. These funds have been allocated to district support services according to the number of students on the Category A Register enrolled in regular schools.

Timeline: **Ongoing**

Contact person:

Di Stow (General teacher aide training)

☎ 6233 6998

☎ 6233 7077

✉ di.stow@education.tas.gov.au

Kerry Mc Minn (Disability training)

☎ 6233 7317

☎ 6233 6980

✉ kerry.mcminn@education.tas.gov.au

6. Guidance Officers

Description: A working group investigating Guidance Services recruitment and training has begun discussions with the University of Tasmania in relation to courses enabling guidance officers to upgrade to Masters level. Provision for those not yet fully trained to undertake some subjects is also under discussion. Further information will be available early in 2002.

Contact Person: Kate Shipway
Equity Standards

☎ 6233 7035

☎ 62336980

✉ kate.shipway@education.tas.gov.au

3. Implement model for District Behaviour Officers' Team

Description: *Learning Together* (Goal 3.1 Initiative 75) provides for the establishment of a Behaviour Support Team that will have one person in each district, as well as a state-wide team leader who will be located at the Tasmanian Educational Leaders Institute (TELI).

The purpose of the Behaviour Support Team is to support Tasmanian Government schools to build understandings about, and share, ways to manage student behaviour. The team has a collaborative responsibility to establish positive and effective state-wide approaches for supporting students, including those with challenging behaviours. In addition the teams have district responsibilities to work with schools to assist them to build their capacities in this area.

The team is co-ordinated by the Principal Education Officer (Behaviour Support Team).

The Principal Education Officer will be responsible for:

- Leading the Behaviour Support Team in supporting schools and districts to review and improve supportive and inclusive school environments;
- Leading the Behaviour Support Team in supporting schools and districts to review and improve problem solving and innovative approaches to behaviour management support;
- Providing leadership in the improvement and management of appropriate teaching and learning environments for all students, particularly those with challenging behaviour;
- Leading and coordinating the Behaviour Support Team to support schools in building greater interdependence between schools and districts, support services and other agencies; and
- Liaising with districts and with other departmental officers stakeholders to determine priorities for professional learning and strategic planning.

Members of the Behaviour Support team will be responsible for:

- Working with districts, whole schools and individual teachers to review and improve their supportive and inclusive environments;
- Working with districts, whole schools and individual teachers to review and improve problem-solving and innovative approaches to behaviour management support;
- Assisting schools in maintaining and improving teaching and learning environments for all students, particularly those with challenging behaviour;
- Working with districts and schools to develop greater interdependence between schools, support services and other agencies;
- Assisting in the development of district strategic behaviour plan; and
- Organising and providing professional learning according to district and school priorities and standards of good practice.

Budget: \$640,000 recurrent

Timeline:
Term 2 2001 Appoint PEO, Behaviour Support Team
Term 3 2001 Advertise SCO positions, one per district
Term 1 2002 Commence model of Behaviour Support Team

Contact person Bill Kelly
T.E.L.L.I.
☎ 6233 6566
☎ 62336982
✉ bill.kelly@education.tas.gov.au

4. Provide a refocus on all schools having a supportive school environment

Description: A project to refocus the *Supportive School Environment Policy* commenced in 2000 and is expected to be completed in July 2002.

The project will:

- Document and publish good practice from case study schools;
- Develop a website providing information, advice and contact details for schools to use in implementing a supportive school environment; and
- Develop a revised *Supportive School Environment Policy*.

Budget: \$13,000 2000-2001
 \$15,000 2001-2002

Timeline: August 2001 Data Collection
 September 2001 Synthesis and interpretation
 July 2002 Policy Guidelines developed
 July 2002 Website launched

Contact person: **Felicity Gifford**
 Equity Standards
 ☎ 6233 7035
 📠 62336980
 📧 felicity.gifford@education.tas.gov.au

5. Implementation of preventative programs appropriate to individual schools and their communities.

Description: *Learning Together* contains a set of goals relating to the maintaining of safe and inclusive learning environments. To promote best practice in the area of behaviour support, there will be provision for district and school based pilot projects (*Learning Together Initiative 76*). The sub-group for 'Early Intervention and Prevention' developed a set of possible activities as outlined below.

Recommendations:

1. That information collated by the sub-group about resources for early intervention and prevention be made available to schools through the Supportive School Environment website.
2. That a trial of *A Partnership Encouraging Effective Learning (APEEL)* be conducted in several school communities. The program is focussed on students in Kindergarten to Grade 2. APEEL aims to build a positive relationship between school and home. It consists of parent workshops and student lesson modules.

That the trials be evaluated and information made available to school communities.
3. That workshops be conducted in districts to introduce teachers and district support staff to effective intervention programs, strategies and approaches already operating in Tasmanian schools. Facilitators familiar with the materials will conduct these workshops.
4. That workshops be conducted in districts by trainers from interstate for intervention programs, such as:
 - Mentoring – primary and secondary
 - Peer Mediation
 - HIP (Help Increase the Peace)
 - FAST (Families and Schools Together)

5. That the rejuvenation and expansion of existing, successful preventative programs, including Peer Support, be facilitated.

Budget: TOTAL \$70,365 (see itemised breakdown below)

<p>Recommendation 2 Trial of APEEL in three schools K-2. Half day training for twelve teachers, relief provided: 12 x \$125 = \$1500 Evaluation by three teachers, two days' relief provided: 6 x \$125 = \$750 APEEL materials \$55 per school: 3 x \$55 = \$165 No cost for parent workshops.</p>	<p>\$2415</p>
<p>Recommendation 3 APEEL district half-day workshop, relief provided: \$125 x 256 participants statewide (36 per district, 76 in Esk)</p>	<p>\$32,000</p>
<p>Recommendation 4 Workshops conducted by interstate trainers. Three workshops in South, three workshops in North (Devonport). Nineteen teachers at each workshop. HIP and FAST (Victoria) Accommodation in Hobart, two trainers' fees and air transport ex Melbourne \$2200 on, (NSW) Accommodation in Hobart, one trainer's fee and air transport ex Sydney \$1300 Teacher relief: 19 x \$250 x 6 = \$28500</p>	<p>\$32,000</p>
<p>Recommendation 5 Three Tasmanian Peer Support trainers to Sydney for three-day intensive training. Costing includes travel and accommodation.</p>	<p>\$3950</p>

Timeline: All budgeted items will be commenced by May 2002 and concluded by December 2002.

Contact Person:

Kate Shipway

Equity Standards (Director)

☎ 6233 7035

☎ 6233 7010

✉ phil.tyson@education.tas.gov.au

6. Develop alternative provision for students with extreme challenging behaviour

Description: Production of a report on needs and planning requirements for alternative provision for students with challenging behaviour who require an alternative to mainstream provision is attached to this plan.

As a result of the recommendations in this report several initiatives will be undertaken in 2002-2003.

It should also be noted that some of the recommendations of the working group, including the need to provide intensive professional learning for staff, the need to develop an interactive website to support teachers and students, and the need to develop district behaviour plans, are included elsewhere in this plan.

Outcomes: The recommendations of the working group will be implemented as fully as possible.

1. Dissemination of Guidelines for Alternative Provision in Tasmania

The report of the working party will be developed into a set of guidelines governing alternative provision in Tasmania. These guidelines will be available on the Website and in print form.

Timeline: Guidelines will be available for the start of the 2002 school year.

Budget: Budget will be absorbed within Education Strategies.

Contact person: Alison Jacob

Deputy Secretary

☎ 6233 7985

☎ 6234 7784

✉ Alison.jacob@education.tas.gov.au

2. Development of a database of students no longer attending school

There is no system level data allowing the follow-up of students who have ceased to attend school, especially where students move between schools and districts. This project will provide a model and a process for school data to be forwarded to each district support service at the end of each term. The managers of the district support services will combine these lists into a central database.

Timeline: Process to be in place during term 1, 2002.

Contact person: The Managers of the District Support Services

3. Consideration of revision to Initiatives of the Education Act covering exemptions and home education

It is intended that the Education Act will be reviewed during 2002-2003. It is evident that there may be benefit in some modifications to the initiatives of the Education Act covering exemptions and home education

At present the use of exemptions is very restricted within the Act. The judicious use of part-time exemption from the requirement to attend school to allow for students to participate in an individually planned educational program should be considered.

A further addition to the Act which may be necessary is a more formal requirement for Principals and Managers of district support services to follow-up students who have ceased to attend school, if they are also not registered with the Home Education Advisory Council.

Timeline: The Education Act will be reviewed during 2002.

Contact Person: **Alison Jacob**

Deputy Secretary

☎ 6233 7985

☎ 6234 7784

✉ Alison.jacob@education.tas.gov.au

4. Development of provision for primary students who require alternative provision

The working party recommended three levels of provision for primary students who need alternative provision:

Level One

- These students can be accommodated in mainstream classrooms for the majority of their school day/week, but benefit from:
 - A choice of activities, such as sport and physically orientated programs, outside the classroom for part of the day (especially afternoons) to suit their learning needs;
 - Social skills and early intervention programs that are designed to provide them with the skills and understandings to better cope in the mainstream class.

