

2011

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

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS
REPORT: *NEEDS OF ACT STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY*, OCTOBER 2010**

Presented by

Mr Andrew Barr MLA

Minister for Education and Training

Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs –*Needs of ACT Students with a Disability.*

Government Response Overview

	Recommendations	Response
1.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training 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
2.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training liaise with the non-government education sector to ensure consistency in the descriptors of educational services.	Agreed
3.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training confer with the providers and users of educational services to ACT students with disabilities regarding any proposed changes to service names.	Agreed
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
5.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training investigate, develop and implement a system of objective educational measures of outcomes for students with a disability that would allow teaching strategies to be refined and system level planning to be undertaken.	Agreed
6.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training investigate and implement a process by which general assessment outcomes for students with disability can be disaggregated in the results from key assessment programs such as the National Assessment Program (NAPLAN).	Agreed
7.	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government examines the proposal set out in the Review of Special Education in the ACT to adopt a broader definition of disability that is consistent with discrimination law and that the Minister for Education and Training report back to the Legislative Assembly.	Agreed
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
9.	The Committee recommends that the Minister for Education and Training provide an explanation to the Legislative Assembly as to why	Noted

	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.	
10.	The Committee recommends that a schematic representation of the definition and funding model used to allocate general school and specialist education funds in the ACT be provided to all parents and carers as a part of the documentation relating to resources available for students with a disability.	Agreed
11.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training undertake a full review of the average cost associated with the delivery of education services to students with disability which provides better indications of: • Costs of developing individual learning plans for all students who are identified as having a disability; • Costs of assessing “reasonable adjustments” in the delivery of education services; • Costs of training and resourcing teachers to implement “reasonable adjustments” in the delivery of the current curriculum; and • Costs of maintaining Learning Support Units within mainstream schools.	Agreed in part
12.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training 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
13.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training provide details in the Annual Report of the delivery of special needs transport services including: • Numbers of students accessing service; • Numbers of trips per annum; • Details of average and longest trips; and • Adverse events on transport services.	Agreed in part
14.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training provide information at enrolment about all available funding programs which may assist students with disabilities.	Agreed
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 Department of Education and Training.	Noted

16.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training consider ways to improve the understanding of disability education services as a key indicator of administrative flexibility and responsiveness.	Agreed in part
17.	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government assess the best means of coordinating information sources for students with disabilities and their advocates.	Agreed
18.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training review the timing of the Student Centred Appraisal of Need (SCAN) review process and establish a mechanism to ensure that the funding approach to allocate resources to students with specified disabilities will be focused towards maximising learning outcomes as proposed by the 2009 Review of Special Education in the ACT.	Agreed
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
20.	The Committee recommends that Department of Education and Training 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
21.	The Committee recommends that the Minister for Education and Training review the use of consultants in government schools in light of the comments made in the 2009 Review of Special Education Services particularly in assessing the need for disability education consultants.	Agreed
22.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training consider the need for a pilot program within the ACT education system for alternative class-room based disability teaching models.	Noted
23.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training review the role of Learning Support Assistants with the structure of the disability education sector with a view to formalising the role; assessing the appropriate staffing 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.	Agreed in part
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
25.	The Committee recommends that the Minister for Education and Training provide a statement to the Legislative Assembly on the outcomes of the service agreement between the Department of	Noted

	Education and Training and Therapy ACT and the effectiveness of this agreement in redressing the gap in services identified in the Review of Special Education in the ACT.	
26.	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government monitor the progress of the post-school options support provider (currently the House with no Steps) in providing planning supports to students with disabilities from at least year 9 and, if necessary, provide additional resources to facilitate early planning of post-school pathways for all students with disabilities.	Agreed
27.	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.	Not agreed
28.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training include questions about access and effectiveness of post-school planning on the annual parent satisfaction survey.	Agreed
29.	The Department of Education and Training provide details of the external linkages established, including type of organisations, and the numbers of students attending the post-school options expo in the Annual Report.	Noted
30.	The Department of Education and Training assess the impact of the changed vocational education structure on the pathways available to students with disabilities.	Agreed

The ACT Department of Education and Training Strategic Plan 2010-2013: *Everyone Matters* articulates a vision for public schooling that young people in the ACT learn, thrive and are equipped with the skills to lead fulfilling, productive and responsible lives. Central to this vision are safe and inclusive schools. The *Review of Special Education in ACT Schools 2009* presented sixty four options to guide the provision of service to students with a disability attending ACT public schools.

