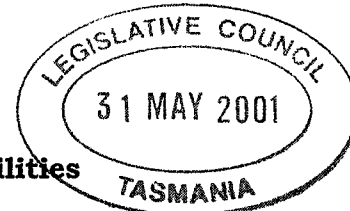


Tabled by the Clerk
R.S.S. McKenzie



Department of Education
response to
Post-School Options for Young Adults with Disabilities

Legislative Council Select Committee

April 2001

Chapter 3 Current Service Provision

Recommendation 4: The provision of services be more flexible to allow opportunities for the creative use of individual funding allocations.

Current situation:	<p>This recommendation relates specifically to provision of day support and respite services. Issues include restricted access due to limited places; need for increased responsiveness to whole family circumstances; and greater staffing flexibility across organisations.</p> <p>As such, the recommendation does not have direct implications for the Department of Education. However, lack of options and resources are major issues for young people completing compulsory education.</p>
Related activities:	<p>Transition planning is a key area for ongoing development, with particular emphasis on options at Years 11 and 12 and post school planning. The Department of Education resource <i>Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities: Into the Future</i> (1996) describes the planning process. It was developed to support school personnel, families and students in the development of individual transition plans.</p>
Constraints:	<p>There is a lack of consistency around the State in understanding and implementing transition practices. It is believed that <i>Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities: Into the Future</i> is under utilised, as resource support towards implementation of the package was for one year and ceased at the end of 1997.</p>
Future possibilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• revitalisation of <i>Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities</i> through increased funding and promotion

Chapter 4 Current and Possible Future Post-School Options

Recommendation 5: As the normal range of services is not available in the major centres of the North West Coast, at least one additional multi-purpose facility be developed in the North West region. This facility should provide (inter alia)

- **Staff appropriately trained to plan and implement individual client educational and recreational programs; and**
- **Specific monitoring and evaluation processes to assess progress of each client.**

Current situation:	<p>The Institute of TAFE Tasmania currently provides training to people working or wishing to work in the disability area. This training is taken from the Community Services Training Package which provides specialisation in Disability Work. The package contains various Units of Competence which develop skills for planning and implementing individual clients' educational and recreational programs and which deal directly with skills for monitoring and evaluation processes to assess the progress of each client.</p> <p>Two such units are: <i>CHCCS6A</i> - assess and deliver services to clients with complex needs; and <i>CHCCS7A</i> - co-ordinate the assessment and delivery of services to clients with particular needs.</p> <p>The key elements of competence in these Units are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and analyse client needs to ensure they can be met; • Identify and provide for the delivery of services to meet client needs; and • Identify program requirements for individual clients; • Co-ordinate program delivery to ensure client needs are addressed; • Evaluate client service delivery. • Co-ordinate the evaluation of client service delivery.
Related activities:	<p>TAFE staff, including Disability Liaison Officers (DLOs) and staff teaching in Certificate I in Work Education and Certificate I Transition Education, have skills appropriate to monitoring and evaluating the progress of clients with disabilities in post school education programs.</p>
Future possibilities:	<p>Information regarding the appropriateness of current training and the adequacy of the current supply of appropriately trained staff in these areas could be</p>

	identified by the relevant industry training advisory board, the Community, Property and Health Services ITAB.
Constraints:	DoE's input into this action is dependent on the development of the multi-purpose facility.
Conclusion:	<p>The training of staff in skills to plan and implement individual client educational programs and to assess the progress of clients is currently being provided by TAFE Tasmania.</p> <p>Increased inter-agency coordination between Disability Services, training organisations and the Department of Education is needed to optimise provision in relation to the provision of staff for a multi purpose facility in the North West.</p>

Recommendation 7: Funding be provided to enable adults with disabilities to continue to have access to specialised equipment such as wheelchairs and computers once they leave school.

