



**Government
of South Australia**

**Ministerial Advisory Committee:
Students with Disabilities**

Annual Report 2009

January 2010

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

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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 Commonwealth Government Non-Government Centres Support grants for supplementary funding to eligible organisations, which support the education and care of children and students with a disability 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 a disability across the three education sectors in South Australia.
- Support the capacity of non-government organisations to provide services to children and students with a disability 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 a disability as requested by the Minister for Education.

Context Statement

Our Vision

Children and students with a 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 Commonwealth and State Government grants for supplementary funding to eligible organisations providing education and education related therapy services to children and students with a disability across the three education sectors and to support our stakeholders on matters concerning the education and care of children and students with a disability.

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 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 a disability. Committee members consist of educators representing the three education sectors; parents; health and disability professionals; a student; and nominees of the Minister for Education, education unions and professional associations.

As a rule the Standing Committee meets once a month, with the exception of January and April. In 2009 the Standing Committee met nine times.

Membership 2009

Ms Margaret Wallace	Chairperson
Dr Mary Bambacas	Deputy Chairperson
Ms Ingrid Alderton	Schooling Sector, Department of Education and Children's Services
Ms Erica Baker	Independent Education Union (SA)
Ms Helen Beavan	Office for Disability and Client Services
Mr Clive Budden	Australian Education Union (SA Branch)
Ms Libby Burns	Association of Independent Schools of South Australia
Ms Vivian Cagliuso	Minister's Nominee, parent
Ms Claire Cotton	Non-Government Special Education Committee
Ms Stephanie Grant	Catholic Education SA
Ms Cathie Home	Early Childhood Australia (SA Branch)
Ms Pam Jacobs	Australian Association of Special Education (AASE) SA Chapter
Dr Brian Matthews	Minister's Nominee
Mr Nick Schumi	Minister's Nominee, Student
Ms Heather Ward	Early Years, Department of Education and Children's Services
Ms Tanya Woodworth	Minister's Nominee, Aboriginal Students with Disabilities

Funding Approval Group

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

Funding Approval Group members for 2009 were:

- Ms Margaret Wallace, MAC:SWD Chairperson
- Dr Mary Bambacas, MAC:SWD Deputy Chairperson
- Ms Libby Burns, Representative for the Association of Independent Schools of SA (AISSA)
- Ms Stephanie Grant, Representative for Catholic Education SA (CESA)
- Ms Ingrid Alderton, Representative for the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS)
- Dr Brian Matthews, Minister for Education Nominee.

Funding Approval Group non-members for 2009 were:

- Ms Christel Butcher, MAC:SWD Executive Officer
- Ms Betty Tsoutouras, MAC:SWD Project Officer (Funding)
- Ms Chris Williams, DECS Assistant Director Accounting and Financial Management Improvement.

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 2009 the Funding Approval Group met eleven times.

Secretariat Staff

Ms Christel Butcher	Executive Officer
Ms Jenny Knight	Executive Secretary
Ms Betty Tsoutouras	Project Officer (Funding)
Ms Jo Shearer	Project Officer
Ms Fiona Snodgrass	Project Officer

2. Funding

Overview of Funding Process

Commonwealth/State Government Grants

The Minister for Education is responsible for the allocation of Commonwealth/State Government Special Education grants to eligible organisations providing education and therapy related services for children and students with a disability in South Australia. Eligible non-government organisations have been able to apply for support grants under the Non-Government Centres Support element of the Commonwealth Government *Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs Programme (Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004)*. Funding for this element is now part of Special Purpose Payments to South Australia under the National Education Agreement between the states and territories and the Commonwealth Government.

The Committee administers the allocation of Commonwealth Government support grants to non-government organisations on behalf of the agent for the Commonwealth Government; in South Australia this is the Minister for Education. In addition to allocating these Commonwealth Government funds on behalf of the Minister, the Committee administers State Recurrent Grants available to support children and students with a disability.

