Further information about the Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities is available on the Website at: http://www.macswd.sa.gov.au
# Contents

1. **Introduction**  
   - Role and Purpose  
   - Context Statement  
   - Committee Membership

2. **Funding**  
   - Overview of Funding Process  
   - Australian/State Government Grants

3. **Projects**  
   - Aboriginal Students with Disabilities – Otitis Media and Conductive Hearing Loss – Information Strategy
   - Children and Students with Disabilities and Mental Health Problems

4. **Activities in 2006**  
   - Committee Leadership and Secretariat Staffing  
   - Funding Processes  
   - Asperger Conference

5. **Future**  
   - Evolving the Funding Process  
   - Projects for 2007
     - Children and Students with Disabilities and Mental Health Problems
     - Aboriginal Students with Disabilities – Otitis Media and Conductive Hearing Loss: Information Strategy
1. Introduction

Role and Purpose

The Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities (MAC:SWD) was established by the South Australian Minister for Education and Children's Services in 1989. The role and purpose of the Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities is to:

- Ensure the equitable, transparent and accountable distribution of Australian Government Non-Government Centres Support grants (Capital and Recurrent) for supplementary funding to eligible organisations, which support the education and care of children and students with disabilities in early intervention programs, preschools and schools across the three education sectors in South Australia.

- Ensure the equitable, transparent and accountable distribution of State Government supplementary funding to support the education and care of children and students with disabilities across the three education sectors in South Australia.

- Support the capacity of non-government organisations to provide services to children and students with disabilities in early intervention programs, preschools and schools across the three education sectors in South Australia.

- Undertake projects and provide support on matters concerning the education and care of children and students with disabilities as requested by the Minister for Education and Children's Services.

Context Statement

Our Vision
Children and students with disabilities achieve in their learning communities; acquiring skills and attitudes for life-long learning and citizenship.

Our Mission
To ensure equitable and efficient allocation of Australian and State Government grants for supplementary funding to eligible organisations providing education and education related therapy services to children and students with disabilities across the three education sectors, and to support our stakeholders on matters concerning the education and care of children and students with disabilities.

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.
Committee Membership

Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities

Standing Committee

Members of the Committee are appointed by the Minister for Education and Children's Services to serve a twelve-month term, although in some instances this term is extended. They are chosen for their knowledge and experience in relation to children and students with disabilities. Committee members consist of educators representing the three education sectors, parents, health and disability professionals, a student and nominees of education unions, professional associations and the Minister for Education and Children's Services.

As a rule the Standing Committee meets once a month, with the exception of January and April. In 2006 the Committee met six times.

Membership

Ms Margaret Wallace
Chairperson
Dr Mary Bambacas
Deputy Chairperson
Ms Ingrid Alderton
Schooling Sector, Department of Education and Children's Services
Ms Vicki Brown
Manager of Aboriginal Services, Office for Disability and Client Services, Department for Families and Communities (resigned on 28.9.07 due to new work commitments)
Ms Libby Burns
Association of Independent Schools of South Australia
Ms Georgina Cattley
Ministerial Nominee
Ms Claire Cotton
Non-Government Special Education Committee
Ms Stephanie Grant
Catholic Education SA
Ms Marie Hedley
Parent
Ms Cathie Home
Early Childhood Australia (SA Branch)
Ms Pam Jacobs
Australian Association of Special Education (AASE) SA Chapter
Ms Sheena Ruedas
Independent Education Union (SA)
Mr Dindo Varona
Student
Ms Heather Ward
Early Years, Department of Education and Children's Services
Mr Paul Willey (proxy Ms Irene Doyle)
Office for Disability and Client Services, Department for Families and Communities
Ms Leah York
Australian Education Union (SA Branch)
Funding Approval Group

The Funding Approval Group, a subgroup of the Ministerial Advisory Committee, oversees the annual funding process. Final decisions about funding recommendations are made by the Standing Committee.

Funding Approval Group members for 2006 were:

- MAC:SWD Chairperson
- MAC:SWD Deputy Chairperson
- Representative for the Association of Independent Schools of SA (AISSA)
- Representative for Catholic Education SA (CESA)
- Representative for the Department of Education and Children’s Services (DECS)
- State Minister for Education and Children’s Services Nominee.

