

**2011**

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**NEEDS OF ACT STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY – PROGRESS REPORT  
RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN REPORT 5 OF STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS**

**QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE BUDGET ESTIMATE HEARINGS**

**Presented by  
Andrew Barr MLA  
Minister for the Education and Training  
June 2011**

**(Tabled on 23 June 2011)**

## NEEDS OF ACT STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY

### PROGRESS REPORT MAY 2011

|    | Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Response | Implementation progress                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| 1. | The Committee recommends that the Education and Training Directorate support the capacity for cross-sector dialogue and information and skills sharing on best practice in the delivery of disability education services between government and non-government education systems                                          | Agreed   | The Cross-Sectoral Disability Steering Group has been formed and meets regularly. It is comprised of representatives from the public, independent and Catholic school systems.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 2. | The Committee recommends that the Education and Training Directorate liaise with the non-government education sector to ensure consistency in the descriptors of educational services.                                                                                                                                    | Agreed   | Common descriptors of education services are addressed as an activity of the Cross Sectoral Disability Education Steering Group.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 3. | The Committee recommends that the Education and Training Directorate confer with the providers and users of educational services to ACT students with disabilities regarding any proposed changes to service names.                                                                                                       | Agreed   | Changes to service descriptions are tabled at the meeting of the Disability Education Reference Group. Work has begun on the <i>Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools</i> Strategic Priority 3 - The development of a parent guide to disability education that describes services, processes and policies. This guide will incorporate a clear description to providers and users the names and functions of all disability education services. The parent/carer sub-committee of the Disability Reference Group is providing advice on the content of this guide. |
| 4. | The Committee recommends that Individual Learning Plans should be developed as a formal benchmarking tool which will assist in the refinement of teaching strategies at the classroom level and be able to measure the level of success of schools in the delivery of educational services to students with disabilities. | Agreed   | This recommendation has been incorporated into the <i>Excellence in Disability Education Strategic Plan 2010-2013</i> . The timeline for completion is 2011 - 2012.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

|    | Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Response | Implementation progress                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |          | Development and Youth Senior Officials (AEEYSOC) and the Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) for endorsement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 8. | The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review the <i>ACT Discrimination Act 1991</i> to ensure consistency with the provisions set out in the <i>Commonwealth Discrimination Act 1992</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Agreed   | The ACT Government made a commitment in the Canberra Plan to review the <i>Discrimination Act 1991</i> . In addition, the Human Rights Commission recently provided advice on the specific issue of reasonable accommodation. While it is not certain in advance of the results of the review that it is necessary to amend the current Act to ensure consistency with the Commonwealth Act, the Attorney General will ask that consistency with the Commonwealth Act be taken into account in the proposed review.                                                          |
| 9. | The Committee recommends that the Minister for Education and Training provide an explanation to the Legislative Assembly as to why the estimated average cost of providing education services to students with disabilities in mainstream public schools has not been subject to the same cost pressures as other service delivery costs and why the percentage growth in this cost between 1999 and 2008 is nearly half that of other percentage estimate average cost growth. | Noted    | <p>The total cost derived for this output class did not appropriately attribute the enrolment growth and the complexity of need of students with a disability. Some weighting of these cost pressures was attributed to output class 1.1 to 1.3.</p> <p>In 2009-10 financial statements, the enrolment growth and complexity in need (output class 1.4) is appropriately attributed to reflect the true cost of special education in both the mainstream and special schools. The cost of special education is reported through the Directorate's annual report process.</p> |

|     | Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Response       | Implementation progress                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| 12. | The Committee recommends that the Education and Training Directorate undertake exit interviews with students with disability and their parents or carers who move from mainstream to special schools to identify common concerns or reasons for student movements.                                                                                                                                                      | Agreed         | The Education and Training Directorate is developing a process, involving students with a disability and their parent or carers, to identify common concerns and/or reasons for students exiting a program, or moving from one program to another.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 13. | <p>The Committee recommends that the Education and Training Directorate provide details in the Annual Report of the delivery of special needs transport services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers of students accessing service;</li> <li>• Numbers of trips per annum;</li> <li>• Details of average and longest trips; and</li> <li>• Adverse events on transport services.</li> </ul> | Agreed in part | Number of students accessing service and the number of formal complaints will be published in the Annual Report 2010-2011.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 14. | The Committee recommends that the Education and Training Directorate provide information at enrolment about all available funding programs which may assist students with disabilities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Agreed         | Work has begun on the <i>Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools</i> Strategic Priority 3 - The development of a parent guide to disability education that describes services, processes and policies. The parent/carer sub-committee of the Disability Education Reference Group is providing advice on the content of this guide. The guide will include information about available funding programs that may assist students with a disability. The guide will be accessible to families prior to student enrolment. |
| 15. | The Committee recommends that as a part of the review of School-Based Management funding arrangements the ACT Government ensure that the quantity of, and processes established for allocating, funding for students with disabilities within government schools be clearly articulated and monitored by the                                                                                                            | Noted          | The Directorate will report ongoing investment in disability education through the budget process.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