Allocative Mechanism

Commonwealth Government Recurrent Grants

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

Exceptions are made in three cases. Base grants are allocated to the Department for Families and Communities' *Families SA Tutoring Program for Children in Residential Care* to be used for tutoring services for students with a disability over one school term, as well as to two small early intervention programs.

Each year, organisations applying for Commonwealth 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 submitted represent services provided in the preceding year, and are verified by education sector representatives who are members of the Committee, before being applied to the funding formula. Data for early intervention services are verified by officers of the MAC:SWD secretariat.

For those organisations funded under the formula, the allocation process has in the past been based on the Committee's three Categories for Funding, which identify the level of child/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. Per capita amounts for all organisations are equal across the Committee'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. Within these categories, the Committee 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. As the grant allocation from the Commonwealth Government had remained at the same level for some time, funding for 2009 was based on the same proportion of funding organisations had received in 2008.

Grant allocations to non-government organisations fluctuate on an annual basis, as they depend on the total Commonwealth 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 a disability who are below school age to prepare them for entry into preschools or schools, to assist school-aged children with a disability by improving their access to educational programs, and to assist children with a disability in residential care.

State Recurrent Grants

Two programs were eligible for State Government Special Education funding in 2009, 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 school, but would need to stay in hospital. The South Australian Government wholly funds the program; in 2009 the program received \$2,344,000 of funding.

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 2009.

Commonwealth Government 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 a disability 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 Commonwealth Government Non-Government Centres Support funding to be allocated along with State Special Education funding. The Commonwealth Government's allocation for South Australia in 2009 was \$4,157,000. Further to that, South Australia received a supplementation of \$80,574 based on a higher number of children and students with a disability in the state, bringing the total allocation to \$4,237,574. The Commonwealth/State Government total amount allocated in 2009 was \$6,626,574.

The following table lists those organisations/programs that received recurrent grants in 2009:

- 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.

**STATE & COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT SPECIAL EDUCATION GRANTS
RECOMMENDED FOR 2009**

State Government Recurrent Grant for January to December 2009	\$ (GST exclusive)	
Children, Youth & Women's Health Service Access Assistant Program	2,344,000	
Joint Sector Intensive & Crisis Support	45,000	TOTAL \$2,389,000

Commonwealth Government Recurrent Grant for January to December 2009		\$ (GST exclusive)	
Autism SA	Early Intervention	219,865	
	School Support	1,217,759	1,437,624
Novita Children's Services	Early Intervention	209,335	
	School Support	667,496	876,831
Down Syndrome Society	Early Intervention	124,623	
	School Support	298,643	423,266
Cora Barclay Centre	Early Intervention	59,249	
	School Support	151,966	211,215
Townsend House	Early Intervention	102,061	
	School Support	138,194	240,255
Guide Dogs Association	School Support	32,084	
Miriam High Special Needs Centre	Early Intervention	65,750	
Inclusive Directions	Early Intervention	436,829	
Port Lincoln Community Health Services Early Intervention and Support Program		10,000	
Early Development Program (Seaton)		25,000	
Families SA Children in Residential Care Tutoring Program		30,000	
Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities (operating grant)		283,981	Total \$4,072,835
Commonwealth Government Capital Grant for January to December 2009		\$ (GST exclusive)	
Cora Barclay Centre		7,800	
Autism SA		27,319	
Down Syndrome Society		35,794	
Townsend House		93,826	Total \$164,739
			TOTAL \$4,237,574

Total amount allocated \$6,626,574.

Commonwealth Government Capital Grant Allocations

Under the Administrative Guidelines for the Commonwealth Government *Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs Programme (Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004)*, five per cent of the total Commonwealth Government Non-Government Centres Support allocation to South Australia was intended for Capital Grants to eligible organisations supporting children and students with a disability. Although these guidelines are no longer in force, the Committee decided to still adhere to them until other guidelines could be developed.

Capital 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 approved by the Standing Committee of MAC: SWD.

The following table lists the non-government organisations allocated capital grants in 2009.

Commonwealth Government Non-Government Centres Support Capital Grants

2009	Autism SA	\$27,319
	Cora Barclay Centre	\$7,800
	Down Syndrome Society	\$35,794
	Townsend House	\$93,826
	Total	\$164,739

Conditions of Funding

When a Capital and/or Recurrent Grant is approved, the organisation must enter into a legally binding Funding Agreement with the Minister for Education 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 2008/2009 financial year

Funding to non-government organisations is allocated retrospectively, based on service provision to children and students in the preceding year. Data recording service provision were collected over four terms, i.e. Terms 3 and 4 2008 and Terms 1 and 2 2009. Averaged over the four terms, 2718 children and students were supported through Early Intervention programs and the School Support programs. The Children, Youth and Women's Health Service's Access Assistant Program provided support to 271 children and students with complex health needs. Additionally, 29 children and students were supported (for 1075 hours in total) through the crisis care program.

There was an increase of two per cent of children and students with a disabilities supported compared to the preceding year. This is mostly due to more children supported through early intervention programs, particularly by Inclusive Directions and Novita Children's Services. These two organisations provide inclusion support in childcare centres.

AVERAGE PROGRAM NUMBERS based on service provision data provided by organisations from Term 3 2008 to Term 2 2009		
Autism SA Early Intervention	227	
Autism SA School Support	651	878
Novita Children's Services Early Intervention	270	
Novita Children's Services School Support	363	633
Down Syndrome Society Early Intervention	46	
Down Syndrome Society School Support	118	164
Cora Barclay Centre Early Intervention	48	
Cora Barclay Centre School Support	98	146
Townsend House Early Intervention	113	
Townsend House School Support	58	171
Guide Dogs Association Early Intervention	4	
Guide Dogs Association School Support	29	33
Children in Residential Care (CIRC)	69	
PLCHS Early Intervention and Support Program	19	
Early Development Program (Seaton)	15	
Miriam High Special Needs Centre Early Intervention	41	
Inclusive Directions Early Intervention	549	
TOTAL	2718	

3. Projects

Each year, the Committee undertakes a number of statewide projects that have been approved by the Minister for Education. The projects may be initiated by the Minister or suggested by the Committee.

All projects focus on children and students with a disability and are relevant to the three education sectors, i.e. State, Catholic and Independent preschools and schools. Project groups are convened for each project and members are chosen for their experience and expertise in the particular topic. Three new projects were conducted in 2009 and, once approved by the Minister, relevant reports will be available on the Committee's website. Summaries of the projects are provided below.

Further to that, three 2008 projects were completed in 2009 and relevant information is provided below.

Families' Experience of Childcare for their Child with a Disability

The Committee undertook a project to investigate families' experience of child care services for their child with a disability or additional needs in 2008. The report of this project was completed in 2009 and approved for publication by the Minister and is available on the Committee's website. The report found that most parents were satisfied with their children's experience of child care, but were unclear about the purpose of the Inclusion Support Subsidy. Inclusion Support agencies have already taken steps to provide more thorough information about the scheme.

Project Group Membership

<i>Co-Chairpersons</i>	
<i>Cathie Home</i>	Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities, Early Childhood Australia (SA Branch) representative
<i>Linda Williams</i>	Novita Children's Services Manager, Early Childhood Services
<i>Members</i>	
<i>Gloria Debba</i>	Parent representative
<i>Joan Gilbert</i>	C.a.F.E. Enfield Children's Centre for Early Childhood Development and Parenting, Director
<i>Stephanie Grant</i>	Catholic Education SA
<i>Tina Quitadamo</i>	Network SA/Aboriginal Resource and Management Support Unit (ARMSU), Indigenous Inclusion Consultant
<i>Heather Ward</i>	Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities, Department of Education and Children's Services, Early Years representative
<i>Sheryle Yorsten</i>	St Peter's College – Junior School Early Learning Centre Coordinator
<i>Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities</i>	
<i>Jo Shearer</i>	Project Officer
<i>Christel Butcher</i>	Executive Officer

Aboriginal Students with Disabilities - Otitis Media and Conductive Hearing Loss (OM/CHL Pilot Project)

The Aboriginal Students with Disabilities: Otitis Media and Conductive Hearing Loss pilot project commenced in 2008. After wide ranging consultation, it was agreed to develop an early childhood resource specifically for urban Aboriginal families with young children with or at risk of otitis media and conductive hearing loss. It was envisaged that such a resource could assist in early prevention of disability and promotion of healthy development. It was agreed that the resource should aim to raise awareness and the take-up of universal early childhood activities, particularly listening activities, among young Aboriginal families.