- Alternative provision for these students can frequently be provided on a school cluster basis.

- Teachers and students in mainstream classes benefit from respite from these students for part of the school week.

Level two

- These students can also be accommodated in mainstream classes for the majority of their school day/week, but require:
 - Clinical case management and intervention by a psychologist, social worker or psychiatrist.
 - The option of being involved in programs described for level one students is often appropriate.
- Teachers of these students require regular support and backup from professionals trained to specifically deal with children with psychological or family disturbances.
- A case management plan should be developed between all the staff involved with the student, and involving their family where possible.

Level three

- While the vast majority of primary aged students can be accommodated within school-based provision described above, there is a small number of students (perhaps two or three per district per year) for whom school is unsuitable for a period of time.
- These students require an individual educational plan (IEP) negotiated at district level. This plan could include provision for the kind of intervention described under level one and two above, but allows for the student to be accommodated by district support services, rather than at school.

Timeline: A business plan for implementation of this model will be developed during term 1, 2002.

Budget: This model depends upon support and expertise being available at school and district level that is specifically directed at primary students.

This resource should be equivalent to one FTE staff member per district (two in Esk).

In addition, a process for providing contact with experienced professionals specifically trained to deal with children with psychological or family disturbance should be provided.

Contact person: District Superintendents.

5. Development of provision for secondary students who require alternative provision

Students in need of alternative provision secondary schools can also be grouped according to three levels of need.

Funding is already provided within the MARSSS provision and school and district sources to provide for students requiring support at level one and level two. Provision at level three will require additional resourcing.

Level one

- These students can be accommodated in mainstream classrooms for the majority of their school day/week, but benefit from some flexible, school based alternative provision such as that provided by MARSSS programs.
- Alternative provision for these students can sometimes be provided on a school cluster basis.
- Teachers and students in mainstream classes benefit from respite from these students for part of the school week.

Level Two

- These students benefit from an Individual Educational Program (IEP) that may allow for full time or part time education and contain any of the following elements:
 - Part time placement in mainstream classes;
 - Part time attendance at District Support Services;
 - Work experience;
 - Placement in a community setting;
 - One-to-one tutorial assistance with basic skills;
 - Clinical intervention from a psychiatrist, psychologist, or social worker;
 - Cross age tutoring with younger students;

- Placement in a school or district based off-site alternative program.
- Where there is a school based or district based off-site provision, this should be resourced from the schools and district utilising the provision.
- Off site provisions should be modelled on the 'Factors related to Success of Alternative Provision, detailed on page 9.

Level Three

There is a small group of students who, despite the best efforts of their school, have stopped attending or whose attendance is very spasmodic. These students frequently exhibit dysfunctional behaviour; and have compounding issues including homelessness, licit and illicit drug use, family breakdown and involvement in criminal activity. These students often have low levels of literacy and poor academic skills and find negotiating a mainstream school or college difficult, as they are often unable to function in large groups.

These students require a centrally funded alternative provision that is additional to school and district provision.

- These students benefit from participation in alternative provision that is:
 - Delivered in settings where these young people gather and feel comfortable.
 - Provided in partnership with youth and community agencies.
 - Developed in consultation with young people through the Office of Youth Affairs.
 - Focuses on foundation and employability skills.
 - Provides social support and links with youth workers.
- Centrally funded alternative provisions should be established where:
 - There is an established need evidenced by the number of students identified;
 - A school or college is prepared to assume management responsibility and infrastructure to support the provision;

- There is community and youth service support.

- Centrally funded alternative provisions should be:

- Closely monitored by the Office for Youth Affairs;
- Established for a guaranteed minimum period of three years.

Timeline: During 2002 a pilot project for students requiring level three provision will be established in the Hobart Central District. Other areas of the state will be asked to provide a case for establishment of additional provisions. Both state and Commonwealth sources of funding will be investigated during 2001-02

Budget: Submission to DETYA (POEMS) for \$165,000
AltED \$10,000 plus a staffing component

Contact person: Alison Jacob

Deputy Secretary

☎ 6233 7985

☎ 6234 7784

✉ Alison.jacob@education.tas.gov.au

7. Develop online support for planning and implementing programs for students with challenging behaviour

Description: A secure online environment will be developed to support staff working with students with challenging behaviour and to provide access to suitable learning environments for disengaged students.

The online environment will include the following features:

- A front line point of access to suitable curriculum materials, programs and resources for students who may be disengaged from other online options;

- Links to services relevant to students involved in alternative provision such as centre link, housing support, drug and alcohol services, and educational services;
- Online support services for both students and staff who require a secure environment to obtain specialist assistance and advice. These services could include guidance, social work and psychiatric services;
- Online forums and chat rooms for both students and staff; and
- A means for the District Behaviour Support Officers to disseminate and coordinate information on available services, resources, professional learning programs and planning and policy documents in relation to students with challenging behaviour.

A reference group of teachers and support staff have already begun working with e-magine to develop a business plan for this project.

E-magine will provide the infrastructure and technical expertise for this project.

An initial development phase will be required to compile the resources and develop the website.

Ongoing professional development will be provided for teachers and support staff through e-magine and the Behaviour Support Team.

Ongoing coordination and management of the site will be jointly managed through e-magine and the Behaviour Support Team.

Outcome: A secure online environment will be developed that provides a single point of access to all information and services concerning students with challenging behaviour.

Timeline: A business plan will be finalised during term 3, 2001. The project will commence in 2002.

Budget

Staffing for an online coordinator

Travel

Professional development

Technology
TOTAL

\$42,635

Contact:

Judy Bennett
e-magine

☎ 6233 4934

☎ 6233 5463

✉ judy.bennett@education.tas.gov.au

Bill Kelly
T.E.L.I.

☎ 6233 6566

☎ 6233 6982

✉ bill.kelly@education.tas.gov.au

8. Management and Retention of Secondary Students at School (MARSSS)

Description: The MARSSS program supports secondary schools in managing students whose behaviour is of serious concern and to maintain these students at school.

The target group is secondary students although there is scope to incorporate primary students in some aspects of the program.

Particular attention is given to:

- students with a record of multiple suspensions or exclusions, chronic non-attenders;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;
- students from backgrounds of poverty and low socio-economic status; students with disabilities;
- students who are geographically isolated;
- students whose language background is other than English; and
- students at risk of leaving school early because of pregnancy, motherhood, child abuse or homelessness.

A diversity of approaches is used to achieve the program's goals.. They range from time out from classes to undertake alternative programs and activities through to special work placement opportunities and part-time schooling. Many of the approaches are integral to schools' inclusive and supportive environment practices.

MARSSS operates at a district level to ensure maximum responsiveness to local need and context. District management groups oversee the program.

Thirty three full-time equivalent teacher positions are allocated to the program.

Outcomes: The program is characterised by a range of locally tailored alternative education programs, operated at a school and district level. While each district plan for MARSSS will identify outcomes for programs, they could include:-

- *Improved attendance*
- *Higher completion rates re: secondary schooling for target groups eg aboriginal students*
- *Enhanced self esteem*
- *Drug education*
- *Vocational experience, exploring vocational pathways*
- *Lifeskills, work experience in the local community*
- *Diversified curriculum*

Budget 2002-2003 Financial year \$2,230,364.

Timeline Ongoing program

Contact person District Superintendent

9. Initiatives for students with autism

Description: Two initiatives in relation to support for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder commenced in 2001. The initiatives were developed and are being overseen by a working group comprising Department of Education staff, parents and representatives from the Health and Human Services Department and Autism specific services. The working group was established to inform the implementation of Recommendation 27 from the review of the *Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Regular Schools Policy*, as well as from the Autism forum held in 1999.

A State Autism Network (SAN) has been established to identify the training needs of school and district support service staff and to plan an ongoing training calendar to address these. The network is convened by the State Autism Consultant and has established links with Autism Tas. and YAST so that training opportunities offered by these organisations are considered. The training program being developed for the Early Intervention Pilot will be extended to include training needs in schools and used by SAN in their work.

Outcomes:

1. An early intervention pilot program targeting toddler aged children and their families to be conducted through the Department's Early Special Education Service, (part of the State Support Service). This initiative was developed in response to research evidence that suggests that intervention for children with an autism spectrum disorder ought to commence at a very early age, and at a reasonable intensity for sustained gains to be made. The program will use a range of empirically validated teaching strategies and provide direct instruction to children as well as training and support to family members. Intervention will be tailored to meet the needs of individual children, and consider the relative capacities of family members to contribute. A training program for involved staff is being developed in the form of a competency framework. The framework will allow training to be tailored to the needs of individual participants and the program will include a range of teaching strategies and providers.
2. Professional Development Support to schools.