Current situation:	<p>The Department of Education via the Office of Post Compulsory Education (OPCET) provides annual funding of \$30,000 to TAFE for specialised assistance for students with disabilities. This funding is a component of the annual Purchase Agreement between TAFE and the Department. The funding is expended on SEAL rooms (Students Equal Access to Learning) that house assistive equipment, as well as on specialist tutors, interpreters, note-takers, assessment support and support groups.</p> <p><i>Equipment is only available to students enrolled in TAFE courses and is generally only for study at TAFE, not at home or elsewhere. Due to resource constraints, there is only a limited amount of equipment and learning supports.</i></p> <p>In addition to the amount supplied through the Purchase Agreement, TAFE contributes additional funds as necessary for equipment and assistance for people with disabilities.</p> <p>The DHHS Post School Options Project offers some funding for specialised equipment however, this is limited.</p> <p>The DoE provides funding to the Equipment/Technology Library for students with a disability in compulsory schooling and allocates</p>
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	<p>\$75,000 pa through the Computers in Schools program.</p> <p><i>Equipment and technology are often not available for post compulsory education.</i></p>
Related activities:	<p>The Equity Standards Branch is running 'Tech Assist Online', a statewide technology consultancy and support service for people with disabilities, to assist them to access the Internet. The service provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loans of equipment and assistive computer technology to organisations for the use of people with disabilities; • Training and technical support to ensure the equipment and technology is used effectively; and • Expertise in the use of assistive computer technology and appropriate applications for people with disabilities. <p>Clients of Tech Assist Online include Online Access Centres, disability service organisations, libraries and organisations providing Internet access for people with disabilities. The service has been allocated three years funding by the Commonwealth Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, through the Networking the Nation program.</p>
Future possibilities:	<p>Within the State Implementation Plan for the National Blueprint <i>Bridging Pathways (the National Plan of Action for Increasing Opportunities for People with Disabilities in VET, 2000-2005)</i>, relevant actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • investigate the possibility of individual educational funding packages for students with a disability across the VET sector; • investigate the possibility of a pooled payment/retainer system with all stakeholders to address learning support needs and gaps, in particular for signers; • establish, circulate and maintain a State register of existing technology expertise related to students with a disability and new learning technologies; • centralise information about computer donation schemes, including training and technical support and distribution; and • scope current availability of assistive technology, and training in its use, in the VET sector.
Constraints:	<p>The Tech Assist Online project is funded until August 2003. It is unlikely the State will be able to maintain it past that date at the current level of funding.</p>

	<p>\$75,000 pa through the Computers in Schools program.</p> <p><i>Shortfall - equipment and technology are not available for post compulsory education.</i></p>
Related activities:	<p>The Equity Standards Branch is running 'Tech Assist Online', a statewide technology consultancy and support service for people with disabilities, to assist them to access the Internet. The service provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loans of equipment and assistive computer technology to organisations for the use of people with disabilities; • Training and technical support to ensure the equipment and technology is used effectively; and • Expertise in the use of assistive computer technology and appropriate applications for people with disabilities. <p>Clients of Tech Assist Online include Online Access Centres, disability service organisations, libraries and organisations providing Internet access for people with disabilities. The service has been allocated three years funding by the Commonwealth Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, through the Networking the Nation program.</p>
Future possibilities:	<p>Within the State Implementation Plan for the National Blueprint <i>Bridging Pathways (the National Plan of Action for Increasing Opportunities for People with Disabilities in VET, 2000-2005)</i>, relevant actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • investigate the possibility of individual educational funding packages for students with a disability across the VET sector; • investigate the possibility of a pooled payment/retainer system with all stakeholders to address learning support needs and gaps, in particular for signers; • establish, circulate and maintain a State register of existing technology expertise related to students with a disability and new learning technologies; • centralise information about computer donation schemes, including training and technical support and distribution; and • scope current availability of assistive technology, and training in its use, in the VET sector.
Constraints:	<p>The Tech Assist Online project is funded until August 2003. It is unlikely the State will be able to maintain it past that date at the current level of funding.</p>

Conclusion:	<p>With regard to current provision of specialised equipment for post school vocational education and training, the Department of Education does not plan to expand existing arrangements but will discuss with TAFE the possibility of increased flexibility in access to specialised equipment for students with a disability.</p> <p>The Department intends to investigate other funding possibilities for provision of specialised equipment for students with a disability in vocational education and training, in discussion with other government and non-government key agencies.</p>
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Recommendation 8: Departments take appropriate action and provide sufficient resources to ensure that transitional planning is undertaken.

