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Tasmanian Association for the Gifted Inc.

Submission

Inquiry into Discrimination and Bullying in Tasmanian Schools Government Administration Committee A

30 August 2024

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Tasmanian Association for the Gifted Inc. submission to the Government Administration Committee A Inquiry into Discrimination and Bullying in Tasmanian Schools

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Introduction

We thank the Government Administration Committee A for this opportunity to provide a submission to the Inquiry into Discrimination and Bullying in Tasmanian Schools on behalf of the members of the Tasmanian Association for the Gifted Inc (TAG). In this submission we address the terms of reference from the gifted perspective and share de-identified experiences from our members. Although we have omitted reference to the type of Tasmanian schools involved for member anonymity, examples from government, independent, and religious schools are included in this submission.

Background information

Who are TAG?

The Tasmanian Association for the Gifted Inc (TAG) is a non-profit organisation whose primary objective is to provide support to gifted children, their families, and their teachers. We also educate our members and the public by hosting monthly online presentations by Australian and international experts. We are affiliated with the Australian Association for the Education of Gifted and Talented and our volunteer committee includes educators, researchers, and parents of gifted children.

Who are gifted children?

Most Australian educational policies use Gagné's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent¹ to define giftedness. This describes gifted children as having innate ability (intellectual, physical, creative, or social) that places them in the top 10% of their age peers. However, this does not mean gifted children are always 'top of the class'; their talent development trajectory is influenced by identification and educational interventions, with underachievement remaining until talent evolves².

In Australia gifted children are generally identified through a psychologist-administered IQ test which focusses on intellectual giftedness. Much like students at the opposite end of the IQ spectrum, gifted children have learning needs that differ significantly from the norm³. They can also experience and respond to external influences differently compared to their same-age average ability peers, due to

¹ Gagné, F. (2010). Motivation within the DMGT 2.0 framework. *High Ability Studies*, 1(2), 81–99.

² Smith, S. (2017). Responding to the Unique Social and Emotional Learning Needs of Gifted Australian Students. In: Frydenberg, E., Martin, A., Collie, R. (eds) *Social and Emotional Learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific*. Springer, Singapore.

³ Rotigel, J.V. Understanding the Young Gifted Child: Guidelines for Parents, Families, and Educators. *Early Childhood Education Journal* 30, 209–214 (2003).

asynchronous (out-of-sync) chronological and intellectual development, and emotional intensity⁴.

Although each gifted child is a unique individual with their own special interests, strengths, and personality, there are many shared characteristics. Key traits that can be seen from a young age include intense curiosity, a need to know and explore, an excellent memory, and rapid learning ability⁵. Gifted children have a keen desire to learn. Most start school with excitement at the prospect of learning, but unfortunately many gifted children find that school falls far short of their expectations.

“I’ve probably learnt about 2 or 3 things this year. I don’t learn, I just repeat the same thing over and over and over.. Maths - I just couldn’t concentrate. I was that bored I got a few wrong and the teacher didn’t know I was actually good at it. I was just so bored.”⁶

Lack of appropriate educational interventions can have serious consequences for gifted children, including disengagement, behavioural issues, underachievement, school refusal, and psychological distress^{4,7,8}. It has been reported that up to 75% of Australian gifted students underachieve and up to 40% leave school before completing Year 12⁸.

Addressing the terms of reference

Experiences and impacts of discrimination and bullying in Tasmanian schools

Tasmanian students have the right to an education that is directed to development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential⁹, however it should be noted that:

“Gifted students need to be identified and provided with learning programs that support them to achieve their full potential. Research shows that without intervention, gifted students are at high risk of under-achieving, disengaging from learning and/or developing emotional and behavioural problems.”¹⁰

The need for appropriate educational interventions for gifted students to achieve their potential and to avoid detrimental impacts is acknowledged in Senate^{7,11} and Parliamentary¹² Inquiries and is represented in Tasmanian educational procedures and policies^{10,13}. Denying gifted students access to

⁴ Smith, S. (2017). Responding to the Unique Social and Emotional Learning Needs of Gifted Australian Students. In: Frydenberg, E., Martin, A., Collie, R. (eds) Social and Emotional Learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific. Springer, Singapore.