Budget Inclusion Review allocation \$80,000 for increased support/pilot

Timeline Term 3 2001 South only

2002-2005 Pilot operating statewide.
Professional Development program ongoing.

Contact Person

Lynne James
State Support Service
☎ 6233
☎ 6233
✉ lynne.james@education.tas.gov.au

10. Initiatives for Students with ADHD and dyslexia

Description: In each district there are students with learning disabilities including ADHD and dyslexia, who are not achieving, or who need additional support to achieve appropriate outcomes, including literacy and numeracy. Funding was provided as part of the State Budget \$1.3 million increase, and identified by the Minister for Education to provide support for students with learning disabilities including ADHD and dyslexia. The target group was identified in *Rewards and Challenges: Inclusion in Practice*, final recommendations (Recommendation No 25).

A Learning Disabilities Working Party of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) determined that funding would be allocated to districts.

Outcomes:

- This initiative will identify and provide support programs that improve the learning outcomes of students with learning difficulties including ADHD and dyslexia.
- A group of students (a minimum of five per district) with learning difficulties including ADHD and dyslexia will be identified for involvement in an existing or newly developed group intervention program.
- The district will monitor a group of students (a minimum of five per district) with learning difficulties including ADHD and dyslexia, targeted by individually designed programs implemented to support them.

Budget: Total of \$300 000 allocated to districts on the basis of total district enrolment multiplied by ENI.

Timeline: Ongoing initiative with recurrent funding.

Contact person: Kate Shipway (Director)

Equity Standards

☎ 6233 7035

☎ 62336980

✉ kate.shipway@education.tas.gov.au

11. Management of students with Psychiatric disorders

Description: Recurrent funding was allocated in the 2000-2001 Special education Budget for students with challenging behaviour, including those with psychiatric disorders. A group comprising representatives from district support service managers, a Guidance Officer and a Senior Social Worker, Mental Health Services, Clare House and Equity Standards Branch was convened in 2000 to canvass issues relating to service provision for students with psychiatric disorders. Work is continuing.

Outcomes: Funding to school resource packages to provide school based support, a discussion paper with proposals for a funding model and a set of preventative and responsive initiatives.

Budget: \$100,000 recurrent

Timeline: Discussion paper - March 2002

Contact Person: **Kate Shipway**

Director - Equity Standards

☎ 6233 7035

☎ 62336980

✉ kate.shipway@education.tas.gov.au

12. Links with Literacy and Numeracy programs

<http://www.discover.tased.edu.au/literacy/>

Contact Officer

Doug Bridge

Principal Education Officer

Phone 6233 7415

Fax 6234 7882

Email Doug.Bridge@education.tas.gov.au

Additional Special Education funding – recurrent from 2001

	\$
New funding	1,350,000
Support for students on the Category A Register – (Teacher Aides)	750,000
Support for students with specific learning difficulties (non-Category A) – distributed to District support Services	300,000
Teacher Aide PD	50,000
Inclusive Classrooms Support Materials for teachers and teacher aides	20,000
Support for students with Challenging Behaviour and psychiatric disorders	100,000
Support for students with Autism	80,000

PLUS from 2002 recurrent

PD funding for Teachers, Teacher Aides & Principals in Inclusive Practice (Learning Together initiative)	50,000
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BUDGET

Commonwealth Targeted Funding

State Funds

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>
	\$1,534,600	\$1,626,800	\$1,690,600	\$1,765,900	\$1,952,501	\$2,048,203
	\$3,988,595	\$4,098,462	\$4,821,481	\$5,483,412	\$6,591,226	\$6,947,769
	\$5,523,195	\$5,725,262	\$6,512,081	\$7,249,312	\$8,543,727	\$8,995,972

Both	NON GOVT CENTRE SUPPORT (quarantined)	\$74,400	\$79,100	\$81,800	\$84,800	\$147,000	\$154,203
Both	NON GOVT CENTRE SUPPORT (additional DOE allocation)	\$170,400	\$143,565	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
Both	TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS - EQUIP & TECH LIBRARY	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000

Both	BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$350,000
Non Cat A	CATEGORY B FUNDING	\$537,857	\$537,857	\$537,857	\$537,857	\$537,857	\$537,857
Both	DOMICILIARY FUNDING	\$0	\$0	\$530,422	\$530,422	\$530,423	\$530,423
Cat A	PD ALLOCATIONS	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Both	PD TEST KITS AND MATERIALS (inc Hearing & Visual)	\$152,248	\$152,248	\$152,248	\$152,248	\$152,248	\$152,248
Both	SPEECH PATHOLOGY AIDE PROGRAM	\$147,000	\$147,000	\$162,639	\$162,639	\$169,894	\$178,185

Both	TEACHER AIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000
Both	ONLINE SUPPORT MATERIALS	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	\$20,000
Both	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$100,000	\$100,000
Both	AUTISM PILOT PROGRAM & PD	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$80,000	\$80,000
Both	PD FOR PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS & TEACHER AIDES	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000
Non Cat A	STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL & LEARNING DISABILITIES	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$300,000	\$300,000

Both	TRANSPORT FUNDING	\$629,764	\$480,500	\$465,500	\$465,500	\$465,500	\$465,500
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Both	MINOR WORKS ACCESS	\$49,000	\$129,000	\$145,906	\$99,000	\$99,000	\$0
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Both	ADMIN SALARY	\$8,800	\$9,077	\$1,670	\$3,323	\$3,422	\$3,524
Both	TREASURY CHARGE	\$50,000	\$53,000	\$55,438	\$57,988	\$66,365	\$69,418

Cat A	TOTAL CURRENT CATEGORY A ALLOCATIONS	\$3,263,726	\$3,553,915	\$3,788,601	\$4,565,535	\$5,232,019	\$5,714,614
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	TOTAL ALLOCATIONS	\$5,523,195	\$5,725,262	\$6,512,081	\$7,249,312	\$8,543,727	\$8,995,973
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2002 Staffing FTE's and Costs

DISTRICT/SUPPORT SERVICE	Guidance Officers		Speech Pathologists		Social Workers		Teaching Staff		
	Department Allocation	Cost	Department Allocation	Cost	Department Allocation	Cost	Department Allocation	Cost	
Arthur	6.00	\$369,000	4.60	\$282,900	4.00	\$246,000	18.35	\$1,128,525	
Barrington	5.80	\$356,700	3.60	\$221,400	3.00	\$184,500	22.58	\$1,388,670	
Bowen	8.00	\$492,000	4.00	\$246,000	3.00	\$184,500	20.37	\$1,252,755	
Derwent	6.00	\$369,000	3.15	\$193,725	3.00	\$184,500	21.37	\$1,314,255	
Esk (includes 2 FTE Teachers at Ashley)	13.00	\$799,500	8.10	\$498,150	6.00	\$369,000	52.72	\$3,242,280	
Hartz	7.00	\$430,500	4.15	\$255,225	3.00	\$184,500	33.17	\$2,039,955	
Statewide							42.35	\$2,604,525	
Other (converted to Teacher Aides 6.0 fte, .04 per District given to Esk to support Ashley)								6.2	\$381,300
		45.80	\$2,816,700	27.60	\$1,697,400	22.00	\$1,353,000	217.11	\$13,352,265

Total Staffing Cost \$19,219,365

Who's

INCLUDED?

disability awareness through the curriculum

TERS?

Unlike older students, many children in the early years of schooling will have had a peer with a significant disability in their class. They may be more likely to be comfortable with a much wider range of difference among people. There are a number of factors that need to be considered in planning to foster a positive attitude towards difference.

These include:

- deliberate/explicit teaching of pro-social skills.
- regularly celebrating achievement in all students.
- providing a curriculum in which all students can participate and feel valued.

If you have a student with a disability in your class, the ways in which you involve and interact with them will provide a model for their peers and all members of the school community.

It is important to:

- use age appropriate language and tone.
- not exclude the child on the basis of assumptions about their disability.
- not make the student more special than other students.
- allow the student to develop relationships with peers and vice versa.

IDEAS

for the

CLASSROOM

Curriculum Planning

As indicated throughout this publication, disability awareness is best embedded across the curriculum in integrated ways. However, the SOSE learning area and civics and citizenship perspectives provide a planning model and a starting point ...