Funding Approval Group non-members for 2006 were:

- MAC:SWD Executive Officer
- MAC:SWD Project Officer (Funding)
- DECS Director Financial Management Services (replaced by Assistant Director Accounting and Financial Management Improvement from November 2006).

Additionally members of the Standing Committee may be asked to attend Funding Approval Group meetings when necessary. Funding Approval Group meetings usually precede the Standing Committee meetings. In 2006 the Funding Approval Group met ten times.

Secretariat Staff

Ms Christel Butcher Executive Officer
Ms Lyn Kohl Executive Secretary
Ms Luisa Pirone Project Officer
Ms Jo Shearer Project Officer
Ms Fiona Snodgrass Project Officer
2. Funding

Overview of Funding Process

Australian/State Government Grants

The Minister for Education and Children’s Services is responsible for the allocation of Australian/State Government Special Education grants to eligible organisations providing education and therapy related services for children and students with disabilities in South Australia. Eligible non-government organisations can apply for both Capital Grants and Recurrent Grants under the Non-Government Centres Support element of the Australian Government Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs Programme (Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004).

The Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities administers the allocation of Australian Government Capital and Recurrent Grants to non-government organisations on behalf of the agent for the Australian Government; in South Australia this is the Minister for Education and Children’s Services. In addition to allocating these Australian Government funds on behalf of the Minister, the Committee administers State Recurrent Grants available to support children and students with disabilities.

Allocative Mechanism

Australian Government Recurrent Grants

For non-government organisations receiving Australian Government Non-Government Centres Support Recurrent Grants, allocations are calculated using MAC:SWD’s funding formula, which was developed in 1999 following a review of the funding process, and has been applied since 2000.

An exception is made in the case of the Department for Families and Communities’ Families SA Tutoring Program for Children in Residential Care. This allocation is calculated using a flat per capita rate determined by MAC:SWD, on the basis of cost for tutoring services for one student over one school term.

For those organisations funded under the formula, the allocation process is based on MAC:SWD’s three Categories for Funding, which identify the level of student need, irrespective of the nature of disability. Each of these categories for funding has weightings assigned to Early Intervention and School Support programs. Funds are allocated according to Categories 1 to 3 in descending order of priority. Within these categories, MAC:SWD has identified certain services as indicators of curriculum based support provided by organisations. The number of hours attached to an individual’s service provision determines the category in which each child/student is placed for funding purposes.

Each year, organisations applying for Australian Government Non-Government Centres Support Recurrent Grants submit a written application to MAC:SWD, outlining child/student numbers and the levels of need and types of service negotiated with the relevant education sectors. The data provided represent services provided in the preceding year, and are verified by education sector representatives who are members of MAC:SWD, before being applied to the funding formula. Data for early intervention services are verified by officers of MAC:SWD.

Per capita amounts for all organisations are equal across MAC:SWD’s three categories of funding, i.e. the same per capita amount applies to all grant recipients for children in Early Intervention categories 1, 2 and 3 and students in School Support categories 1, 2 and 3. The recipient’s total grant will comprise subtotal funding for children and students across Early Intervention and/or School Support categories 1, 2 and 3, with students in priority categories 1 attracting the highest per capita amounts. Stakeholders continue to support this transparent and equitable distribution of supplementary recurrent funding.
Grant allocations fluctuate on an annual basis, according to the total Australian Government allocation and the level of service provided to individual children and students in each of the organisations funded. The funding provided is targeted to provide learning and development opportunities for children with disabilities who are below school age to prepare them for entry into preschools or schools, to assist school-aged children with severe disabilities by improving their access to educational programs, and to assist children with disabilities in residential care.

**State Recurrent Grants**

Two programs were eligible for State Government Special Education funding in 2006, namely the Children, Youth and Women’s Health Service Access Assistant 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 neighbourhood school, but would need to stay in hospital. The South Australian government now wholly funds the program; in 2006 the program received $2,160,500.