To achieve these aims, the development of the resource used Aboriginal design, featured local Aboriginal families and selected activities that would resonate with Aboriginal families. The selection of activities was a joint venture between the Kurna Plains Children's Centre Community Development Coordinator, the Early Intervention: Hearing Impairment Team, the local DECS Early Childhood Initiatives Coordinator and the speech pathologist from Muna Paiendi Community Health Centre. The contributors all had extensive experience in working with Aboriginal families with young children and were well placed to select appropriate activities that families would enjoy. Aboriginal elders and other community members also contributed to the development of this resource. The final twenty-five activities in the activity book have been chosen as a result of those discussions.

The resulting resource package is entitled *Yarnin' It Up: Learning to Listen and Talk. Activities for Young Aboriginal Children* and features an activity book, activity cards and a DVD. The core concern of the project was to make the resource available to parents and to encourage them to undertake the activities with their children. The parent cards, featuring the same information as the activity book, are also available as PDF documents on the DVD for reprint or electronic dispatch. The resource package was completed in 2009 and has approval for publication by the Minister for Education and the Minister for Early Childhood Development.

The launch of the resource is planned for early February 2010 and it will be made available to all early years programs with high Aboriginal enrolment, regional offices of DECS and relevant health care services.

Project Group Membership

<i>Chairperson</i>	
<i>Kim Morey</i>	Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities
<i>Members</i>	
<i>Fionna Bottroff</i>	Speech Pathologist, Muna Paiendi Community Health Centre
<i>Amanda Connor</i>	Teacher of the Deaf, Early Intervention Service – Hearing Impaired (SERU)
<i>Marina Elliott</i>	Early Childhood Initiatives Coordinator, Kumangka Para District, DECS
<i>Megan Hickman</i>	Community Development Officer, Kurna Plains Children's Centre
<i>Chris Olsen</i>	Hearing Impairment Coordinator, Kumangka Para District, DECS
<u><i>Contributors</i></u>	
<i>Quenten Iskov</i>	Project Officer (Hearing Impairment), DECS
<i>Elsa Kyriacou</i>	Social Worker, Kumangka Para District, DECS
<i>Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities</i>	
<i>Christel Butcher</i>	Executive Officer
<i>Fiona Snodgrass</i>	Project Officer

Review of the funding formula and processes

With the Minister's approval, the Committee has been reviewing the current funding formula and associated processes over the last two years, as it had become apparent that the funding formula (developed in 1997/98) proved to be not as effective as it had been in the past. This was mainly due to a reduction of overall funds available from the Commonwealth and an increase in the number of children and students eligible for support.

The Committee had received feedback from members representing the three education sectors about service provision from non-government organisations supporting students with a disability in schools. In many cases services provided did not match what was required in schools. Schools were asking for more direct and expert support in working with students with high needs, and less support for curriculum advice for less needy students. The Committee took that into consideration in its funding review.

Non-government organisations had for several years advised the Committee that it was becoming more difficult to provide outreach services, as provision of this type of service was becoming too costly. The Committee has been collecting information from organisations over a number of years to be able to gauge the number of children and students involved and has taken that information into consideration for the development of the proposed funding model.

The Minister gave her approval for the new funding model to become effective from 2011. The 2010 funding year will be a transition year.