	Key Questions	Teaching and Learning Strategies	Notes
Time, Continuity and Change	<p>What is our democracy founded on?</p> <p>How have our views on human rights and social justice changed over time?</p> <p>How have these changes affected schools and other places?</p>	<p>Discuss what 'democracy' means - How can everyone have a say in our class, school and community?</p> <p>Consider inventions over time and how they have helped peoples' lives. Design an invention that would help you do a task you would like to be better at.</p> <p>Interview people to find out how delivery of services to people with a disability has changed over time.</p>	
Place and Space	<p>How does the natural and built environment advantage and disadvantage people?</p>	<p>Conduct a survey of the school and community - how user-friendly is it?</p> <p>Design a more user-friendly, accessible school. Visit local community places (eg. Post Office) and plan ways to make them accessible.</p>	
Culture	<p>What makes a good community?</p> <p>What does 'good citizen' mean?</p>	<p>Brainstorm a list of characteristics - What would an ideal community look like?</p> <p>Discuss the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen in places around the world.</p> <p>Share photographs of different people with and without (obvious) disabilities and discuss "How am I like you?"</p>	
Resources	<p>How are resources used and distributed?</p> <p>What makes people more or less powerful as employers, employees and consumers?</p>	<p>Discuss - Do we treat everyone the same? Does everyone have the same resources? Should things be fair or equal?</p> <p>Contact/interview employers to find opinions about people with a disability in the workplace.</p>	
Systems	<p>What sorts of systems exist to solve problems?</p> <p>How are individuals and groups involved in public policy?</p>	<p>Who helps us? Compile a list of people and services for people with a disability</p> <p>Look at bodies and structures in society that foster arbitration and conciliation eg HREOC, the Public Guardian, Ombudsman.</p> <p>Choose a particular disability organisation and research how they influence government policy.</p>	

ng focus on values, ethics and social justice -
knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable
participate and relate as active, informed citizens of
democratic society in an interdependent world.
Partnership - through SOSE and across the curriculum,
vehicle for enabling students to understand and
social justice and democratic principles- to
in which people are discriminated against; to
the ideas, make connections, ask questions, work
to action to solve problems.

fundamental lessons about what it means to be an
citizen are taught through the culture of the
community: the ways problems are solved, how
used and how learners live their normal lives
formal and informal rules of the school. Civics
Partnership education, therefore, is integral to all
al and pastoral-care programs of a healthy
community"

n - SOSE in Tasmanian Schools, K-8. Department of
1998.)

provide teachers with a framework for planning

societal changes which impact directly upon
school and classroom experiences;

school populations which have altered
y in the past 10 years to include students with
disabilities; and

as educators communicate can affect the
ment of values and attitudes.

clude:

to thinking about language/communication;

s of quotes and excerpts which provide a
for discussion regarding the international,
l and local social context;

ing model which demonstrates how a
y perspective can be provided through the
curriculum; and

al resources and contacts for teachers

Introduction

Useful Quotes

These quotes and excerpts provide a context for the materials, should promote discussion, and serve as a reminder that this is an area that is universally under consideration.

'The people of the UN have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life ...'

'...All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights...'

United Nations - Declaration of Human Rights - 1948

'When a person is excluded from employment because he (sic) is disabled, he is being discriminated against as a human being. If a general education system is developed ... and disabled children are excluded, their rights are being violated: :the consequences of disability interfere in the lives of disabled persons to a degree which is not at all acceptable'

UN Special Rapporteur Lindquist on 50th Anniversary of the Human Rights Declaration - 1998

'... to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against persons on the grounds of disability To promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.'

Disability Discrimination Act - 1992, Australia

'Students with disabilities will attend a school setting which is as close as possible to the norms and patterns of schooling experienced by other students and one that provides the least possible restriction on their right to lead a normal life, while adequately catering for their special needs.'

Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Regular Schools Policy, Department of Education, Tasmania, 1994

'Occasionally you get frustrated at the insensitivity, or plain ignorance, of some people and the comments that they make but then you realise that it is only because the community hasn't been educated about children with disabilities and the abilities and potential that they have. My hope is that as they grow up the community will grow up and become more accepting and I think that this will happen because of how the younger generation are so accepting of our children.'

Parent of a child with an intellectual disability, 1999

'I was a bit scared of Simon when he first came in our class, but now that I know him I realise that he is just the same as us except that he sits all the time.'

Grade 7 student about a new classmate with a severe multiple disability.

There are risks and opportunities associated in providing students and staff with learning experiences regarding issues of disability and discrimination. The risks are that these experiences may lead to further marginalisation of people who are among the least empowered in our society. To simply teach a unit exploring issues related to disability may not ensure that those issues are addressed across the whole life of the school. Attempts to understand and 'walk in the shoes' of a person with a disability may help to understand the physical limitations associated with the disability, however this may not lead to an appreciation of the discrimination experienced by the person with a disability.

Curriculum issues

"(A) truly democratic society has its roots in the education we can provide"

(Learning Together, Department of Education, 2000)

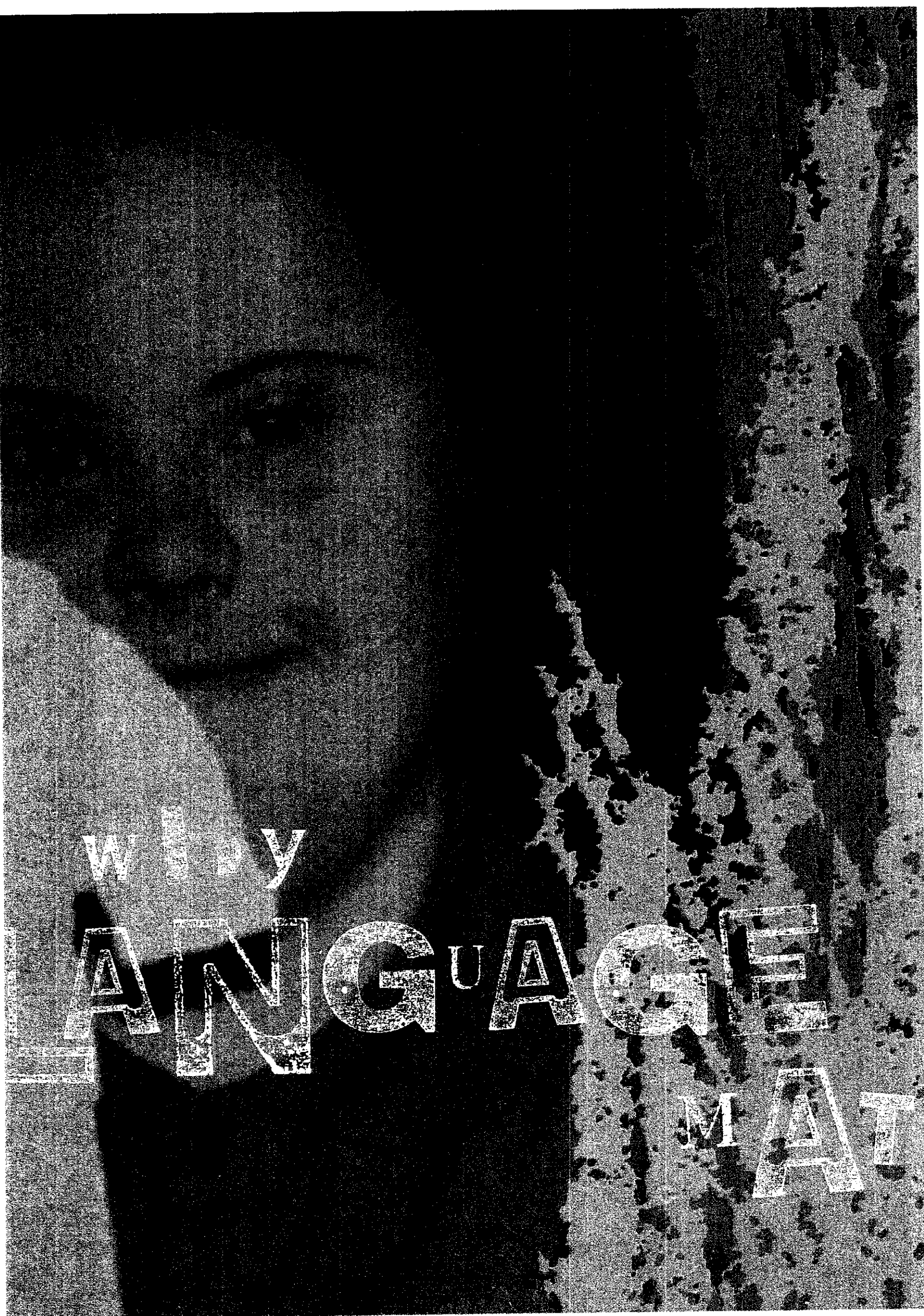
"Australia's future depends upon each citizen having the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values for a productive and rewarding life in an educated, just and open society."

(Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century, MCEETYA, 1999)

"We are guided by the...core values of connectedness, resilience, achievement, creativity, integrity, responsibility and equity, and the purposes of) ensuring our children and students are learning to relate, participate and care; learning to live full healthy lives; and learning to create purposeful futures"

(Curriculum Consultation Values and Purposes Statement, Department of Education, 2000)

The best way to increase students' understanding of issues relating to disability is to have them consider these issues in a broad context. The perspective of people with disabilities is best embedded across all the learning experiences offered in the school - both within and across the learning areas in integrated curricula. Both the curriculum and the culture of the school community convey fundamental messages about disability and difference. The SOSE curriculum and particularly a civics and citizenship perspective provide a curriculum planning model for teaching disability awareness, and for asking the question, "Who's included?"