MAC:SWD administers the Joint Sector Intensive and Crisis Support funding on behalf of 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 on return to school after hospitalisation. An amount of $45,000 was allocated to support this program in 2006.

**Recurrent Grant Allocations**

Recurrent Grants must contribute to the provision of education and therapy related services by non-government organisations to improve the access and participation of children and students with disabilities in early intervention programs, preschools and schools. These grants are supplementary to organisations’ total program costs and are intended to support education based services.

The Minister receives the Australian Government Non-Government Centres Support funding to be allocated along with State Special Education funding. The Australian Government’s allocation for South Australia in 2006 was $4,157,000. The Australian/State Government total amount allocated in 2006 was $6,696,376. This included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Recurrent Grants</td>
<td>2,205,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recurrent Grants</td>
<td>4,326,256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Grants</td>
<td>164,620</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table lists those organisations/programs that received recurrent grants in 2006:

- 10 non-government organisations offering early intervention and/or school support programs
- the Children, Youth and Women’s Health Service Access Assistant Program
- Department for Families and Communities’ Families SA *Tutoring Program for Children in Residential Care* (CIRC)
- the Joint Sector Intensive and Crisis Support program.
### Australian/State Government Special Education Grants allocated for 2006

#### State Government Recurrent Grants for 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Amount (GST exclusive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children, Youth &amp; Women’s Health Service Access Assistant Program</strong></td>
<td>2,160,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joint Sector Intensive &amp; Crisis Support</strong></td>
<td>45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,205,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Australian Government Recurrent Grant for 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Early Intervention</th>
<th>School Support</th>
<th>Amount (GST exclusive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autism SA</td>
<td>239,608</td>
<td>1,327,114</td>
<td>1,566,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novita Children’s Services</td>
<td>228,134</td>
<td>727,436</td>
<td>955,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down Syndrome Society</td>
<td>135,814</td>
<td>325,462</td>
<td>461,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cora Barclay Centre</td>
<td>64,570</td>
<td>165,612</td>
<td>230,182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsend House</td>
<td>111,228</td>
<td>150,602</td>
<td>261,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide Dogs Association</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miriam High Special Needs Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>71,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive Directions</td>
<td>476,056</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Lincoln Community Health Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Intervention and Support Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Development Program (Seaton)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families SA Children in Residential Care Tutoring Program¹</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities (operating grant)</td>
<td>233,000</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total $4,326,256</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Australian Government Capital Grant for January to December 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Amount (GST exclusive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Novita Children’s Services</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down Syndrome Society</td>
<td>34,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsend House</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miriam High Special Needs Centre</td>
<td>5,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$164,620</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL $4,490,876**

---

¹ No funds were allocated in 2006 to enable Families SA to use up unspent funds from 2005.
Australian Government Capital Grant Allocations

Five per cent of the total Australian Government Non-Government Centres Support allocation to South Australia is intended for Capital Grants to eligible organisations supporting children and students with a disability. These grants are allocated to non-government organisations for the construction or refurbishment of facilities that provide education and therapy related services to improve the access and participation of children and students with a disability. Organisations applying for a capital grant must submit a written application, to be assessed by the Funding Approval Group and the Ministerial Advisory Committee.

The following table lists the non-government organisations allocated capital grants in 2006.

### Australian Government Non-Government Centres Support Capital Grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Novita Children’s Services</td>
<td>(project ongoing)</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Down Syndrome Society of South Australia Incorporated</td>
<td>(project ongoing)</td>
<td>$34,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Townsend House</td>
<td>(project ongoing)</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miriam High Special Needs Centre</td>
<td>(project ongoing)</td>
<td>$5,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>164,620</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conditions of Funding**

If a Capital and/or Recurrent Grant is approved, the organisation must enter into a legally binding Funding Agreement with the Minister for Education and Children’s Services to ensure the grant is properly applied. The organisation is required to provide a number of reports, accountability statements and whatever other information the Minister might require, under the terms and conditions of the Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004 or the clauses contained in the Funding Agreement. At the end of the funding period, the organisation needs to meet specific financial accountability requirements contained in the Funding Agreement.