⁵ Silverman, L. K. (2003). Characteristics of Giftedness Scale: Research and review of the literature. Available from the Gifted Development Center, 1452(9).

⁶ Northern Tasmanian schoolgirl in ‘Gifted Kids Interviews’, recorded by TAG Committee, 2012.

⁷ The Senate Education and Employment References Committee (2023). The national trend of school refusal and related matters.

⁸ Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. (2001). The Education of Gifted and Talented Children.

⁹ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

¹⁰ Tasmanian Government Department for Education, Children and Young People (2024). Extended Learning for Gifted Students Procedure.

¹¹ Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. (1988). Report of the Select Committee on the Education of the Gifted and Talented Children. Canberra, ACT: Australian Government Publishing Services.

¹² Victoria. Parliament. Education and Training Committee. & Southwick, David. (2012). Inquiry into the education of gifted and talented students. Melbourne: Victorian Government Printer.

¹³ Catholic Education Commission Tasmania (2021). Gifted and Talented Education Guidelines.

appropriate interventions deprives them of the education they are rightfully entitled to receive and exposes them to known detrimental impacts.

- Unfortunately, our members indicate that such disadvantageous treatment often occurs in Tasmanian schools. This may take the form of indirect discrimination in which schools (erroneously) maintain that what is appropriate for the rest of the class (or age peers) is also appropriate for the gifted student - that interventions are not necessary, even in the face of negative impacts or student feedback. Gifted students also face direct discrimination, experiencing disadvantageous treatment due to expression of their innate characteristics e.g. completing work quickly due to their rapid learning ability can lead to exclusion from learning, and asking 'too many' questions due to heightened curiosity can lead to reprimand.

A member, whose son ended up suffering school refusal, shared that:

"My son was reading lengthy books prior to entering Kindergarten. By grade 2 - my son was extremely anxious and unhappy at school... One teacher indicated while she knew he "could read chapter books by prep", that he would just have to read the same books as the others in the class. She didn't have to time to differentiate.

She said the only way we could get him extended was to pay for a gifted assessment through a psychologist ourselves or wait 3 years to go through the school system. We opted to pay for a private assessment. He received an assessment of 97th percentile, her 'extension' of him in class was to allow him to do Minecraft when he had finished his work. This could happen 7-10 times a day.

My son ended up hating going to school, with major meltdowns and crying and clinging to us at the gate of school every day."¹⁴

A gifted student recounted to us her troubled experience of discrimination in Year 4:

"I would have to repeat and repeat and repeat and repeat the same work."¹⁵

Her mother clarified:

"So basically, she was given the same work (as everyone else) and when she'd finished the work she would be told to redo it because everyone else was still doing it. And it got the point that she came home one day and said "That's it. I'm not going back". And that's why she now homeschools."¹⁵

Another member reports that despite having an ILP in place their child still does not receive teaching at a suitable level, and that:

"My gifted child [is] sitting alone on a computer for large portions of the day with nothing to do that is relevant or suitable. My child is not able to access learning and this is inequitable... The teacher is choosing to completely focus on the children who are at or below grade level. There appears to be no shame or concern at the obvious discrimination in only teaching some of the class. I can assure you my child is not fine. And no other child in that situation would be either..."

¹⁴ TAG Member correspondence received 5/12/22

¹⁵ TAG "Kids' Forum" seminar, recorded 29/6/22

We are currently deciding whether we need to leave Tasmania due to lack of suitable schooling here. We are faced with the prospect of leaving house, neighbourhood, job, friends etc etc and incurring massive financial debts. I don't know too many other people for whom there is no viable option for their children's education in the entire state. To me, this feels discriminatory.”¹⁶

- The effects of discrimination can snowball, leading to further discrimination when gifted students begin to exhibit known consequences of inadequate educational interventions, such as disengagement, underachievement, and behavioural issues. These students then face additional discrimination as a response to these challenges.

“..we had a very negative experience in [...] where our child was first ignored and later bullied by educators due to lack of support and understanding of their giftedness.. Regardless of the information and documentation we provided to the school outlining our child's needs and assessment placing them at the exceptionally gifted spectrum, the educators showed very little understanding of the concept of giftedness and no interest to explore it further.