Why
LANGUAGE
MATTER

Acknowledgements

Who's Included? is a collaborative project involving consultation with teachers, parents and the following organisations:

- Department of Education, Tasmania
(Equity Standards Branch; State and District Support Services;
Tasmanian Educational Leaders' Institute)
- Disability Services, Strategic Planning and Development Unit,
Department of Health and Human Services
- Catholic Education Office (Tas)
- Association of Independent Schools of Tasmania
- Tascare, Society for Children
- Tasmanian Council on Intellectual Disability
- Association for Children with a Disability
- Speakout

This information and professional development support details can be accessed online at:

www.education.tas.gov.au/statesupport

www.discover.tased.edu.au/sose

For further information and support please contact:

Manager, State Support Service,
Department of Education, Tasmania
Phone: (03) 62337743
Fax: (03) 62336980
Web: www.education.tas.gov.au/statesupport

Principal Education Officer (SOSE)
Department of Education, Tasmania
Phone: (03) 62337020
Fax: (03) 62336983
Web: <http://www.discover.tased.edu.au/sose/>

Executive Officer
Association for Children with Disability
Phone: (03) 6228 0916
Fax: (03) 6228 0916
Web: <http://www.key.org.au/acdtas>

Executive Officer
Tascare Society for Children
Phone: (03) 6272 8265
Fax: (03) 6272 8365
Email: tascare@tassie.net.au

equal partners

Tasmanian Plan of Action for increasing opportunities for people with a disability in vocational education and training 2001 – 2005

Stage 1 2001 – 2002

Tasmania's response to *Bridging Pathways - Blueprint for Implementation* - the National Plan of Action for people with a disability in vocational education and training (VET) 2000 - 2005



Tasmania

DEPARTMENT of
EDUCATION

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Message from the Minister

Equal Partners, the Tasmanian Plan of Action for people with a disability in vocational education and training 2001 – 2005, has been developed to help all Tasmanians have an equal chance of accessing the State's education, training and information systems.

This Plan will help increase the number of people with disabilities who participate in vocational education and training. In 1999, 3.7% of Tasmanian vocational education and training students identified as having a disability. In 2000, this percentage increased to 5.3%.

I believe that the implementation of *Equal Partners* will see this increase accelerate. By the end of 2005 Tasmania will be closer to a participation rate that matches the percentage of people in the total population who have a disability. In 1999, this figure was 17.1% for Tasmanians between the ages of 15 and 64.

When people with a disability are under-represented in vocational education and training, the consequences for them are low workforce participation and lower levels of engagement in economic and social activity. For most, this leads to economic hardship and social isolation, and therefore, as a community, we lose socially and economically.

Equal Partners is underpinned by *Learning Together*, the Government's vision for education, training and information into the 21st century. *Equal Partners* will give tangible expression to *Learning Together's* goal of providing "safe and inclusive learning environments that encourage and support participation in learning throughout all of life."

To implement *Equal Partners* and realise its vision of creating "a vocational education and training system that leads world's best practice in achieving equitable outcomes for people with disabilities," the Department of Education will work with people with a disability and their organisations, training providers, schools, government agencies, industry bodies, employers and unions.

I am very appreciative of the work of the Steering Committee of *Equal Partners* and I thank them for so ably guiding its development. I would also like to thank and commend the Tasmanian State Training Authority Equity Advisory Committee and the many individuals and organisations who contributed their expertise during the consultations that were held to develop this Plan.

I am confident that *Equal Partners* will make a significant contribution to enabling people with a disability to develop skills and competencies, thus enriching their own and others' lives and adding to the social and economic development of this State.



Paula Wriedt, MHA
Minister for Education

Background

National Plan of Action for increasing opportunities for people with a disability in VET 2000 – 2005

Bridging Pathways

Bridging Pathways provides guidance on strategies and actions required by governments, training providers and industry to improve outcomes for people with a disability in vocational education and training (VET).

Bridging Pathways was developed by the Disability Forum of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). It was endorsed by Commonwealth, State and Territory Education and Training Ministers in June 2000.

The Department of Education represents Tasmania on the Australian Disability Training Advisory Committee which oversees implementation of the National Plan.

Tasmanian Plan of Action 2001 – 2005

Equal Partners

Equal Partners builds upon *Bridging Pathways*. It was developed by the State Steering Committee (Appendix A) in a consultative process with participants from the education, training, industry, employment and government sectors, and people with a disability.

Equal Partners sets out six goals and seven focus areas with strategies for their achievement for 2001 – 2005. Stage 1 specifies actions to be implemented in the period 2001 – 2002.

Equal Partners will be reviewed by the end of 2002 and actions for Stage 2, 2003 – 2005, will be formulated and implemented.

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Legislative Framework

Federal and State legislation

Bridging Pathways and *Equal Partners* are underpinned by the *Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, and the *Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act, 1998*. These Acts articulate everyone's right to participate in educational, economic, social and political life without discrimination. They provide protection for everyone against discrimination based on disability.

Some of the types of disability covered in these Acts include:

- learning disability and intellectual disability;
- sensory impairment, ie vision or hearing;
- physical or mobility impairment;
- psychological or psychiatric impairment (or mental illness);
- disabilities resulting in multiple impairment eg brain injury;
- medical conditions eg AIDS, HIV, cancer, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

Context

Equal Partners *addresses the following context*

expectation of increased enrolments in VET

Increasing numbers of adults with a disability are participating in VET and many secondary level students with a disability have the expectation of undertaking some form of further education or training (Appendix B, Tables 1a, 1b, 2).

barriers to participation in training and employment

However, people with a disability continue to face systemic and personal barriers to participation in VET and employment. Some of these are:

- inadequate levels of personal care and learning supports;
- inappropriate training/workplaces, technology and equipment;
- inadequate transition planning and cross-agency coordination;
- biased attitudes and assumptions about people with a disability;
- lack of vocational information and advice on career paths;
- limited professional development for trainers and employers;
- personal perceptions eg fear of failure and lack of confidence.

shortfall in the VET participation rate

The above barriers contribute significantly to the under-representation of people with a disability in VET. Currently, in Tasmania and nationally, their participation rate is significantly lower than both the proportion of the whole population with a disability and that of people in VET who do not report as having a disability (Appendix B, Tables 1a, 1b).

By 2005, it is estimated that the proportion of Australians aged 15 to 64 participating in VET will rise to 12%. However, without initiatives to increase the participation of people with disabilities, it is estimated that by 2005 there will be a shortfall in their number in VET of more than 215,000 (Bridging Pathways).

I7

shortfall in
the workforce
participation
rate

Consultations with employers undertaken in formulating *Equal Partners* show that once established in employment, people with a disability are as productive, safe and reliable as other workers; have fewer sick leave days or accidents; and remain longer in the job. However, people with a disability in VET have a lower module load*pass rate than those reported as not having a disability (Appendix B, Table 1a); are less likely to complete all their module hours; are more likely to do courses that include mostly generic rather than specific occupational skills; and tend to be over-represented in courses with declining labour market demand. Thus they have lower workforce participation levels and limited job prospects after graduation.

While 80% of the general population of working age are in the workforce, this figure falls to only 53% of people with a disability.

(Media release, '\$119 million for training/education for disadvantaged people.'

Hon D. Kemp, Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 22 May 2001)

* See *Common Terms* page 32

lost
opportunity
cost

Low levels of workforce participation by people with a disability mean lower levels of skills, productivity and workplace performance. This represents a serious lost opportunity cost for the economy and the community.

The Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) believes that if 12,000 currently unemployed people with a disability were able to gain work, the economy would increase by \$300m per year.

(*'Gold Medal Disability Access Strategy.'* Strategy Overview. FaCS, 1999)

Equal Partners Policy Framework

A Bridge to the Future
The National Vocational Education
and Training Policy



Bridging Pathways
The National Plan of Action for
increasing opportunities for
people with a disability in
vocational education and training



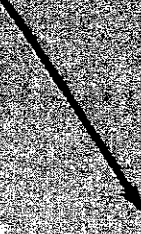
Equal Partners
The Tasmanian Plan for increasing
opportunities for people with a
disability in vocational education
and training



Learning Together
The Tasmanian Government's
vision for education,
training and information
into the 21st century



The Tasmanian
Vocational Education
and Training Strategy



Tasmania Together
The social, environmental
and economic plan
for Tasmania



Equal Partners *The Partners*

Department of Education (DoE) Equity Standards Branch (ESB)

This Branch is responsible for ensuring that all students have equitable access to the benefits of education and training irrespective of their disability, sex, culture, linguistic background, race, location or socio-economic background.

Office of Post-Compulsory Education and Training (OPCET) OPCET ensures quality outcomes from the Tasmanian training system; supports apprentices and trainees; and assesses and plans for the training needs of Tasmanian industry.

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

Disability Services

Disability Services is a unit within the State Department of Health and Human Services. It provides a wide range of services to assist people with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.

The Tasmanian Tertiary Education Disability Advisory Committee (TTEDAC)

TTEDAC is a non-profit organisation made up of representatives from government agencies, disability groups and the University of Tasmania. It promotes access and equity within tertiary education and training for people with disabilities.

Industry Training Advisory Boards (ITABs)

These Boards are supported by Government to provide Government with advice on vocational education and training matters within specific industries. They also promote training to the industry sectors they serve.

Group Training Companies (GTC)

Group training companies employ trainees and apprentices and hire them out to host employers for a period of their training agreement. They can also be called Group Employment Organisations.

Australian National Training Authority (ANTA)

ANTA administers funding to States and Territories for the national training system. *Bridging Pathways* was developed by an ANTA advisory forum.

Equal Partners

Steering Committee

This committee was established in 2000 to develop *Equal Partners* as the State response to *Bridging Pathways*, and to monitor the implementation of the actions contained in *Equal Partners*.

The Committee is convened by the Equity Standards Branch, Department of Education.

Students with Disabilities

TAFE students with disabilities are members of the *Equal Partners* Steering Committee. Students with disabilities are key partners and stakeholders in this Plan.

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)

These organisations are registered against national standards to provide training as part of the national system of vocational education and training.

State Disability Liaison Officer (SDLO)

This officer is funded by the Commonwealth to assist students with disabilities to move smoothly between education sectors and into employment and to assist the sectors develop high quality services for students with disabilities.

Institute of TAFE Tasmania

The Institute of TAFE Tasmania is a statutory authority within the Education portfolio. It is the major provider of vocational education and training (VET) to the Tasmanian community.

Vision and Goals

The Vision

from *Bridging Pathways*:

- ❖ to create a vocational education and training system that leads world's best practice in achieving equitable outcomes for people with disabilities.

from *Learning Together*, the Tasmanian Government's vision for education, training and information into the 21st century:

- ❖ Tasmania will have a world-class education, training and information system which matches the best anywhere.

The Goals

Goals directly addressed by *Equal Partners* are:

from *Bridging Pathways*:

- ❖ to increase access to vocational education and training for people with a disability;
- ❖ to improve successful participation and attainment in all fields of study and levels of vocational education and training;
- ❖ to achieve outcomes in employment and life-long learning to allow people with a disability to make a greater contribution to the economic and social life of the community;
- ❖ to create an accountable system that provides equitable outcomes for people with a disability.

from *Tasmania Together*, the 20-year social, environmental and economic plan for Tasmania:

- ❖ create a culture of life-long learning that encourages people to learn and develop new skills throughout their lives, including 'life skills.'

from *Learning Together*:

- ❖ to provide safe and inclusive learning environments that encourage and support participation in learning throughout life.

from *Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Strategy 2001*:

- ❖ to achieve equitable outcomes for individuals in vocational education and training.

Outcomes and Performance Indicators

Outcomes

Implementation of *Equal Partners* will deliver outcomes that are consistent with *Bridging Pathways*. They are to:

- progressively increase equity and reduce the size of the 'shortfall group';
- create a climate in VET where people with a disability have opportunities, achieve personal goals and derive the same long-term benefits as other students;
- offer students with a disability relevant training, easy access to information and assistance as well as appropriate supports to complete their qualifications;
- deliver specific outcomes for individuals, training providers, industry, government and the community.

Performance Indicators

Performance measurement will require empirical data as well as qualitative assessments which need longer timeframes to achieve. This will be the subject of discrete work in the future. All actions in the Plan will identify target groups and specify performance indicators. Qualitative and quantitative indicators to be used to monitor and assess performance in respect of the outcomes include:

Access

Improved access to learning supports, facilities, programs, courses, services, resources, advice, information and professional development for stakeholders.

Participation

Increase in participation and retention rates of people with a disability in VET, and their increased participation in VET decision-making processes and structures.

*Performance
Indicators
continued*

Achievement

Increase in pass rates and post-VET employment destinations for people with a disability.

Satisfaction

Increased satisfaction with the VET system by stakeholders.

*Monitoring
and Review*

The Steering Committee will monitor implementation and review outcomes of Stage 1, 2001 – 2002 and formulate, implement and monitor actions for Stage 2, 2003 – 2005.

Summary of the Key Strategies

Focus Area 1

Planning and Representation

Strategy 1: Involve Industry Training Advisory Boards (ITABs) and other industry groups in improving training and employment opportunities for students with a disability.

Strategy 2: Increase the genuine influence of people with a disability in VET.

Actions p. 15

Focus Area 2

Purchasing

Strategy 3: Establish equitable purchasing arrangements that improve the effectiveness of public investment in VET outcomes for people with a disability, by supporting inclusion and removing disincentives to providers.

Actions p. 17

Focus Area 3

Pathways

Strategy 4: Facilitate preparatory skills training in planning and funding frameworks.

Strategy 5: Encourage the participation of people with a disability in VET at all qualification levels.

Strategy 6: Ensure national training packages support the inclusion of people with a disability.

Strategy 7: Improve pathways for people with a disability into New Apprenticeships through collaboration between Group Training Companies, employers and disability employment assistance services.

Strategy 8: Ensure students with a disability have equal opportunities to participate in VET in Schools and to gain equitable outcomes.

Strategy 9: Increase employment and training pathways for people with a disability through greater access to recognition of prior learning/current competencies.

Strategy 10: Foster clear pathways for people with a disability from VET into employment services and directly into employment.

Actions p. 19

Equal Partners

The Tasmanian Plan of Action for increasing opportunities for people with a disability in vocational education and training 2001 - 2005

Stage 1, 2001 - 2002

Focus Area 4 Learning Supports

Strategy 11: Increase the availability of learning supports for people with a disability across the VET sector.

Strategy 12: Establish a coordination mechanism at State or regional level to provide:

- a database of publicly available equipment and technology;
- a register of learning support personnel available to providers and students;
- coordination of supports across government agencies; and
- referral, advice and information to all sector stakeholders.

Actions p. 22

Focus Area 5 Capacity Building

Strategy 13: Equip training delivery staff with skills that assist the inclusion of people with a disability including:

- reasonable adjustment for people with a disability;
- flexible assessment methods for students with various types of disability;
- methods of recognising prior learning;
- inclusion and anti-bias teaching practices; and
- access and coordination of additional supports when appropriate.

Strategy 14: Strengthen the access and equity performance of registered training organisations in relation to opportunities provided for people with a disability.

Strategy 15: Build competencies in inclusive workforce practices into VET programs.

Actions p. 24

Focus Area 6 Marketing and Information

Strategy 16: Market the value of VET to potential students with a disability, their key support networks and sources of advice and career information.

Strategy 17: Undertake marketing with employers and people with a disability about the value of investment in graduates who have a disability and the value of training employees who have a disability.

Strategy 18: Recognise achievements in education/training outcomes for people with a disability.

Actions p. 26

Focus Area 7 Performance Measurement

Strategy 19: Improve data collection protocols with regard to the participation, outcomes and satisfaction of people with a disability in VET.

Strategy 20: Ensure annual reporting includes qualitative and quantitative outcome measures for people with a disability.

Actions p. 28

Focus Areas, Objectives, Strategies 2001 – 2005

Actions Stage 1 2001 – 2002

Tasmania has endorsed the focus areas, objectives and strategies of Bridging Pathways and incorporated them in Equal Partners. Actions to implement the strategies were developed at the State level to respond to the specific circumstances of the Tasmanian vocational education and training (VET) sector and the particular needs and aspirations of people with a disability in Tasmania.

Focus Area 1 Planning and Representation

To increase opportunities for people with a disability in vocational education and training (VET), cross-agency planning must occur from the highest level of policy formation down to local service networks. To guide appropriate policies, practices and services, people with a disability must have genuine opportunities to represent their interests at political and administrative levels; and be involved in decisions regarding their own VET participation (Bridging Pathways).

Objectives

- *Decision-making in the VET sector works to achieve equitable outcomes for people with a disability through providing opportunities for skills development, social participation and employment.*
- *VET planning is informed by the views of people with a disability.*

Strategy 1

Involve Industry Training Advisory Boards (ITABs) and other industry groups in improving training and employment opportunities for students with a disability.

Actions 2001 - 2002

1.1 For the VET, employment and industry sectors, provide information on:

- funding and resources available to improve training and employment opportunities for students with a disability;
- financial incentives to engage people with a disability as apprentices/trainees; and
- the number of students with a disability in training. Responsibility – Equity Standards Branch (ESB), Department of Education (DoE).