**Number of Students Supported during the 2005/2006 financial year**

Funding to non-government organisations is allocated retrospectively, based on service provision to children and students in the preceding year. In 2006, a total of 1,024 children were supported through Early Intervention programs and 2,156 students received support through the School Support programs. A total of 3,180 children and students were supported through Australian Government Special Education Recurrent Grants. The Children, Youth and Women’s Health Service’s Access Assistant Program provided support to 300 children and students with disabilities. Additionally, 31 children and students were supported through the crisis care program. There was a significant increase of children and students with autism spectrum disorder and children with disabilities in childcare.

---

2 Numbers of children and students supported are based on services provided during Terms 3&4 2005 and 1&2 2006. Funding allocations to organisations are based on these data.
3. Projects

Each year, the Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities undertakes a number of statewide projects that have been approved by the Minister for Education and Children's Services. The projects may be initiated by the Minister or suggested by the Committee.

All projects focus on children and students with disabilities and are relevant to the three education sectors, i.e. State, Catholic and Independent preschools and schools. Project groups are formed for each project and members are chosen for their experience and expertise in the particular topic. Two projects were conducted in 2006 and, once approved by the Minister, published reports will be available on the Committee’s website. A summary of the projects is provided below.

**Aboriginal Students with Disabilities: Otitis Media and Conductive Hearing Loss — Information Strategy**

This project was borne out of the findings of two previous studies by the Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities, focusing on the education of Aboriginal children and students with a disability. The first study identified the high incidence of otitis media and conductive hearing loss (OM/CHL) in this population (2002), while the second and more recent study focused on existing programs to address the incidence and impact of OM/CHL.

Findings from the Aboriginal Students with Disabilities: Otitis Media and Conductive Hearing Loss project confirmed that educators and parents have little awareness of the long term impact of hearing loss on language and literacy acquisition, schooling outcomes and the social and emotional well-being of Aboriginal children.

The project group, comprised of professionals working in hearing impairment, speech pathology, children's health, early childhood and education, agreed to develop a strategy clarifying the information needs of families and educators regarding the impact of hearing loss on Aboriginal children. A number of project group members brought first-hand knowledge of working with affected Aboriginal children to the discussions.

As the project progressed, it became evident that many excellent resources were already available for both Aboriginal families and educators on otitis media and conductive hearing loss. However, it also became apparent that there were many barriers to successful information provision.

The challenge of the information strategy project was to identify how to successfully engage the community - families, educators and other relevant professionals — to access information on the impact of hearing loss on Aboriginal children.

A draft strategy has been completed and comprises two parts:
- Part 1 focuses on information that would assist prevention of hearing loss in Aboriginal children
- Part 2 focuses on information to assist Aboriginal children with hearing loss.

The information strategy will be a companion document to the Aboriginal Students with Disabilities: Otitis Media and Conductive Hearing Loss project report.
Project Group Membership

Co-Chairpersons

Vicki Hodgson-Brown  Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities, Aboriginal Students with Disabilities representative
Rosemary Hadges  Children, Youth and Women's Health Service, Manager Disability Services

Members

Thora Buckskin  Kaurna Plains Childcare Centre
Dindo Varona  Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities, student representative
Carolyn Fortune  Association of Independent Schools of South Australia
Claire Cotton  Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities, Non-Government Special Education Committee representative
Leone Coorey  Catholic Education SA
Quenten Iskov  Department of Education and Children's Services
Heather Ward  Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities, Early Years representative
Joanna Agius  DeafSA
Kellie Porter  Whyalla Hospital and Health Services

Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities

Christel Butcher  Executive Officer
Fiona Snodgrass  Project Officer
Children and Students with Disabilities and Mental Health Problems

This project investigated what supports were available for children and students with a disability with, or at risk of developing, mental health problems. Parents, educators and allied professionals concerned with mental health care for children and students with a disability provided information about their experiences and opinions of the systems within which they worked or sought service.

The initial intention was to map programs and services available to children and students with a disability and their families – thus identifying service gaps and areas for development. As the inquiry progressed, it became evident that services and programs concerned with both mental health care and disability in this state represent a complex matrix.