Our child's engagement very quickly faded as all curriculum offered was way below their academic level. However, the school treated it as failure to learn and insisted on psychiatric assessment, potential learning disability, and medicated treatment to make the child more engaged in class. When we requested that the curriculum be somewhat tailored for their needs, we were refused "because it is not done". We were told that "the pupil will only be given a curriculum assigned to their age and grade as it is prescribed in Tasmanian state guidelines", which even at the time we knew was not true... The psych assessments on giftedness that we completed prior did not make any difference and were not taken seriously.

Our child was excluded from class activities, as they kept blurting out all the (right) answers, and put in a corner desk with a support teacher. Within the first couple of months they were no longer offered to join class activities of any kind and were generally seen as a nuisance. We had daily calls from the school going into detail of how much the child has failed today to be engaging and obedient.”

“The result of this discriminatory, exclusionary, and often bullying attitude from the school was that our child developed extreme anxiety and sleeping disorders, which took months to recover from.”¹⁷

- Members have reported discriminatory behaviour by school professionals who have attempted to dissuade them from pursuing appropriate educational interventions. Early entry to school, like other forms of acceleration, is well-supported by extensive research as a beneficial educational intervention for gifted students^{18,19,20}. In Tasmania, early entry is available both to children who have

¹⁶ TAG Member correspondence received 18/8/24

¹⁷ TAG Member correspondence received 2/8/24

¹⁸ Bernstein, B. O., Lubinski, D., & Benbow, C. P. (2021). Academic acceleration in gifted youth and fruitless concerns regarding psychological well-being: A 35-year longitudinal study. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 113(4), 830.

¹⁹ McClarty, K. L. (2015). Life in the fast lane: Effects of early grade acceleration on high school and college outcomes. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 59(1), 3-13.

²⁰ Steenbergen-Hu, S., & Moon, S. M. (2011). The effects of acceleration on high-ability learners: A meta-analysis. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 55(1), 39-53.

already started school interstate or overseas, and to gifted children who meet specific criteria.²¹ Despite being of a similar age, interstate or overseas students continuing their education are unlikely to be dissuaded from applying for early entry.

A school psychologist accused one member applying for early entry of ‘just trying to get out of paying for childcare’ and followed this up by saying ‘in all the years they had been doing assessments they had never come across a gifted child and no one had ever got in for early entry’²². The member was very upset by the exchange and opted to pay for assessment from a private psychologist.

Another member was told by an advanced skills teacher that they should seriously consider the negative impacts early entry would have on their gifted child when they were older; examples given were how the child might feel being the last to reach legal drinking and driving ages. In a meeting with the principal, the member was again told to consider negative impacts when their child was older. When the member interrupted with ‘surely you don’t mean their drinking and driving age’, the principal changed tact and started talking about ‘when hormones kick in’²³. These ‘concerns’ are not supported at all by research^{24,25,26} and may mislead uninformed parents who trust that the advice given by school professionals is research-based. The principal concluded the meeting by saying ‘I hope you won’t be too disappointed when you don’t get in’.

Thankfully both members' gifted children were accepted for early entry as early entry applications are approved independently of schools by the Early Entry to School Cross Sectoral Placement Committee.

Unfortunately, most other educational interventions, including other forms of acceleration, are at the discretion of school principals which can put gifted students at risk due to discriminatory action (or lack of action). One member²⁷, when they referred their gifted child for subject acceleration, was verbally told by a teacher that ‘it was just not done at their school’, and the principal subsequently rejected their request. In such cases there is no mechanism for a review of the decision or for transparency in the decision-making process.

- Members experience disadvantageous treatment when trying to advocate for gifted student needs. Tasmanian students have the right to express their views in all matters affecting them²⁸. This is particularly important for the wellbeing of gifted students, given research showing incongruities between gifted students and their teachers’ thinking is a major issue underlying underachievement - with teachers erroneously believing their students’ needs are being met²⁹.

²¹ Tasmanian Government Minister for Education (2023). Ministerial Instruction No 15 Early Entry to School.

²² TAG Committee member notes from phone conversation, 28/7/19

²³ From TAG member correspondence, 27/8/21

²⁴ Bernstein, B. O., Lubinski, D., & Benbow, C. P. (2021). Academic acceleration in gifted youth and fruitless concerns regarding psychological well-being: A 35-year longitudinal study. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 113(4), 830.