Current situation:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 1996, the DoE developed <i>Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities: Into the Future</i>, a funded transition planning process for Category A students with disabilities to help them to prepare for post school life, including accessing post school options. 2. In 1999, a DoE and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) inter-departmental committee was formed to steer the Post School Options project, funded through the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (FACS).
Related activities:	
Future possibilities:	<p>Draft proposals from <i>Bridging Pathways</i> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • track students from school to college to VET and vice versa, to improve institutions'/trainers' knowledge of students and help in better matching the student/skills to employer needs; and • career planning with one on one guidance for students with a disability with regard to VET programs, to begin in early high school years and continue beyond the completion of VET programs.

Constraints:	Further development is required in training school staff to implement the transition process with more consistency. This has implications for schools and support staff, including career counsellors whose awareness of appropriate pathways needs to be increased. The transition planning process needs to begin in early secondary school and continue beyond Year 12.
Conclusion:	Transition planning needs to be adopted consistently across the state with inter-sectoral and inter-departmental cooperation, as well as strengthened links with work and training placement agencies.

Recommendation 9: Greater flexibility be incorporated in programming and planning.

Current situation:	<p><i>Inter-Departmental Cooperation</i></p> <p>The Department is participating in the Post School Options project with DHHS (Disability Services).</p> <p>The Department liaises with non-government agencies in the provision of therapy services for students in schools.</p>
Related activities:	
Future possibilities:	<p>Draft proposals from <i>Bridging Pathways</i> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Disability Consumer Advisory Sub-committee to Tasmanian State Training Authority and TASTA Equity Advisory Committee. • OPCET Annual Plans to include input from the Disability Consumer Advisory Sub-committee (see above). Advice should also be sought from training organisations that are proactive in increasing the numbers of people with a disability in training. • Through the quality assurance auditing process the need for registered training providers to consult with disability advocacy groups should be highlighted as part of compliance with Registration Standard 6. • Review current provision of enabling skills (basic work and life skills training that provide a pathway into further training), preparatory and pre-vocational courses and AQF Certificate I and II and implement recommendations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAFE to consider arrangements that will allow for extra time in training for students with a disability who may need it.
Constraints:	There is some uncertainty about the intent of this recommendation.
Conclusion:	Through the <i>Bridging Pathways</i> State Implementation Plan, the Department of Education proposes to achieve greater flexibility in programming and planning through increasing the involvement of people with a disability on decision-making and planning bodies in the vocational education and training and employment sectors.

Recommendation 10: Specific programs and services be provided, where appropriate, for clients with acquired brain injury.

Current situation:	Headway Support Services advises that very few people who come through the rehabilitation system continue on to TAFE. Those who do generally need one on one support for some period of time. In Headway's experience, one on one support is very cost intensive.
Related activities:	People with acquired brain injury are included in all activities currently planned and delivered for people with disabilities.
Future possibilities:	<p>Draft proposals from <i>Bridging Pathways</i> are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • map what is currently available in relation to pre-vocational training courses, for example: access courses, Adult Community Education courses, linking programs and open employment services; and how they are funded, in order to get a clear picture of what is being provided; and • investigate the delivery of pre-vocational training in assistive technologies to students with a disability.
Constraints:	
Conclusion:	The Department of Education will discuss the Individual Options Program with DHHS with regard to support for programs and services for people with acquired brain injury wishing to access vocational

	education and training. While the Department of Education provides funding to TAFE for learning supports and specialised equipment for students with a disability, it is a TAFE responsibility to decide the specific use of that funding. The Department of Education will discuss with TAFE the provision of specialised equipment and learning supports for students with acquired brain injury.
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Recommendation 11: A system of local area coordination be developed to provide a point of contact and coordination between people with disabilities and their families or carers and the Departments, service providers and the general community.