1.2 Investigate the possibility of a dedicated Access and Equity Officer working across the industry sector and ITABs, accountable to a management committee and funded by contributions from government and industry. Responsibility – ESB.

Strategy 1 continued

- 1.3 Develop a contact list and communication protocols for accessing disability expertise in and outside the Department of Education. Responsibility – ESB.
- 1.4 Individual ITAB forums to include disability issues, eg promoting employment opportunities for people with a disability. Responsibility – ITABs.
- 1.5 State ITAB meetings to have disability issues as a regular agenda item. Responsibility – ITABs.

Strategy 2

Increase the genuine influence of people with a disability in VET.

Actions 2001 - 2002

- 2.1 Establish a Disability Consumer Advisory Sub-committee to the Department of Education's Equity Advisory Committee. Responsibility – ESB.
- 2.2 Include a requirement in the registered training organisation registration and auditing process, that these organisations contact disability consumer and disability advocacy groups in relation to advice on training for people with disabilities. Responsibility – Office of Post-Compulsory Education and Training (OPCET).
- 2.3 OPCET annual plans to include input from the Disability Consumer Advisory Sub-committee. Responsibility – OPCET.

Focus Area 2 Purchasing

Purchasing arrangements influence the extent to which training providers can and do respond to the training needs of people with a disability, and the degree to which training options are appropriate, appealing and accessible to them. Purchasing arrangements have to take account of the reasonable adjustments that may be needed by some students with a disability to enable them to participate and experience the full range of opportunities, benefits and outcomes that are available to other VET students.

Reasonable adjustments are measures that provide substantive equality for people with a disability, such as accommodation, learning supports or services that a person without a disability does not require. While it is essential to understand the impact of disability on a person's capacity to function independently within the training/work environment, current standards and outcomes can be maintained. There is no need to reduce standards for a person with a disability (Bridging Pathways).

Objectives

- *VET purchasing arrangements support the inclusion of people with a disability by recognising and resourcing inclusive supports, practices and services.*
- *Improved purchasing arrangements lead to equitable, cost-effective investment in VET for people with a disability.*

Strategy 3

Establish equitable purchasing arrangements that improve the effectiveness of public investment in VET outcomes for people with a disability, by supporting inclusion and removing disincentives to providers.

Actions 2001 - 2002

- 3.1 Through the Institute of TAFE Tasmania (TAFE) Purchase Agreement, seek to increase funding to support students with a disability. Responsibility – ESB, OPCET.
- 3.2 Implement outcomes from Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) research and development in relation to equitable purchasing arrangements. Responsibility – ESB, OPCET.

Focus Area 3 Pathways

The proportion of people with a disability in VET is far lower than the proportion for the wider population, and fewer graduates with a disability find employment on completing their courses than the proportion of all graduates. Research suggests that improving pathways for people with a disability will increase their participation. Such pathways could include access to preparatory training courses, New Apprenticeships and VET in Schools, and improved links between agencies, such as training providers and employment assistance services. These pathways will facilitate life stage transitions between education, training, employment and other social participation (Bridging Pathways).

Objectives

- *People with a disability experience equitable access to VET through multiple pathways, including preparatory skills training, programs based on National Training Packages, VET in Schools, New Apprenticeships and recognition of current competencies.*
- *People with a disability experience the same employment opportunities and outcomes as a result of participation in VET as other students and graduates and go on to enrol in higher level courses at the same rate as all students.*

Strategy 4

Facilitate preparatory skills training in planning and funding frameworks.

Actions 2001 - 2002

- 4.1 Review the adequacy of the current provision of life/work enabling skills, (including Certificate 1 and pre-vocational courses) in order to inform the State VET Plan of gaps and priorities in this area. Responsibility – ESB, OPCET.

Strategy 4 continued

- 4.2 The Institute of TAFE Tasmania (TAFE) to consider arrangements allowing for extra time in training for students with a disability who may need it.
Responsibility – TAFE.
- 4.3 Ensure the interests of students with a disability are considered by the Tasmanian Qualification Authority, to be set up under the *Learning Together* Framework.
Responsibility – ESB.

Strategy 5

Encourage the participation of people with a disability in VET at all qualification levels.

Actions 2001 - 2002

- 5.1 Initiate effective transition processes through:
- support for the widespread take-up of the transition model for school age students with a disability;
 - the inclusion of transition support for people with a disability undertaking VET courses. Responsibility – ESB, State Disability Liaison Officer (SDLO), Disability Services/Department of Health and Human Services.

Strategy 6

To be actioned 2003 - 2005

Ensure National Training Packages support the inclusion of people with a disability.

Strategy 7

To be actioned 2003 - 2005

Improve pathways for people with a disability into New Apprenticeships through collaboration between Group Training Companies, employers and disability employment assistance services.

Strategy 8

Ensure students with a disability have equal opportunities to participate in VET in Schools and to gain equitable outcomes.

Actions 2001 - 2002

- 8.1 Include disability issues, such as data collection, on the agenda of the VET in Schools Policy Committee. Responsibility – DoE.
- 8.2 Action initiatives to increase access to VET in Schools for students with a disability. Responsibility – DoE.
- 8.3 Participate in any review of VET in Schools undertaken by the Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs VET in Schools Taskforce and implement relevant recommendations. Responsibility – DoE, ESB.

Strategy 9

To be actioned 2003 - 2005

Increase employment and training pathways for people with a disability through greater access to recognition of prior learning/recognition of current competencies.

Strategy 10

Foster clear pathways for people with a disability from VET into employment services and directly into employment.

Actions 2001 - 2002

- 10.1 Establish a cross-agency group to provide information to training providers on how to support people with a disability in finding employment.
Responsibility – ESB.

Focus Area 4 Learning Supports

People with a disability may sometimes learn in different ways, but their differences do not imply that they have any less capacity than other people. Learning Supports are services provided to students in VET to assist them to successfully complete training. They may include in-class or out-of class supports such as tutoring, sign language interpreters, note takers, specialist advisers or coordinators, equipment or workplace modification for work-based training. The costs associated with these supports are dependent on the nature of the individual student's needs, the existing capacity of the training provider and the nature of the training being undertaken. Access to resources and advice regarding learning supports is often unclear for both training providers and people with a disability.

Participation in VET often involves significant personal costs for students with a disability over and above those for other students eg financial expenditure for equipment or services, as well as additional time and energy required to organise them. There is a clear need to improve the availability and effectiveness of supports provided to students with a disability and to create easier access to information and coordination of these supports (Bridging Pathways).

Objectives

- *Training providers have access to information and resources to provide learning supports to students with a disability that are individually tailored, appropriate and adequate.*
- *Support services that assist people with a disability to participate in education, training and employment are linked and appropriately coordinated.*

Strategy 11

Increase the availability of learning supports for people with a disability across the VET sector.

Actions 2001 - 2002

- 11.1 Investigate the possibility of a pooled payment/retainer system with all stakeholders to address learning support needs and gaps. Responsibility – ESB, SDLO.

Strategy 12

Establish a coordination mechanism at State or regional level to provide:

- a database of publicly available equipment and technology;
- a register of learning support personnel available to providers and students;
- coordination of supports across government agencies; and
- referral, advice and information to all sector stakeholders.

Actions 2001 - 2002

12.1 Establish, circulate and maintain a register of technology, expertise, services, funds, new learning technologies and networks relating to students with a disability. Responsibility – ESB.

12.2 Review existing arrangements and responsibilities for coordinating and providing learning support services across different agencies, including service providers, client groups and funding bodies, in order to identify any gaps and to plan responses to them. Responsibility – ESB.

Focus Area 5 Capacity Building

To increase expertise in inclusive training practices, professional development is needed for all levels of VET personnel. Availability of specialist skills and expertise should be ensured for training staff/students. Inclusion requires accessible learning environments in relation to physical premises, operations, information and student support services. Covering competencies relevant to workforce participation will enhance employment outcomes for VET students with a disability, for example, by training front-line managers, workplace training staff and staffing personnel (Bridging Pathways).

Objectives

- *VET staff are appropriately skilled to work with people with a disability and demonstrate non-discriminatory attitudes.*
- *Specialist learning support staff are appropriately skilled and resourced to provide support to students with a disability and to train other staff.*
- *Training providers provide equitable opportunities for people with a disability.*
- *VET contributes to creating an inclusive workforce by providing appropriate training in key employment related areas.*

Strategy 13

Equip training delivery staff with skills that assist the inclusion of people with a disability including:

- reasonable adjustment for people with a disability;
- flexible assessment methods for students with various types of disability;
- methods of recognising prior learning;
- inclusion and anti-bias teaching practices; and
- access and coordination of additional supports when appropriate.