²⁵ McClarty, K. L. (2015). Life in the fast lane: Effects of early grade acceleration on high school and college outcomes. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 59(1), 3-13.

²⁶ Steenbergen-Hu, S., & Moon, S. M. (2011). The effects of acceleration on high-ability learners: A meta-analysis. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 55(1), 39-53.

²⁷ TAG Member correspondence received 5/7/23

²⁸ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

²⁹ Ireland, C., Bowles, T. V., Nikakis, S., & Russo, D. (2021). Increasing underachievement of Australian highly able secondary science students. *SN Social Sciences*, 1(11), 264.

One member, in an email to their teacher regarding an ILP meeting, added that their child was finding “*sounding-out-letters-time in class way too easy*”. This sharing of information was prompted out of concern around disengagement after their gifted prep child, who was already reading chapter books, repeatedly expressed frustration and asked for help because they were ‘too scared to ask themselves’. The member was promptly contacted by the principal who completely dismissed the student's view with the following:

“This reads that [gifted student] is bored. What is missing here is wondering and trust that there is more going on in the classroom... all our highly professional staff are experts in the complexity of teaching and learning. Perhaps next time the wondering could be: “We are noticing [gifted child] is using the language “too easy” are there some strategies we can use at home to help [gifted child] make the connections to the challenges set in class.””

The member was also then told by the prep teacher that they could not discuss their child unless it was in an ILP meeting, and that they were not to make contact by email. The member wrote:

“...this is not the norm for other parents; we are disappointed and feel discriminated against given we have different rules of communication.”

After meetings, the school apologised and arranged for mediated chats to ‘repair’ the member-teacher relationship. However continuing challenges resulted in a change of schools, with impacts including loss of community and friendships, financial strain, and lingering anxiety for the member whenever speaking up for their gifted child³⁰.

- In some cases, schools admit to discriminatory behaviour. One member writes:

“We have been affected by school refusal. We are lucky that she is only young so we can get her there, but I hate leaving her crying and upset.. I am dreading what will happen as she gets bigger and older. I feel that it will be very hard to get her there.. They (the school) admitted that they let students down who needed extension work and would try to do better, but their concern was to catch the ones up that were behind.”³¹

And from another negatively affected member:

“..we heard from [...] school staff that it is wilful ignorance of giftedness, as identifying some children as gifted by their definition ‘discriminates’ against non-gifted children, and they would rather keep all children at the same level. Ironically, this goes directly against the ideas of diversity and inclusivity, as to be included all children must conform to the same standards.”³²

- Discriminatory attitudes appear widespread, particularly in schools without overarching gifted policies or guidelines, restricting opportunities for gifted students to reach their potential and putting them at risk of detrimental impacts:

“...we reached out and had interviews with principals and senior educators of several other main [...] schools in the area. The outcomes were very similar - giftedness is not treated as a real thing or as something to specifically cater for via the means of acceleration or tailored

³⁰ From TAG member correspondence dated 24/2/23, 27/2/23, 28/6/23, 2/10/23

³¹ TAG Member correspondence received 1/12/22

³² TAG Member correspondence received 2/8/24

*curriculum. It is not seen as "real" as psych diagnosis for ADHD or Autism Spectrum Disorder, which do have allocated resources and support."*¹⁹

- Some of our members talk about bullying as though it is to be expected. In fact, gifted youth are often believed to face a 'forced-choice dilemma', where they must choose between academic achievement and acceptance by their average-ability peers. This dilemma arises from the belief that excelling academically may provoke negative or hostile attitudes from these peers. Some students may adopt the strategy of 'masking' their giftedness to develop more acceptable identities which can conflict with their true self, resulting in emotional frustration. Others choose to pursue their academic interests even with the risk of not attaining close relationships or acceptance^{33,34}. Bullying can have long-term psychological effects. Gifted students in Tasmanian schools should not be forced to make such a choice in order to achieve their full potential.

One member describes their child's experience of bullying:

"When younger, [our gifted child] was accepted as being a little different on his knowledge and topics of conversation, as he became older, it became a reason for other children to either dismiss him "just speak English, no one knows what you're on about", "such an Einstein", or target in making sure he couldn't do anything "you see you're not as smart as you think you are". [Our gifted child] is mocked for making a mistake, hounded for people to work with him as he knows the answer, and targeted as "he thinks he's special".