Current situation:	No action from DoE
Related activities:	Forums were held in Launceston and Hobart in February 2000 to gain stakeholder input into the State Implementation Plan for <i>Bridging Pathways</i> .
Future possibilities:	Draft proposals from <i>Bridging Pathways</i> include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish, circulate and maintain a State register of existing technology (including web design), expertise, services, funds, networks relating to students with a disability and new learning technologies; • centralise information about computer donation schemes, including training and technical support and disseminate it; and • scope current availability of assistive technology, and training in its use, in the VET sector.
Constraints:	A lead agency needs to direct this process however, there needs to be negotiation with relevant agencies on who will assume the role.
Conclusion:	

Chapter 5 Current Funding Model for Post-School Options

Recommendation 13: There will be a continued campaign aimed at convincing Governments, both state and federal, of the need to increase funding for the provision of care and support to people with disabilities.

Current situation:	Additional state funding of \$1.3m to the Special Education Budget for 2001 was allocated as a result of Recommendation 20 of the Review of the Policy on Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Regular Schools.
Related activities:	The need for recurrent funding to support students with disabilities is acknowledged and was explicitly stated in the Report on the Review of the Policy on Inclusion. Recent statistics indicate the increasing number of students with significant disabilities receiving their education in neighbourhood schools, along with maintenance of enrolments in special schools. This highlights the ongoing need for increased special education funding.
Future possibilities:	Changed resource allocation model.
Constraints/shortfalls:	While the Special Education Budget provision supports students in K-12 education, and includes the period of preparation for transition from school to adult life, it is acknowledged (as documented in the Report Card on Inclusive Education in Australia) that this is an area demanding attention in Tasmania as there is clear need for improvement. Current practice does not reflect a consistent approach in all areas of the state, and options for students residing in rural and remote areas present the greatest challenges. The Post-Schools Option Project is an important strategy to address the needs of young people with disabilities and is indicative of future possibilities, but is a 3 year project with Commonwealth funding to June 2002 and a fixed resource allocation.
Conclusion:	The changed resourcing model will need to accommodate the changing demands of the school-aged population especially in relation to work experience, VET in Schools and transition planning.

Recommendation 14: Further trials be undertaken in an effort to determine the financial and social benefits of funding clients and that the Queensland model be the basis of any trial.

Current situation:	Funding for students with significant disabilities, who meet specified criteria, is allocated on an individual basis to address identified needs and learning outcomes, to the end of Year 12.
Related activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation 22 of the Inclusion Review, affirms continuation of the practice of individual funding to students with highest needs in regular schools, and also recommends increased flexibility in utilisation of resources within schools. Guidelines to assist schools are to be developed to ensure accountability; the Special Education Resources Working Group is to meet for the first time on April 23. • The Longitudinal Study of Students with Disabilities, now entering its second year, may inform consideration of issues at the time of transition to post-school life for young people with disabilities.
Future possibilities:	
Constraints/ shortfalls :	While individual funding to address educational needs is established practice in Tasmanian education and is well known to school communities and families, the approach ceases at conclusion of school education. It is not unexpected that this systemic change would present difficulties for families, who are dealing with many major life changes at this time. A continuation of individually based funding would have major resource and management implications. The Department of Education would be supportive of inter-departmental collaboration to investigate flexible funding and to assist families maximise opportunities for young people.
Conclusion:	

Recommendation 15: There be further investigation of the potential to coordinate established groups in rural and remote areas as a facilitator of service delivery.