The Department of Education and Training's (the Department) *Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010–2013*, launched in September 2010 was developed in consultation with the peak representative advisory body to the Chief Executive of the Department of Education and Training, the Disability Education Reference Group, using the *Review of Special Education in ACT Schools 2009* as a source document. The Plan is published on the Department's website.

Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010 – 2013 is based on the foundation principles of Excellence, Accountability and Fairness. The Plan distilled five priorities to describe what Disability Education needs to achieve, to further improve the learning outcomes of students with a disability:

- staff are trained qualified and well supported
- Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) reflect high quality, inclusive adjustments, are future focussed and accountable
- schools and families develop strong and positive partnerships to support students
- there is a whole-of-government approach to student learning outcomes
- schools/staff develop networks and work with the community.

These priorities described within the plan will be delivered through practical and measurable actions. The outcomes of these actions will be monitored by the Disability Education Reference Group, reported annually and published on the Department's website.

The responses to the inquiry into the needs of ACT students with a disability are framed in the context of the *Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010–2013* and its implementation and reporting processes.

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training 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

Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Priority 5 has as a key action the establishment of a Cross Sectoral Disability Education Steering Group to coordinate agreed actions from the Review of Special Education. This group has been formed with representation from the Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Office and the ACT Association of Independent Schools. It has met and developed terms of reference and set key strategic actions to be achieved across all sectors. A Cross Sector Education Working Group has also been established to operationalise these strategic goals of the Steering Group.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training 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.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training confer with the providers and users of educational services to ACT students with disabilities regarding any proposed changes to service names.

Agreed

The Disability Education Reference Group is a peak advisory body to the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Education and Training on disability education matters. This group has representation from both education providers and users of education services. Changes to service descriptions will be tabled at the meeting of this group. In regard to the adoption of disability nomenclature, the department has already adopted this in consultation with the Disability Education Reference Group in the Review of Special Education in ACT Schools. The *Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools* Strategic Priority 3 outlines as a key action 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.

RECOMMENDATION 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

The *Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools* Strategic Priority 2 has as a key action to refine the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) process to better reflect the nature of actions required of schools to allow student to access and participate in their curriculum. This refinement of ILP practice is expected to enhance the ILP process so that it might better inform curriculum planning. The refinement of the ILP process will lead to more standard practices in developing ILPs across, which will in turn allow more valid aggregation of ILP achievement data. It is planned to aggregate the achievement of ILP goals at a system's level as standard practices allow for a valid analysis.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training investigate, develop and implement a system of objective educational measures of outcomes for students with a disability that would allow teaching strategies to be refined and system level planning to be undertaken.

Agreed

The Department of Education and Training is engaged in the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority working group formed to investigate and provide input into the Australian Curriculum to ensure it reflects education outcomes for all students including students with disabilities. It is envisaged that the outcome of this process will be a system of nationally consistent standards of student learning outcomes applicable to students with disabilities that will allow teaching strategies to be refined and system level planning to be undertaken.

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training investigate and implement a process by which general assessment outcomes for students with disability can be disaggregated in the results from key assessment programs such as the National Assessment Program (NAPLAN).

Agreed

NAPLAN results for students with disabilities is already disaggregated and used to monitor student progress where there is possible (refer to the ACT Government Submission: *Inquiry into the needs of ACT students with a disability* – Section 3 Educational Outcomes and Attachment 12). Standard assessment programs are not always valid assessment instruments for all students with a disability and in these circumstances it is projected that aggregation of achievement of ILP goals.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government examines the proposal set out in the Review of Special Education in the ACT to adopt a broader definition of disability that is consistent with discrimination law and that the Minister for Education and Training report back to the Legislative Assembly.

Agreed

The Department of Education and Training is participating in the National Definition of Students with Disability Expert Advisory Group formed by Councils of Australian Government. In 2011 a national definition consistent with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* will be trialled across Australia including a representation of ACT Schools. The results of this trial will be put before the Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Senior Officials (AEEYSOC) and the Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) for endorsement. A report outlining the government position on the adoption of the national definition can be provided to the Legislative Assembly following this trial.

RECOMMENDATION 8

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review the *ACT Discrimination Act 1991* to ensure consistency with the provisions set out in the *Commonwealth Discrimination Act 1992*.

Agreed

The ACT Government made a commitment in the Canberra Plan to review the *Discrimination Act 1991*. 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.

RECOMMENDATION 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

There has been an increase in enrolment of students with a disability in both the mainstream and special schools as well an increase in the complexity in student

need. The total cost derived for this output class did not appropriately attribute the enrolment growth and the complexity of need. Some weighting of these cost pressures was attributed to output class 1.1 to 1.3.

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 Department's annual report process.

RECOMMENDATION 10

The Committee recommends that a schematic representation of the definition and funding model used to allocate general school and specialist education funds in the ACT be provided to all parents and carers as a part of the documentation relating to resources available for students with a disability.

Agreed

The *Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Priority 3* outlines as a key action the development of a parent guide to disability education that describes services, processes and policies. This guide will incorporate a schematic representation of the funding model used to allocated additional resources to schools to support students with disabilities. Additional funding for students with disabilities is provided to schools in order to make the appropriate adjustments for individual students to achieve the goals outlined in their ILP. The approach to the provision of educational adjustments to achieve these goals and how funding is deployed to achieve this is a decision made by the school and will also include resources universally deployed at school, such as class teacher resources and school counsellor resources.

RECOMMENDATION 11

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training undertake a full review of the average cost associated with the delivery of education services to students with disability which provides better indications of:

- Costs of developing individual learning plans for all students who are identified as having a disability;
- Costs of assessing "reasonable adjustments" in the delivery of education services;
- Costs of training and resourcing teachers to implement "reasonable adjustments" in the delivery of the current curriculum; and
- Costs of maintaining Learning Support Units within mainstream schools.

Agreed in part

The *Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010-2013 Strategic Priority 2* aims to integrate the student centred appraisal of need and individual learning plan processes in order to align allocation of resources better with actual adjustments made in classrooms. This will require a review of actual average costs of common activities to support reasonable adjustments. The

highly individualised nature of student need however means that some activities will not be validly described as averages. The cost of each Learning Support Unit in mainstream schools is already known. However, there is frequently a significant adjustment in funding above the base funding to Learning Support Units dependent on the nature and mix of the students attending the unit that would make a simple average in this case invalid.

RECOMMENDATION 12

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training 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 Department of Education and Training will develop a process, involving students with a disability and their parent or carers, to identify common concerns and/or reasons for students moving from mainstream to specialist schools.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training provide details in the Annual Report of the delivery of special needs transport services including:

- Numbers of students accessing service;
- Numbers of trips per annum;
- Details of average and longest trips; and
- Adverse events on transport services.

Agreed in part

The Department can provide in the Annual Report details of the delivery of special needs transport including number of students accessing service, number of trips per annum and the number of formal complaints relating to transport service.

The Department does not hold information relating to average or longest trips. This information is not currently held by the service providers and the collection of this data would impose a significant administrative burden on the provider and require renegotiation of contracts. The relevant service standard for providers is that no single journey should be longer than 75 minutes. However this is significantly influenced by traffic conditions.

RECOMMENDATION 14

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training provide information at enrolment about all available funding programs which may assist students with disabilities.

Agreed

The *Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Priority 3* outlines as a key action the development of a parent guide to disability education that describes services, processes and policies. This guide will include information about available programs that may assist students with a disability. The guide will be accessible to families prior to student enrolment. The Students with a Disability Post School Transition Joint Advisory Group co-chaired by senior officers from the Departments of Education and Training and Disability, Housing and Community Services have identified the development and continued maintenance of a parent information guide for all funding programs available to support families of students with disability as a priority for implementation in 2011.

RECOMMENDATION 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 Department of Education and Training.