Strategy 13 continued

Actions 2001 - 2002

- 13.1 To increase disability and legislative awareness, knowledge and skills in inclusive teaching practices and career advice skills, develop a professional development framework for VET teachers, trainers, assessors, career counsellors and ITABs. Responsibility – ESB.
- 13.2 Encourage VET providers to allocate a percentage of funds for staff professional development in access and equity awareness. Responsibility – ESB, OPCET.
- 13.3 Increase funding to provide fulltime TAFE Disability Liaison Officers. Responsibility – ESB, OPCET.
- 13.4 Noting the importance of disability awareness training being included as a core unit of competence, participate in ANTA's review of the National Training Package for Workplace Training and Assessment. Responsibility – ESB.

Strategy 14

Strengthen the access and equity performance of registered training organisations in relation to opportunities provided for people with a disability.

Actions 2001 - 2002

- 14.1 Provide guidance for registering and auditing registered training organisations (RTOs) in relation to access and equity by:
- providing information and advice to RTOs on the registration standards and evidence requirements of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). Responsibility – ESB.
 - ensuring rigorous auditing and monitoring of RTOs by OPCET quality assurance auditors in relation to access and equity requirements under the AQTF. Responsibility – ESB, OPCET.

Strategy 15

To be actioned 2003 - 2005

Build competencies in inclusive workforce practices into VET programs.

Focus Area 6 Marketing and Information

Potential VET students and their advisers need accessible information about available training and supports. Information should promote positive images of people with a disability participating successfully in training and achieving personal goals. Marketing should address perceptions of barriers and difficulties for people with a disability and provide examples of positive outcomes (Bridging Pathways).

Objectives

- *VET graduates with a disability are promoted to employers as valuable employees.*
- *Employers provide equitable access to ongoing training opportunities for employees who have a disability.*
- *Information regarding VET is provided to potential and current students in a variety of formats that are accessible to people with a disability.*
- *Students who have a disability are actively encouraged to participate in further training and achieve higher levels of qualification.*
- *Training providers recognise the benefits of providing accessible, flexible training that can both meet the training needs of VET students with a disability and assist employers to hire skilled people with a disability.*

Strategy 16

Market the value of VET to potential students with a disability, their key support networks and sources of advice and career information.

Actions 2001 - 2002

16.1 Develop and implement a marketing framework that notes the importance of:

- **presenting:** positive role models, success stories and information in a range of formats and media; and information that challenges stereotypes, dispels myths and addresses perceived barriers to training/employing people with a disability;

Strategy 16 continued

- **promoting:** courses/career paths through career guidance staff, Online Access Centres and community-based and disability groups; and promoting peer employer education strategies and employer-based mentoring systems;
- **targeting/marketing** materials to: people with a disability and their families; employers who represent the strongest opportunity for hiring people with a disability, as noted in the ANTA National Marketing Strategy; and employer, industry and union peak bodies for inclusion in their publications and forums, including materials showing the value of investment in people with a disability in the workplace; and
- **distributing** products from the ANTA Communications Strategy. Responsibility – ESB, SDLO.

Strategy 17

Undertake marketing with employers and people with a disability about the value of investment in graduates who have a disability and the value of training employees who have a disability.

Actions 2001 - 2002

17.1 People with a disability take a lead role in developing a marketing strategy promoting New Apprenticeships to employers. Responsibility – ESB.

Strategy 18

Recognise achievements in education/training outcomes for people with a disability.

Actions 2001 - 2002

18.1 Investigate the possibility of the Minister for Education presenting awards to employers during Education Week. Responsibility – ESB.

Focus Area 7 Performance Measurement

Data collection is needed to ensure that improvements in performance expected from implementation are captured, and baseline data is available for comparison. Data collection is vital to sound planning and effective resource allocation (Bridging Pathways).

Objectives

Generate appropriate performance reporting.

Strategy 19

Improve data collection protocols with regard to the participation, outcomes and satisfaction of people with a disability in VET.

Actions 2001 - 2002

- 19.1 OPCET to identify baseline data on people with a disability in VET and document annual trends for distribution to stakeholders across the VET sector. Responsibility – OPCET, ESB.

Strategy 20

Ensure annual reporting includes qualitative and quantitative outcome measures for people with a disability. Responsibility – ANTA.

Appendix A

State Steering Committee Membership

Kate Shipway (Chair),
Equity Standards Branch,
Tasmanian Department of Education

Anne French,
Equity Standards Branch,
Tasmanian Department of Education

Dr Adam Grover,
Office of Post-Compulsory Education,
Tasmanian Department of Education

Peter Galligan,
Institute of TAFE Tasmania

Robin McLean,
Institute of TAFE Tasmania

Anne McWhirter,
NGT Tasmania

Roger Stafford,
Tasmanian Group Training Ltd.

Sharon Waitzer,
Community, Property and Health Services
Industry Training Advisory Board

Margie Nolan,
Disability Services,
Department of Health and Human Services

Kathryn Ellston,
Disability Services,
Department of Health and Human Services

David Pearce OAM,
Tasmanian Tertiary Education
Disability Advisory Committee

Kit Murdoch,
Consumer representative (VET student)

Jenny Pragnell,
Consumer representative (VET student)

Jane Barrett,
State Disability Liaison Officer

Executive Officer:
Lynn Lee,
Equity Standards Branch,
Tasmanian Department of Education

Appendix B

Tasmanian Statistical Tables

Table 1a VET Disability Statistics - Tasmania 2000

(includes all funding sources; accredited/non-accredited VET programs; and students with credit transfer and recognition of prior learning outcome results)

Number of VET students reported as having a disability	1610
Number of VET students reported as not having a disability (does not include "not stated")	30558
Load pass rate of VET students reported as having a disability (ANTA Annual Report definition of module load*completion rate).	68.7%
Load pass rate of VET students reported as not having a disability (ANTA Annual Report definition of module load completion rate).	83.2%

Source: OPCET, Department of Education, Tasmania 2001

** See Common Terms Appendix C*

Table 1b VET Disability Statistics - Tasmania, Australia (%) 1999

	Tasmania	Australia
VET students reported as having a disability	3.7%	3.9%
Persons with a disability as proportion of total population	22.3%	19.3%
Persons with a disability aged 15-64 as proportion of total population (15-64)	17.1%	14.4%
VET students reported as not having a disability	80.6%	80.0%
Load pass rate of VET students reported as having a disability	71.0%	68.0%
Load pass rate of VET students reported as not having a disability	84.0%	75.0%

Source: ANTA National Report 1999; figures derived using NCVET data for clients and ABS population data

*Table 2 Number of students with a significant disability in
Tasmanian Schools at February 2001*

Description	Total fulltime equivalent students
Autism	36.0
Hearing Impaired	42.3
Intellectual Disability	256.0
Multiple Disabilities	71.4
Multiple Disability/Vision Impairment	4.5
Physical Disabilities/Hearing Impaired	3.0
Physical Disability	59.5
Physical Disability/Medical	27.0
Psychiatric Disability	6.0
Vision Impairment	25.0
Grand Total	530.7

Department of Education, Tasmania 2001

Appendix C

Common Terms

(Bridging Pathways)

Access and equity: strategies to open VET to all individuals in the community, particularly focusing on those groups who have been traditionally under-represented.

Additional Supports: resources targeted at barriers experienced by disadvantaged groups.

Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF), formerly the Australian Recognition Framework (ARF): the quality assurance and recognition arrangements underpinning the National Training Framework (NTF). Key elements of the NTF include nationally recognised competency standards, qualifications and training organisations.

Module load pass rate: the ratio of students who passed assessment in a module to all students who were assessed and either passed or failed. The calculation is based on the module curriculum hours for each module.

National Training Package (NTP): a set of national training resources consisting of national competency standards, assessment guidelines and national qualifications that have been endorsed by the National Training Framework Committee. The package can also include non-endorsed components, eg assessment materials, learning strategies, professional development materials and unit cost information.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): the recognition of skills and knowledge against course outcomes, ie learning outcomes. RPL also involves the recognition of competencies held against relevant competency standards. RPL is also referred to as Recognition of Current Competencies (RCC).

Registered Training Organisation (RTO): any training organisation registered in accordance with the Australian Quality Training Framework providing VET, training and/or assessment services. RTOs includes the Institute of TAFE Tasmania, private providers, community providers, some schools and higher education institutions, enterprises and firms and industry bodies.

Training Providers: organisations that deliver VET; this would include registered training organisations that are publicly operated, privately operated, or employer-based.

VET in Schools: is the integration of Tasmanian Certificate of Education units with industry specific units, completed with work placements and delivered in school and colleges.

Internet sites of documents referred to in Equal Partners:

Bridging Pathways www.anta.gov.au

Equal Partners www.education.tas.gov.au/equitystandards/VET

Tasmania Together www.tasttogether.asn.au

Learning Together www.doe.tased.edu.au/learningtogether

Disability Discrimination Act (1992) www.hreoc.gov.au

Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act (1998) www.thelaw.tas.gov.au

(Anti-Discrimination Commission Tasmania, GPO Box 197, Hobart, Tasmania 7001)