|     | Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Response | Implementation progress                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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|     | Review of Special Education in the ACT.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |          | student centred appraisal of need and individual learning plan processes in order to align allocation of resources better with actual adjustments made in classrooms.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 19. | The Committee recommends that the students' needs for inclusive technology be assessed as a part of the Student Centred Appraisal of Need (SCAN) process.                                                                                                  | Agreed   | The Directorate's ILP guidelines are being reviewed and will identify appropriate inclusive technologies in addition to other curriculum adaptations, modified teaching strategies and designated resources as important tools to support the achievement student learning outcomes. The <i>Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010–2013</i> priority of developing an Inclusion Support Centre will embed Inclusive Technologies in core business of all Disability Education consultant teachers.     |
| 20. | The Committee recommends that Education and Training Directorate Network Coordinators be required to report on the audit of Individual Learning Plans from schools in their areas and that outcomes of the audit process be detailed in the Annual Report. | Noted    | <i>Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010–2013</i> Strategic Priority 2 outlines as a key action that accountability measures be put in place for ILPs by instituting an audit of ILP quality and implementation. The outcome of this audit will be shared with School Network Leaders and reported. The audit of ILPs will be reported against that achievement of all actions in the plan. The Directorate will continue to survey parents and carers about their satisfaction with the ILP process. |

|     | Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Response | Implementation progress                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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|     | ratios; providing initial training and professional development opportunities; and clarifying duties within the classroom in terms of maximising the learning outcomes for students with disabilities.                                                                                                  |          | role of learning support assistants (LSAs). This will include developing a system-wide set of guidelines on appropriate roles for LSAs. LSAs are able to access formal qualifications in Education Support – Certificates III and IV, through the qualified Registered Training Organisations such as the Canberra Institute of Technology. Additional professional learning for LSAs is also offered regularly throughout each year by the Education and Training Directorate. Schools have been encouraged to explore the use of LSAs in the classroom through the allocation of Innovative Practices grants. Schools will report on the outcomes of these grants. |
| 24. | The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training, in reviewing the role of Learning Support Assistants, review the need for additional Indigenous Education Officers and Indigenous Learning Support Assistants to support the learning of Indigenous students with disabilities. | Noted    | <p>The Directorate has an employment strategy with a fundamental outcome to increase the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including teachers and LSAs. Actions to achieve these are described and reported against in the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Matters Strategic Plan 2010-2013</i>. <i>Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010–2013</i> Strategic Priority 1 outlines actions to develop the quality of LSA provision, including improved skills and cultural competence through increased investment in professional learning.</p> <p>The philosophy of the</p>       |

|     | Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Response   | Implementation progress                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
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|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |            | <p>Community Services Directorate guides service development, including the implementation of planning practices, beginning as early as year 7.</p> <p>Disability ACT will continue to monitor the capacity of funded providers to deliver appropriate services to school leavers and re-assess resource allocation where appropriate.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 27. | <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that the formula used to determine the allocation of funding for post-school options is based on the number of students graduating each year so that adequate services can be provided.</p> | Not agreed | <p>The funding provided to each student graduating from high school is based on the needs of the individual and not on a 'formula' based on the number of students graduating in that particular year.</p> <p>The ACT Government provides support to assist young people with disability who are leaving school and who cannot presently participate in full time employment or full time education, or may not be able to do so in the future.</p> <p>To do this, Disability ACT offers two forms of specialist support for young people with disability leaving school:</p> <p><b>Transitional support</b></p> <p>The House With No Steps Transition Service provides school leavers who require time limited additional assistance to progress to their preferred vocation with information and assistance with planning and coordination. The Transition Service works with students in the final years of school (generally years 11 and 12)</p> |

|     | Recommendations                                                                                                                                                 | Response | Implementation progress                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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|     |                                                                                                                                                                 |          | <p>providers; students, and parents and oversees the totality of services to support post school transitions. This group has as a major priority the enhancement of community support pathways.</p> <p>The Joint Advisory Group will develop an information guide for parents on available pathways and will capture data about the relative use of these services, including attendance at the post school options expo and its efficacy. The post school options expo is one activity of a significant array of activities aimed at improving post-school transitions for students and their families. Incorporating the reporting of outcomes from the post school options expo into a broader report from the joint advisory group will provide a more complete picture of government and community links in supporting transitions to post-school life.</p> |
| 30. | The Education and Training Directorate assess the impact of the changed vocational education structure on the pathways available to students with disabilities. | Agreed   | <p>The Education and Training Directorate has contracted the House with No Steps to provide work experience and social placement opportunities for all students with a disability in ACT public schools in years 9 and 10. This will assist students in identifying appropriate pathways to post-school life.</p> <p>Students with a disability in the college system can access vocational courses on the same basis as students without a disability. The school is required to</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |