

# 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

## Ministerial Advisory Committee: Children and Students with Disability

Report for the Minister for Education and Child Development



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# Introduction

## Role and purpose

The Ministerial Advisory Committee: Children and Students with Disability (MAC:CSWD) was established by the South Australian Minister for Education in 1989.

The role and purpose of the committee is to:

- ensure the equitable, transparent and accountable distribution of Commonwealth and State money through State Government funding to eligible organisations that support the care and education of children and students with disability in early years programs, child care, preschools and schools across the three education sectors in South Australia
- support the capacity of non-government organisations to provide services to children and students with disability in early years programs, child care, preschools and schools across the three education sectors in South Australia
- undertake projects and provide advice on matters concerning the care and education of children and students with disability as requested by the Minister for Education and Child Development.

## Context statement

MAC: CSWD is supported by the Office of Non-Government Schools and Services, a unit of the Office for Strategy and Performance in the Department for Education and Child Development.

### **Our vision**

Children and students with disability achieve in their learning communities acquiring skills and attitudes for life-long learning and citizenship.

### **Our mission**

To ensure equitable and efficient allocation of State Government funding to eligible organisations providing care and education-related services to children and students with disability across the three education sectors, and to support our stakeholders on matters concerning the education and care of children and students with disability.

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## **Our values**

### **Respect**

Our behaviour recognises the values, diversity and contribution of individuals.

### **Diligence**

We are careful and persistent in our application and effort and strive for continuous improvement.

### **Integrity**

We act honestly and ethically.

### **Fairness**

We are unbiased and impartial in all our undertakings.

### **Transparency**

Our systems and decision-making processes are understandable and open to scrutiny.

### **Connectedness**

Our work is relevant to and supportive of our stakeholders.

### **Accountability**

We are accountable for our decisions and actions.

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# Ministerial Advisory Committee: Children and Students with Disability (MAC:CSWD) membership

## Standing committee

Members of MAC: CSWD are appointed by the Minister for Education and Child Development.

The term of appointment for 2014 was two years and expired in December 2015.

Members are chosen for their knowledge and experience in relation to children and students with disability. The committee consists of educators representing the three education sectors, parents, disability professionals, a student plus nominees of the Minister for Education and Child Development, education unions and professional associations.

As a rule the standing committee meets once a month. In 2015 the committee met seven times. There were no meetings held in January, March, April, June and July. The first meeting was held in February.

## Membership

Ms Margaret Wallace, Chairperson

Dr Mary Bambacas, Deputy Chairperson (parent)

Ms Jackie Ah Kit, Minister's Nominee (Aboriginal people) (resigned from the committee August 2015)

Ms Alice Duffield, Association of Independent Schools of SA

Ms Sue Bailey, Independent Education Union (SA)

Dr Kerry Bissaker, Minister's Nominee (professional)

Ms Vivian Cagliuso, Minister's Nominee (parent)

Ms Elizabeth Cohen, National Disability Services, Sub Committee: Children, Young People and their Families (SA Branch)

Ms Jillian Denys, Australian Association of Special Education (AASE) SA Chapter

Ms Stephanie Grant, Catholic Education SA

Ms Aimee Harwood, Minister's Nominee (student)

Ms Nicole Kyrkou, Department for Education and Child Development, School Years

Ms Deirdre Le Maistre, Australian Education Union (SA Branch)

Ms Deborah McInnes, Department for Education and Child Development, Early Childhood

Ms Rennie Strawbridge, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion

Ms Pamela Linke, Early Childhood Australia (SA Branch)

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## **Funding Approval Group**

The Funding Approval Group is a subgroup of MAC:CSWD that oversees the annual funding process. Final decisions about funding recommendations are made by the standing committee.

### **Membership**

Ms Margaret Wallace, Chairperson

Dr Mary Bambacas, Deputy Chairperson (parent)

Dr Kerry Bissaker, Flinders University, Minister's Nominee (professional)

Ms Alice Duffield, Association of Independent Schools of SA

Ms Stephanie Grant, Catholic Education SA

Ms Nicole Kyrkou, Department for Education and Child Development, School Years

### **Funding Approval Group non-members**

Mr Skye Yuill, MAC:CSWD Acting Executive Officer

Ms Jane Fairlie, Project and Policy Officer

Ms Carolyn Parker, Office of Non-Government Schools and Services (ONGSS) Business Manager (May 2015 - Ongoing)

Ms Audra Field, Office of Non-Government Schools and Services (ONGSS) Acting Business Manager (February- May 2015)

Members of the Standing Committee may be asked to attend Funding Approval Group meetings when necessary. Funding Approval Group meetings usually follow the Standing Committee meetings. In 2015 the Funding Approval Group met seven times.

### **Secretariat staff**

Mr Skye Yuill, Acting Executive Officer

Ms Maria DeFazio, Administrative Services Officer

Ms Jane Fairlie, Project and Policy Officer, (commenced March 2015)

Ms Kerry Pienaar, Project and Policy Officer

Ms Alexandra Christopher, Project and Policy Officer (commenced August 2015)

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# Funding

## Overview of funding process

The Minister for Education and Child Development is responsible for the allocation of State Government special education grants to eligible organisations providing education and therapy related services for children and students with disability in South Australia.

Eligible non-government organisations have in the past been able to apply for grants under the non-government centres support element of the Australian Government Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs program (Schools Assistance [*Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity*] Act 2004). Funding for this element is now part of specific purpose payments to South Australia under the national education agreement between the states and territories and the Australian Government. Grants are allocated under the National Equity program.

The committee administers the allocation of National Equity program grants to non-government organisations on behalf of the Minister for Education and Child Development. In addition, the committee administers State Government grants on behalf of the Minister, which are available to provide additional support for children and students with disability with very specific needs.

### Funding allocations

#### National Equity program grants

Each year organisations applying for National Equity program grants submit a written report to MAC:CSWD outlining child/student numbers and the levels of service provided directly to the child/student and to their care or education provider. The data submitted represent services provided in the preceding financial year and this data is applied to the committee's funding formula.

In 2009 MAC:CSWD reviewed its funding model in response to a request from the three education sectors, which sought more intense direct service for children and students with high needs at their early years program, preschools and schools. This review was conducted over a period of 18 months in consultation with education sector representatives and non-government organisations that provide services.

The current funding model came into effect from 2011. It was agreed that grants should continue to be allocated based on retrospective service delivery and the amount would depend on the level and type of service provided by the organisations. An exception was made in one case – where a base grant was allocated to a small early years intervention program in 2015.

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The funding model consists of three elements:

- **General support**, which measures the number of children and students who have received any type of service. Thirty per cent of the total available funding is allocated to this component.
- **Specific service**, which measures the amount of time a direct service has been provided to a child or student in minutes. Organisations must achieve a minimum of 120 minutes of early years intervention service per child per semester, or 360 minutes of school support service per student per semester, for their service minutes to be counted. This structure is designed to encourage a high level of intensive, direct support. Sixty per cent of the total available funding is allocated to this component.
- **Outreach service**, which measures the number of children and students who live in rural and regional areas who have received specific service of any duration. Ten per cent of the total available funding is allocated to this component.

Grant allocations to non-government organisations fluctuate on an annual basis. They depend on the finite total budget for the program and the level of service provided to individual children and students by each of the organisations funded.

The funding provided to organisations is targeted to provide learning and development opportunities for children with disability who are below school age to assist their participation in an early years program and to prepare them for entry into preschools or schools, and to assist school-aged children with disability by improving their participation and attainment in educational programs.

The allocation of funds for the National Equity program for the 2015 calendar year was \$4,345,766.

### **State Government grants**

Three programs were eligible for State Government grants in 2014, namely the Women's and Children's Health Network's Access Assistant program, Families SA's Out of Home Care Tutoring program and the Joint Sector Intensive and Crisis Support program.

The Access Assistant program supports children with severe physical disability and/or complex health care needs in preschools and schools across the three education sectors in South Australia. Without this program many children would not be able to attend their school. The South Australian Government wholly funds the program. In 2015 the program received \$2,866,142.

The Out of Home Care Tutoring program funding provides assistance to children and young people who have been assessed as having disability, are living in out-of-home situations and require extra tutoring to participate in their school curriculum. Assessment for tutoring services must be tied to a negotiated education plan (NEP) or the equivalent in a non-government school. The South Australian Government wholly funds this service. In 2015 the amount of funding allocated was \$78,506.

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In 2015 the funding and administrative responsibility for the Families SA Children In Out Of Home Care Tutoring Services was transferred from MAC:CSWD to Families SA, DECD.

MAC:CSWD manages funding for the Joint Sector Intensive and Crisis Support program, which is accessible to the three education sectors in South Australia. This funding provides school-based support for children and students during a period of unexpected need, often due to complex health support requirements on return to school after hospitalisation. An amount of \$50,000 was allocated to support this program in 2015.

### **Total State Government special education grant allocations**

The total amount allocated in 2015 was \$7,320,414.

Organisations/programs that received grants in 2015 consisted of:

- 8 non-government organisations offering early years intervention and/or school support programs (see note below)
- Women's and Children's Health Network's Access Assistant program
- Department for Education and Child Development Families SA Out of Home Care Tutoring program
- Joint Sector Intensive and Crisis Support program.

Note: Funding to seven of the eight non-government organisations was allocated retrospectively (as described earlier). The basis of funding for calendar year 2015 was data on services provided from the beginning of Term 3, 2013 (July) to the end of Term 2, 2014 (June). The remaining non-government organisation that provided an Early Years Intervention program was provided with a base grant.

TABLE 1: 2015 Funding allocations

State Government Special Education Grants for 2015			
State Government Grant (for January to December 2015)	\$ (GST ex)	Total	
Women's and Children's Health Network Access Assistant program	\$2,866,142		
Joint sector intensive & crisis support	\$30,000		
Families SA Out of Home Care Tutoring program	\$78,506	<b>\$2,974,648</b>	
National Equity Program Grants (for January to December 2015)	\$ (GST ex)	Totals	
Autism SA	Early intervention	\$618,023	
	School support	\$1,004,217	<b>\$1,622,240</b>
Novita Children's Services	Early intervention	\$1,098,735	
	School support	\$540,955	<b>\$1,639,690</b>
Down Syndrome SA	Early intervention	\$24,328	
	School support	\$45,515	<b>\$69,843</b>
Cora Barclay Centre	Early intervention	\$149,054	
	School support	\$109,492	<b>\$258,546</b>
Townsend House	Early intervention	\$98,263	
	School support	\$51,212	<b>\$149,475</b>
Guide Dogs Association	Early intervention	\$8,761	
	School support	\$96,652	<b>\$105,413</b>
Inclusive Directions	Early intervention	<b>\$410,559</b>	
Miriam High Special Needs Centre, Port Augusta Early Intervention		<b>\$70,000</b>	
Joint sector intensive and crisis support		<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$4,345,766</b>

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## Number of children and students supported

Data on the number of children and students registered and who received services from July 2014 to June 2015 was collected during 2015. These data were used to inform funding for the upcoming year (2016).

Based on an average over four terms and for all funded non-government organisations, there were 3763 children registered for early years intervention services and 9033 students for school support services.

Of these (averaged over the four terms), 3060 children and students received a service, of which 1259 children (41%), received an early years intervention service, and 1801 students (59%) received a school support service. Overall, approximately 16% less children and students received a service than in the previous year. This drop can be attributed to service providers delivering more services via National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funding and less via MAC:SWD funding.

During the same period of time, the Women's and Children's Health Network's Access Assistant program provided services, on average, to 211 children and students with complex health needs. In 2015, 16 children and students were supported through the Joint Sector Intensive and Crisis Support program for 545 hours in total.

Overall, on average, a total of 3287 children and students with disability received additional services to support their early years development and participation in educational and care services from July 2014 to June 2015.

TABLE 2: Average program numbers (based on service provision data provided from Term 3, 2014 - Term 2, 2015)

Non-government organisations	No. of children receiving a service	
Autism SA Early Years Intervention	253	
Autism SA School Support	806	1059
Novita Children's Services Early Years Intervention	334	
Novita Children's Services School Support	649	983
Down Syndrome Society Early Years Intervention	20	
Down Syndrome Society School Support	68	88
Cora Barclay Centre Early Years Intervention	30	
Cora Barclay Centre School Support	89	119
Townsend House Early Years Intervention	86	
Townsend House School Support	101	187
Guide Dogs Association Early Years Intervention	14	
Guide Dogs Association School Support	88	102
Inclusive Directions Early Years Intervention		490
Miriam High Special Needs Centre (Port Augusta)		32
<b>Sub total</b>		<b>3,060</b>
Other programs	No. of children receiving a service	
Women's and Children's Health Network Access Assistant program		211
Joint Sector Intensive and Crisis Support program		16
Sub total		227
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,287</b>

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# Projects

Each year, the Ministerial Advisory Committee: Children and Students with Disability (MAC:CSWD) undertakes a number of statewide projects that have been approved by the Minister for Education and Child Development. These projects may be initiated by the Minister or suggested by the committee and approved by the Minister.

Projects focus on children and students with disability and their education and care services. Project groups are convened for most projects and members are chosen for their experience and expertise on a particular topic. Summaries of the work undertaken in 2015 are provided below. Once approved by the Minister, reports from project work are made available at the committee's website [www.macswd.sa.edu.au](http://www.macswd.sa.edu.au).

## **Funding for disability services (continuing project)**

The Ministerial Advisory Committee: Children and Students with Disability (MAC: CSWD) allocates funding to government and non-government services to support the development of children and students with disability through early years intervention programs, and at childcare, preschools and schools.

During 2013 MAC:CSWD began enquiries with service providers about their funding sources and service guidelines, in light of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and proposed changes to Australian Government funding to schools (Better Schools Plan). In 2015 with the Minister's approval, MAC:CSWD continued its inquiry about the impact of changes to funding for children and students with disability and instigated discussions with key stakeholders to ensure a seamless transition in funding and service delivery where applicable. Although the NDIS trial phase ends on June 30 2016 issues pertaining to funding for disability services for children and students in South Australia are still being resolved.

## **Documenting effective building practices for children and students with a disability (continuing project)**

In 2014 the Minister for Education and Child Development approved a project to inquire about access and participation for children and students with disability in new, refurbished and renovated care and education facilities. A resource to assist with the planning and design of building developments for children and students with disability is being developed.

In 2015 additional data was gathered around refurbished and renovated facilities for children and students with disability and the impact of facility design on the access and participation of Aboriginal children and students with disability. MAC:CSWD staff undertook a comprehensive analysis of data gathered which provided the key findings for a report which has been provided to the Minister.

MAC:CSWD received approval from the Minister to develop a resource to assist with the planning and design of building developments for children and students with disability. The project will continue in 2016 to allow MAC:CSWD to design, develop and distribute an online resource that can be used by key people involved in the planning and design of new, renovated and refurbished facilities.

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### **Same first day for children with disability and/or additional needs (new project)**

In 2014, schools of the South Australian Department for Education and Child Development (DECD), Catholic Education SA (CESA) and some independent schools in the state enacted a new policy for all children to begin school on the same day once per year.

In 2015 the Minister for Education and Child Development gave approval for MAC:CSWD to inquire with families of children with disability and educators about their experience of the Same First Day strategy.

The project will continue in 2016 to allow for further consultation with preschools in regional areas, sites with high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments, and with Catholic and Independent education sectors. A report will be provided to the Minister in 2016.

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# *Additional work*

The Ministerial Advisory Committee: Children and Students with Disability (MAC:CSWD) undertakes additional work on matters concerning the care and education of children and students with disability for the Minister.