...leaving classes for extension became a reason for some children to dislike him. When [our gifted child] jumped grades, his peers who had known him as the younger kid who is smart are now threatened by him exceeding them in class. [Our gifted child] refuses to be a victim, "he does not want pity" but it makes him sad and he feels lonely.

*The school when they see it, when they aware of it, instantly deal with it and it stops, for a while, then it starts again."*³⁵

Preventing discrimination and bullying of gifted students in Tasmanian schools

- The Senate inquiry into the Education of Gifted and Talented Children³⁶ revealed widespread negative attitudes and misconceptions about gifted students. Research continues to indicate that teachers and school psychologists lack essential knowledge, skills, and confidence to identify and meet the needs of gifted children, and that misconceptions regarding their needs are pervasive

³³ Jung, J. Y., McCormick, J., & Gross, M. U. (2012). The forced choice dilemma: A model incorporating idiocentric/allocentric cultural orientation. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 56(1), 15-24.

³⁴ Gross, M. U. (1989). The pursuit of excellence or the search for intimacy? The forced-choice dilemma of gifted youth. *Roeper Review*, 11(4), 189-194.

³⁵ TAG Member correspondence received 9/8/24

³⁶ Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. (2001). *The Education of Gifted and Talented Children*

amongst Australian educators^{37,38,39,40}. This issue urgently requires action, given Tasmanian gifted students are suffering from disengagement, behavioural issues, underachievement, school refusal, psychological distress, and school withdrawal.

The Senate inquiry recommended that State education authorities should require, as a condition of employment, that **all** newly graduated teachers have **at least a semester unit** on the special needs of gifted children in their degrees (including identification)⁴¹, however this has not happened. The Department for Education, Children and Young People offer a one-day professional learning course, accessed by 25 teachers in 2021-2022⁴².

*"I think it is genuinely difficult for teachers to understand giftedness unless they have lived with it or have someone in their household with it. However, if they had some training or professional development in the area, that would help. And I don't think this happens very often. Which in itself is discriminatory, since professional development is often provided around other conditions such as autism and dyslexia. It is essential that teachers understand the educational needs of gifted children and the multitude of potential dire outcomes when children are denied a suitable education. If they understood this, I think they would at least try, and that would count for a lot."*⁴³

Research supports the effectiveness of such a semester unit in changing pre-service teacher misconceptions surrounding the needs of gifted children⁴⁴. Our members frequently report exceptional support and appropriate interventions for gifted students at schools where leadership have had personal experience with gifted children, usually family members:

*"We are lucky that we have had a consistent school leadership that has worked with us to the best of their ability and maximum of what the system would allow.. Having teachers and senior staff with personal experience of giftedness made a huge difference."*⁴⁵

And:

*"We have since found a wonderful [...] school that offers a range of extensions to gifted children, as well as ongoing support, and more importantly, understanding of what giftedness is and how it presents... In short, previous personal experience with giftedness is absolutely key to success!"*⁴⁶

³⁷ Vialle, W. (2012). The role of school counsellors in fostering giftedness: The Australian experience.. In A. Ziegler, C. Fischer, H. Stoeger & M. Reutlinger (Eds.), Gifted education as a life-long challenge (pp. 265-278). Berlin: LIT-Verlag.

³⁸ Plunkett, M. & Kronborg, L. (2011) Learning to Be a Teacher of the Gifted: The Importance of Examining Opinions and Challenging Misconceptions, Gifted and Talented International, 26:1-2, 31-46

³⁹ Smith, S. (2017). Responding to the Unique Social and Emotional Learning Needs of Gifted Australian Students. In: Frydenberg, E., Martin, A., Collie, R. (eds) Social and Emotional Learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific. Springer, Singapore.

⁴⁰ Rambo, K. E., & McCoach, D. B. (2012). Teacher attitudes toward subject-specific acceleration: Instrument development and validation. Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 35(2), 129-152.

⁴¹ Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. (2001). The Education of Gifted and Talented Children

⁴² Tasmanian Government Department of Education (2022). Annual Report 2021-22.