Noted

The Department will report in ongoing investment in disability education through the budget process.

RECOMMENDATION 16

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training consider ways to improve the understanding of disability education services as a key indicator of administrative flexibility and responsiveness.

Agreed in part

Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010–2013 sets the strategic direction for disability education. The Department will report against the actions detailed in the plan. Both flexibility and responsiveness and understanding of disability education services will be outcomes of the plan. However it is not agreed that an understanding of disability education services is a key indicator of flexibility or responsiveness.

RECOMMENDATION 17

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government assess the best means of coordinating information sources for students with disabilities and their advocates.

Agreed

Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010–2013 Strategic Priority 4 outlines a whole-of-government approach to achieving student learning outcomes. An action within this priority is to work collaboratively across

government to implement the *ACT Government Policy Framework for Children and Young People with a Disability and their Families*. The Department is liaising closely with the Catholic and Independent school sectors through the Cross Sectoral Disability Education Steering Group. The Students with Disability Post School Transition Joint Advisory Group co-chaired by senior officers from the Departments of Education and Training and Disability, Housing and Community Services have identified the development and continued maintenance of a parent information guide for all funding programs available to support families of students with disability as a priority.

RECOMMENDATION 18

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training review the timing of the Student Centred Appraisal of Need (SCAN) review process and establish a mechanism to ensure that the funding approach to allocate resources to students with specified disabilities will be focused towards maximising learning outcomes as proposed by the 2009 Review of Special Education in the ACT.

Agreed

The *Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Priority 2* outlines as a key action that the Student Centred Appraisal of Need and the ILP processes are integrated to align resource allocation with actual adjustments. Refining and integrating the Student Centred Appraisal of Need and ILP processes will increase the focus on a student's curriculum needs and associated required adjustments.

RECOMMENDATION 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

Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010–2013 Strategic Priority 2 outlines aligning the Student Centred Appraisal of Need and the ILP processes. Achievement of this strategic priority will allow inclusive technologies to be identified in future planning process. Students' ILPs should 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 Department's ILP Guidelines will be amended to include reference to an assessment of inclusive technologies as appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION 20

The Committee recommends that Department of Education and Training 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

Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010–2013 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 Department will continue to survey parents and carers about their satisfaction with the ILP process.

RECOMMENDATION 21

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Education and Training review the use of consultants in government schools in light of the comments made in the 2009 Review of Special Education Services particularly in assessing the need for disability education consultants.

Agreed

Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010–2013 Strategic Priority 1 has as a key action to reconfigure services for student with a disability in an Inclusion Support Centre. Consultant teachers from this team will focus on building the capacity of teachers to support students with a disability in mainstream schools through the use of evidence-based teaching strategies and curriculum differentiation to support students' ILPs. The development of the Inclusion Support Centre will be informed by the principles articulated in the *Review of Special Education in ACT Schools 2009*.

RECOMMENDATION 22

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training consider the need for a pilot program within the ACT education system for alternative class-room based disability teaching models.

Noted

The Department of Education and Training provides a range of educational options for students with disabilities including specialist schools, learning support units and centres, specific learning support units for students with autism and mainstream education with additional support. Professional learning in the use of effective, evidence-based teaching strategies to meet the needs of students with disabilities is regularly provided to all teachers. Inclusion support program teachers' consultants work with schools and one on one with individual class teachers, coaching and mentoring schools and teachers in adopting best practice pedagogy for students with a disability. In addition schools will be encouraged to develop innovative targeted programs for students with additional support needs and report on the outcomes of these trials.

RECOMMENDATION 23

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training review the role of Learning Support Assistants with the structure of the disability education sector with a view to formalising the role; assessing the appropriate staffing 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.

Agreed in part

Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010–2013 Strategic Priority 1 outlines as a key action the clarification of the role of learning support assistants (LSAs). This will include developing a system-wide set of guidelines on appropriate roles for LSAs. However given the diversity of individual student needs and the variety of models schools tailor to meet the needs of students with disabilities it is impractical to set explicit staffing ratios. LSAs can now 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 Department of Education and Training.