While universal mental health services and programs are available to all families, the extent to which families of children with a disability access these is unknown. It is also likely that these universal programs and services would require some adaptation to meet the specific needs of various disability groups. Such expertise is not always available. Services and programs which are designed specifically for children and students with disabilities and co-morbid mental health problems are few, and families of children with a disability tend to access mental health services when their needs become acute.

Currently, mainstream initiatives to address mental health care in education settings are being planned and implemented. For example:

- **KidsMatter** promotes a whole of school approach to improve the mental health and wellbeing of primary school students. *KidsMatter* is in its pilot phase in 2006 and 2007.
- Child health education and support services (chess) trialled the professional training package, *First Aid for Mental Health for Schools and Children’s Services in beyondblue* schools during 2006.
- *Chess* intends to publish a *planning and support guide and information kit for families and services on mental illness in education and children’s services* towards the end of 2007.

It is the Ministerial Advisory Committee’s concern that children and students with a disability be especially considered in these initiatives, because there appears to be a need to:

- raise awareness of the higher prevalence of mental health problems and vulnerability of this group
- increase the capacity of families and school/care communities to respond earlier to mental health problems for children and students with a disability
- provide consultative services, which would help families, care providers and school communities to achieve mental health promotion, preventative care and appropriate responses to mental health problems.
Project Group Membership 2006

Co-Chairpersons

Mary Bambacas
Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities,
Deputy Chairperson of Standing Committee and parent

Ms Gail Mondy
Children, Youth and Women's Health Service,
Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse representative

Members

Julie Dini
Intellectual Disability Services Council,
Psychologist

Deborah Down
Catholic Education SA, Special Education Consultant

Helen Foster
Christie Downs Schools, Counsellor

Pam Jacobs
Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities, Australian Association of
Special Education representative

Marie Hedley
Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities, Parent representative

Deb Kay
Department of Education and Children's Services,
Project Manager, Interagency Health Care
(proxy Helen Scales)

Cynthia Lawson
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service,
Unit Head, Behavioural Intervention Service

Nicole McDowell
Association of Independent Schools of South Australia,
Special Education Adviser

Katharine Annear
Autism SA, youth mentor

Daniel Kollner
Autism SA, youth representative

Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities

Christel Butcher
Executive Officer

Jo Shearer
Project Officer
4. Activities in 2006

Committee Leadership and Secretariat Staffing

There were no changes in the Committee's leadership and staffing during 2006. Ms Margaret Wallace continued as Chairperson, with Dr Mary Bambacas as Deputy Chairperson.

Funding Processes

1. Closer Collaboration with and Support for Grant Recipient Organisations
   In November 2005, MAC:SWD received formal notification from the Australian Government on the Non-Government Centres Support allocation to South Australia for calendar year 2006 of $4,157,000. The correspondence also advised that South Australia's allocation would be maintained at $4,157 million until such time as its entitlement exceeded this amount, based on the State share of population aged 0-18 years with a disability. This means that compared to former years, no annual supplementation can be expected. Non-government organisations funded through MAC:SWD were invited to a meeting in April 2006 to inform them about the anticipated funding shortfall from 2007 onwards.
   In order to support more stringent data collection, organisations were provided with a procedural checklist for data recording. Positive effects were noted in subsequent data collection cycles.

2. Closer Collaboration with the Office for Disability and Client Services
   MAC:SWD collaborated successfully with the Department for Families and Communities, Office for Disability and Client Services (ODACS), concerning the anticipated funding shortfall. ODACS proposed once-off contribution of $393,000 in calendar year 2007 will ensure funding to non-government organisations can be maintained as at the 2006 level.

3. Minimum Service Provision
   To encourage quality service provision, members discussed the need to institute the requirement for minimum service provision for Early Intervention and School Support to qualify for funding support. It was agreed that for one year of service provision, the minimum service expected for Early Intervention would be trialled as two hours versus four hours for School Support.