⁴³ TAG Member correspondence received 18/8/24

⁴⁴ Plunkett, M. & Kronborg, L. (2011) Learning to Be a Teacher of the Gifted: The Importance of Examining Opinions and Challenging Misconceptions, Gifted and Talented International, 26:1-2, 31-46

⁴⁵ TAG Member (a) correspondence received 30/8/24

⁴⁶ TAG Member (b) correspondence received 30/8/24

In the absence of appropriate widespread training, this reflects the effectiveness of being informed about the needs of gifted children.

- While the majority of Tasmanian educators, school psychologists, and school leaders lack appropriate training, gifted students remain vulnerable to disadvantageous treatment. Until widespread, comprehensive knowledge of gifted students' needs are established in Tasmanian schools, protections must be put in place to safeguard their wellbeing and avoid discrimination.

Currently, the existence of policies regarding appropriate educational interventions for gifted students vary across school sectors. Additionally, policies alone may be ineffective without systems to ensure proper implementation for those who need them. For example, where decisions about educational interventions are at the discretion of school principals, gifted students may be at risk where principals persist in believing misconceptions which lead to discriminatory inaction. In such cases, there is often a lack of transparency in the decision-making process and no mechanism for reviewing decisions.

Early entry is approved independently of schools by the Early Entry to School Cross Sectoral Placement Committee and is governed by a Ministerial Instruction that applies to all Tasmanian state and non-government schools. This independent, standardised process helps protect the rights of gifted students by ensuring that decisions are free from discrimination. Similar avenues exist for other interventions, such as international frameworks for decision-making in relation to acceleration that ensure fair, evidence-based outcomes (e.g. <https://accelerationsystem.org/>).

- The Senate inquiry also found “*Special needs (giftedness) should be seen in the same light as special needs (intellectual disabilities) or special needs (physical disabilities). Policy documents should make this clear.*”⁴⁷. Given the learning needs of gifted students are as different from the norm as children with learning disabilities at the other end of the spectrum⁴⁸, members wonder at the disparity in funding for gifted students:

*“Funding should be allocated to children above a certain level of standard deviations. It is discriminatory that children significantly below average receive funding and those significantly above do not. It is not realistic that one class teacher manage a gifted child’s education in a mainstream class. If we acknowledge that to be the case for intellectually disabled children, it is both unrealistic and discriminatory to not acknowledge it also for academically gifted children.”*⁴⁹

Some members also believe funding validate the special needs of gifted students in Tasmanian schools and help shift perceptions so their needs are taken seriously.

- In relation to bullying, research suggests that the ‘forced-choice dilemma’ (see page 7) may not arise if the average ability peers of intellectually gifted students accept, or tolerate, high levels of academic achievement. In such situations, intellectually gifted students may feel permitted to simultaneously pursue both their motivation for academic success and need for peer acceptance⁵⁰. Thus, a focus on

⁴⁷ Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. (2001). The Education of Gifted and Talented Children

⁴⁸ Rotigel, J.V. Understanding the Young Gifted Child: Guidelines for Parents, Families, and Educators. *Early Childhood Education Journal* 30, 209–214 (2003).

⁴⁹ TAG Member correspondence received 18/8/24

⁵⁰ Jung, J. Y., McCormick, J., & Gross, M. U. (2012). The forced choice dilemma: A model incorporating idiocentric/allocentric cultural orientation. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 56(1), 15-24.

promoting a inclusive school cultures in Tasmania that are accepting of academic excellence may help reduce experiences of bullying for gifted students.

Further, we would like to draw your attention to an initiative of one school sector in Tasmania called the 'One Day School'. It was developed so that gifted students were able to mix with similar ability and like-minded peers, rather than being isolated by their intellectual differences. Gifted students of the One Day School came together from primary schools in the Launceston region and attended at a single location for a full school day every week with learning experiences for the day developed in line with the Australian Curriculum, and with particular focus on cross-curriculum priorities and transferrable big concepts. Parent and student perception of the effect of the program has revealed exceedingly positive outcomes for gifted students in the areas of friendship, wellbeing, self-confidence, and perceived achievement. Students reported that they felt better understood, could be their true selves, made friends with people who understood them and felt challenged to achieve whilst also being supported in their learning. The school sector hopes to expand this model around Tasmania in the coming few years.