The committee provides consultation on policy and legislation advocating for children and students with disability, for example in 2015 the committee delivered feedback to DECD on the DECD Design Standards.

MAC:CSWD secretariat staff represent the committee on reference groups and working parties that are relevant to the committee's work, for example the National Disability Services: NDIS Children's Trial Site Working Party and the National Disability Coordination Officer Program Reference Group. This work provides opportunities to engage with stakeholders, share key information and collaborate.

In 2015 at the Minister's request, MAC:CSWD began a project to extend the installation of augmented hearing technology, such as Soundfield systems, in South Australian schools and preschools. In 2016 MAC:CSWD will coordinate a one-off funding program on behalf of the Minister to extend the installation of Soundfield systems.

During 2015 MAC:CSWD continued to work with representatives from the three education sectors and staff of the Domiciliary Equipment Service (DES), the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion to establish a single equipment pool for children and students with disability to be used across the three education sectors in South Australia.

MAC:CSWD also worked on a project to investigate the extent to which students with disability participate in and achieve completion of schooling in South Australia, and a project investigating professional learning opportunities for the team of teacher and school support officers (SSOs) working with children and students with Autism. These projects will also continue in 2016.

The committee continues to distribute the MAC:CSWD developed child protection booklet *A Guide to Protecting Children and Young People with Disability and Preventing Sexual Abuse*, which is a companion to the Families SA booklet, *Protecting Children and Young People with Disability: A Booklet for Parents and Carers*. Requests continue to come for the booklet from South Australia and other states, but also from organisations in the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The Boards and Committees: Interim Report published by the Premier recommended that MAC:CSWD be maintained and that it should explore new ways of managing engagement with the community.

In 2015 MAC:CSWD provided stakeholders with a proposed new structure for the committee and sought feedback. MAC:CSWD also reviewed its consultation processes. Work continues on the redesign of the committee in accordance with the Premier's review.

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# *Other information*

## **Committee leadership and secretariat staffing**

There were no changes in the committee's leadership during 2015. Ms Margaret Wallace continued as Chairperson, with Dr Mary Bambacas as Deputy Chairperson.

Mr Skye Yuill continued in the position of Executive Officer (full-time) in an acting capacity.

Ms Kerry Pienaar continued as Project and Policy Officer (0.7 FTE).

Ms Maria DeFazio continued as Administration Officer (0.6 FTE).

Ms Jane Fairlie commenced as a Project and Policy Officer (0.8 FTE).

Ms Alexandra Christopher commenced as a Project and Policy Officer (0.8 FTE)

## **Conferences and presentations**

Ms Kerry Pienaar attended the Autism SA workshop 'No More Meltdowns: Effective Interventions for Behavioural and Social Challenges' on 29 June 2015

Ms Kerry Pienaar and Ms Jane Fairlie attended the Office of the Senior Practitioner's Development Session 'Bringing Positive Behaviour out of the Filing Cabinet and into the Frontline of Service Delivery' on 30 June 2015.

Ms Kerry Pienaar, Ms Alexandra Christopher and Ms Jane Fairlie attended the Research in Special Education (RISE) Conference in Adelaide on 13 November 2015.

# *Future activities*

The Committee's name has been changed to the Ministerial Advisory Committee: Children and Students with Disability to reflect current terminology and the Committee's focus on both the early years and school years. The structure of the Committee will be streamlined with membership being reduced from sixteen to eleven members. Under the new structure the Committee will continue to undertake consultative processes informed by the Better Together Principles of Engagement to gain the input of stakeholders and community.

## **Projects for 2016**

Project work will continue on the following projects in 2015:

- Funding for disability services (continuing project)
- Documenting effective building practices for children and students with a disability (continuing project)
- Same first day for children with a disability (continuing project)
- Participation and retention of students with a disability (continuing project)
- Training opportunity for teachers and school support officers of children with Autism project (continuing project)
- Single equipment pool for children and students with a disability (continuing project)
- Minister's Specialist Sound Technology Grants 2016 (continuing project).