4. Collaboration with Families SA regarding Children in Residential Care (CIRC)
   It had been noted that the number of children and students with a disability supported by tutors through this program had declined over the years. Discussions with officers from Families SA indicated that this could be contributed to several factors, such as lack of link to other education related services in Families SA, a cumbersome application process for workers in the field and lack of available tutors in general, but particularly of those willing to work with students with a disability. It was decided to allocate CIRC funding through the Families SA school retention team and investigate possible additional sources for tutoring services.

Asperger Conference
A seminar on Quality Educational Practices for Students with Asperger Syndrome was held in conjunction with Autism SA on 18 May 2006 during National Autism Awareness Week. Presenters from the nine schools involved in MAC:SWD's project during 2005 presented aspects of their quality educational practices for students with Asperger syndrome at their school. The Minister for Education and Children's Services, Hon Jane Lomax-Smith, opened the seminar. A total of 142 attended, of whom 79 per cent were educators and 21 per cent were parents or staff of Autism SA. In addition, the Minister for Education and Children's Services spoke of the Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities' work regarding students with Asperger syndrome in Parliament on 5 June 2006.
5. Future

Evolving the Funding Process

As identified in MAC:SWD’s Strategic Plan, evolving the funding process according to the principles of equity, efficiency and effectiveness will continue to be the priority for 2007, particularly in light of the predicted funding shortfall.

MAC:SWD will continue to focus on accountability for services provided to children and students with a disability. In 2005, for the first time, data about actual service provision in Early Intervention were recorded and verified by members of the Secretariat. This process had already been applied to services provided through School Support programs and was further evolved in 2006 with the introduction of minimum service provision for both the Early Intervention and School Support Program. In 2007, it is proposed to support the three education sectors in their negotiations with non-government organisations to further evolve service agreements.

In light of the predicted funding shortfall, the Committee will need to evaluate the impact of the increasingly higher number of children receiving early intervention services, particularly in category 3, the category that provides the fewest support hours. The Committee also needs to revisit which services provided by the non-government organisations should form the basis for funding submissions by the organisations.

Projects for 2007

The following two projects have been approved by the Minister.

Children and Students with Disabilities and Mental Health Problems

Members of the Committee are still very concerned about the availability of mental health programs specifically targeted at children and students with a disability.

As new mainstream initiatives to address mental health care in education settings are being planned for and about to be implemented in 2007, for example the KidsMatter program, the chess mental health training package and mental health support guide, it is proposed that MAC:SWD keep a watching brief on developments in this area and advocate for the needs of children and students with a disability.

To this purpose it is proposed that MAC:SWD’s Executive Officer will become a member of the chess Mental Health Reference Group to inform the group about the specific needs of children and students in this area, and in turn provide information about this topic back to the Minister and the Committee.

It is further suggested that a MAC:SWD project officer will approach the national coordinator of KidsMatter, based in Adelaide, regarding information about disability issues to be considered in their program during its pilot implementation and evaluation phase and work collaboratively to ensure that the specific needs of children and students with a disability are taken into consideration.

A report on this topic would be provided to the Minister at the end of the year, with the possibility of a more formal investigation into the topic of mental health and disability in 2008, after assessing the impact of these new initiatives.
Transition for children and students with a disability continues to be a cause for concern. Committee members suggested that a project should investigate transition practices for young children with a disability from home, to care and preschool and school. Most commonly involved in the transition process with the families are education providers, care providers, non-government organisations, disability services and Children, Youth and Women’s Health Service.

Difficulties that arise at points of transition for all parties concerned include:
- the transfer of information regarding the child's wellbeing and additional needs
- the number of transitional changes which occur for the child and the family
- changes in the type of service provided both within a service and from one service to another.

It is proposed to investigate transition guidelines and practices for children with a disability across childcare, the three education sectors, non-government organisations, health and disability providers. The project aims to articulate a transition model that supports children with a disability or developmental delay and fits within an integrated early childhood model, such as the Children’s Centres for Early Development and Parenting. The Committee is particularly interested in the relationship and protocols between disability agencies and Children’s Centres.

It is envisaged the Committee will identify quality practices and the barriers which currently prevent quality practices in transition for children and students with a disability.