Current situation:	Young people with disabilities, while at school, are case managed educationally in their local area by school and support service personnel in conjunction with other agencies involved with the student and family. Links with organisations and community groups are managed at a local level and therefore knowledge of current practices does not extend beyond this immediate focus. However, support services in each district can provide a co-ordinating role in planning transition processes involving government departments and non-government organisations as appropriate, albeit with varying degrees of effectiveness.
Related activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tech Assist Online provides opportunities for young people to access services, particularly from rural and remote locations. • The TAFE Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE) program has been investigating the use of online learning for people with low literacy skills.
Future possibilities:	Online learning, developed as an adjunct to Tech Assist Online, and with input from <i>e-magine</i> and TAFE's Learning Online Services, may be a future possibility.
Constraints:	Practices are inconsistent in implementation of transition guidelines and communication and co-ordination between stakeholders. The Department would strongly support a renewed focus upon implementation of the transition planning guidelines.
Conclusion:	The Department supports the development of protocols involving schools, families, training bodies and other organisations in implementation of co-ordinated, comprehensive transition practices, based upon existing policy and guidelines.

Chapter 6 Electronic Data Base Program

Recommendation 16: An investigation begin as soon as practicable to look at an appropriate method for data collection and that all interested parties be invited to have input and that it be a full consultative process.

Current situation:	DoE plans to investigate appropriate methods for data collection relating to the enrolment of students with disabilities and progress against learning benchmarks. At the national level, work has begun in this area.
Related activities:	All registered training organisations delivering government funded training are required to provide statistical information in relation to disability to AVETMIS (the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information System). This information is available to the State and is accessed regularly to monitor the participation of people with disabilities in VET.
Future possibilities:	DoE would contribute to an investigation into an appropriate method for data collection beyond the current work. DoE to collaborate with DHHS and other major stakeholders in relation to this investigation.
Constraints:	There is a lack of a lead agency directive to establish an interdepartmental working party/hire a consultant to undertake this investigation in relation to data collection beyond school. Lack of resources is a constraint to this activity.
Conclusion:	The appropriate action by a lead agency needs to be taken to begin this action.

Recommendation 17: there be an investigation into any similar methods of data collection in mainland states with the view to implementing aspects of those databases which will best suit the needs of our Tasmanian clientele.

Current situation:	DoE is not participating in an investigation into any similar methods of data collection in mainland states.
Related activities:	Informal discussions have taken place between officers in Queensland and Tasmania in relation to the establishment of databases within education departments.
Future possibilities:	DoE to further discuss establishment of lifelong databases with those states and/or territories who have established/investigated similar methods of data collection. DoE collaborate with DHHS in relation to this investigation.
Constraints:	There is a lack of a lead agency directive to establish an interdepartmental working party/hire a consultant to undertake this investigation. Lack of resources is a constraint to this activity.
Conclusion:	The appropriate action by a lead agency needs to be taken to begin this action.

Chapter 7 Matters Incidental

Recommendation 19: Work experience opportunities be provided at supported employment enterprises

Current situation:	
Related activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Education provides all Tasmanian education and training providers with the 'Workplace Learning Guidelines for Work Experience and Vocational Placements'. The 2001 publication is currently being updated to include specific advice for trainers/employers on the workplace needs of people with a disability, including monitoring and evaluation. • OPCET and Equity Standards Branch canvassed issues and strategies relating to workplace learning for students with disabilities in 2000. This work will continue to be developed in 2001.
Future possibilities:	
Constraints:	Resourcing students with disabilities in off-site work

	experience placements is not satisfactorily addressed under the current funding model.
Conclusion:	The Special Education Resources Working Group will address resource implications of extending work experience to more students with disabilities.

Recommendation 20: Secondary colleges and TAFE ensure that all courses provided are accessible to students with disabilities

Current situation:	By law, all education and training institutions are obligated to ensure that all courses provided are accessible to students with disabilities.
Related activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) is reviewing the Workplace Training and Assessment Package and will include disability awareness training as a core unit of competence • ANTA is reviewing the Core Competencies and Other Generic Skills Competencies of training packages to ensure that disability awareness is included as a core competency in all training packages
Future possibilities:	<i>Bridging Pathways</i> proposes that the positions of TAFE Disability Liaison Officers be increased to full time and that their activities be spread across the VET sector and not restricted to TAFE.
Constraints:	Funding for increased spread of DLO activities.
Conclusion:	