RECOMMENDATION 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

The Department 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 *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Matters Strategic Plan 2010-2013*. *Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010–2013* Strategic Priority 1 outlines actions to develop the quality of LSA provision, including improved skills and cultural competence through increased investment in professional learning.

The philosophy of the Indigenous Education Officer role has been to develop the skills and attitudes of all employees to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and not to target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers to work only with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Any consideration regarding a change to this approach would be made only after significant consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Group.

RECOMMENDATION 25

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Education and Training provide a statement to the Legislative Assembly on the outcomes of the service agreement between the Department of Education and Training and Therapy ACT and the effectiveness of this agreement in redressing the gap in services identified in the Review of Special Education in the ACT.

Noted

Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010–2013 Strategic Priority 4 has as one of the actions, to establish a service agreement with Therapy ACT for therapy services in schools. The Department will report annually against the performance measures identified in the plan to the Chief Executive of the Department and the Disability Education Reference Group. This report will be published on the Department web site. Outcome of the Service agreement will also be reported through the Department's annual report process.

RECOMMENDATION 26

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government monitor the progress of the post-school options support provider (currently the House with no Steps) in providing planning supports to students with disabilities from at least year 9 and, if necessary, provide additional resources to facilitate early planning of post-school pathways for all students with disabilities.

Agreed

Disability ACT will continue to monitor the progress of the service provider through the provisions of the funding agreement.

A joint governance group consisting of senior departmental staff from the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services guides service development, including the implementation of planning practices, beginning as early as year 7.

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.

RECOMMENDATION 27

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.

Not Agreed

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.

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.

To do this, Disability ACT offers two forms of specialist support for young people with disability leaving school:

1. **Transitional support:** 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) and support continues for up to three years after the person leaves school; and
2. **Ongoing support:** is provided to people with high support needs who require funded supports to undertake meaningful day time activities after they leave school
3. Access to these services is based on an individual assessment of a person's support needs that is determined by interviews with the young person, their family, and their school teachers.
4. To be eligible for these services the young person must realistically not be able to move to further education; open employment or be eligible for assistance from a Disability Employment Network provider. In addition the young person must:
 1. have a disability as defined under the *ACT Disability Services Act 1991* and the relevant Commonwealth, State/Territory funding agreement;
 2. have a disability that is attributable to an intellectual, cognitive, neurological, sensory, psychiatric or physical impairment, or a combination of these impairments. The person with a disability will need support due to a substantive reduction of their capacity for communication, social interaction, learning or mobility. The disability is permanent or likely to be permanent and may be of a chronic episodic nature; and
 3. be a current resident of the ACT.

RECOMMENDATION 28

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training include questions about access and effectiveness of post-school planning on the annual parent satisfaction survey.

Agreed

The Department will include questions about post-school options planning in the annual parent satisfaction survey. As all ILPs will be required to include a transition goal it is appropriate that the survey of effectiveness of ILPs contained within the parent satisfaction survey be adapted to include an element that specifically addresses transition planning including post school transition.

RECOMMENDATION 29

The Department of Education and Training provide details of the external linkages established, including type of organisations, and the numbers of students attending the post-school options expo in the Annual Report.

Noted

Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010–2013 Strategic Priority 4 outlines actions for whole of government collaboration. The Students with Disability Post School Transition Joint Advisory Group co-chaired by senior officers of Disability ACT and the Department consists of members of those departments; service providers; students, and parents and oversee the totality of services to support post school transitions. This group has as a major priority the enhancement of community support pathways.

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.

RECOMMENDATION 30

The Department of Education and Training assess the impact of the changed vocational education structure on the pathways available to students with disabilities.

Agreed

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 make reasonable adjustments to support these students. The two specialist secondary schools, Black Mountain School and Woden School also offer vocational options for their students.

Planning for post school options occurs through the ILP process and will often include integration of some aspects of further training. Prior to leaving school, students are connected with the range of service providers that can assist students to make a positive transition to post-school life. Senior managers from International

and Tertiary Education branch of the Department are key members of the Students with Disability Post School Transition Joint Advisory Group and assist this group in assessing the impact of changes in the vocational education structure on pathways for students with disability.