The new funding model has three elements:

- *General Support Element* – the purpose of this funding is to support service provision connected to the specific needs of the child or student for activities undertaken in collaboration with teaching staff. Thirty per cent of overall funding will be dedicated to this element.
- *Specific Service Support Element* – in order to attract funding under this element, non-government organisation service providers must work directly with the child or student on an individual or group basis in Early Intervention Programs, preschools or schools to support access to the curriculum. Sixty per cent of overall funding will be dedicated to this element.
- *Outreach Support Element* – Outreach services attract additional funding to the elements described above. Outreach services are considered to be those that are provided in regional and remote areas where the organisation does not have an office base. Ten per cent of overall funding will be dedicated to this element.

The Committee proposes not to award capital grants to organisations from 2010 onwards, with a review after three years. This portion of the funding will be used for recurrent grants in the interim.

In early November, Committee representatives met with affected non-government organisations for an information and consultation meeting regarding the new model; the model was well received.

Transition Guidelines for Children with a Disability across Care and Education Sectors

In December 2008, the Minister approved the development of overarching early childhood transition guidelines by the Committee in response to findings and recommendations of the 2007 project concerning early childhood transitions for children with a disability.

A project group with representation from the education sectors, child care and disability services was established early in 2009.

The project group met on six occasions in the first half of the year to discuss and debate the content of these guidelines. When agreement was reached, further consultations were held with targeted individuals and agencies to seek their feedback. A Transition Guidelines booklet and companion brochure were produced and approval for publication from both the Minister for Education and the Minister for Early Childhood Development was granted in October 2009.

The *Transition Guidelines* booklet and brochure were professionally printed in December 2009. During January 2010, copies will be distributed to all South Australian early childhood, preschool and junior primary school settings, as well as to regional offices and agencies that support children with a disability in their early years.

Project Group Membership

<i>Chairperson</i>	
<i>Margaret Wallace</i>	Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities Chair
<i>Members</i>	
<i>Ingrid Alderton</i>	Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities Department of Education and Children's Services Manager, Learning Difficulties, Policy & Service Disability and Statewide Programs
<i>Andrea McGuffog</i>	Department of Education and Children's Services Manager, Early Years Strategy
<i>Melanie Gohl</i>	Chairperson Community Children's Centres SA
<i>Linda Turpin</i>	Inclusive Directions Regional Manager, North
<i>Libby Burns</i>	Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities Association of Independent Schools of SA Special Learning Needs Coordinator
<i>Stephanie Grant</i>	Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities Catholic Education SA Senior Education Adviser – Special Education
<i>Heather Ward</i>	Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities, Department of Education and Children's Services, Early Years representative
<i>Barbara Langford</i>	President Childcare SA
<i>Rochelle Hay</i>	Acting Program Manager Children's Services Families and Communities
<i>Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities</i>	
<i>Christel Butcher</i>	Executive Officer
<i>Jo Shearer</i>	Project Officer

Mental Health for Students with a Disability—Successful Practice

In December 2008, the Minister approved a project to investigate successful practice in mental health care for students with a disability. The project focused on outcomes for students with a disability who participated in the KidsMatter Primary mental health initiative.

KidsMatter Primary was developed in association with the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, beyondblue, the Australian Psychological Society, Principals Australia and the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund. Over a two year pilot implementation phase (2007 to 2008), involving 101 schools Australia wide, KidsMatter was evaluated by the KidsMatter Evaluation team, based at Flinders University, chaired by Professor Phillip Slee. In 2009, the Committee began working with representatives from the KidsMatter Evaluation team to filter their data for findings related to students with a disability from South Australia.

The findings show that KidsMatter Primary had a significant positive effect to improve mental health strengths and reduce mental health difficulties for students with a disability. The findings also indicate that South Australian primary school children without a disability have a 1 in 8 chance of developing mental health problems, compared with children with one disability who have a 1 in 3 chance. Children with more than one disability have a 1 in 2 chance of developing mental health problems. The findings also indicate that children with a disability find their school experience more emotionally challenging than children without a disability. There seem to be opportunities to improve the level of support provided to parents of children with a disability to care for their children's mental health and emotional wellbeing.

The final report on the effect of KidsMatter on South Australian students with a disability will be presented to the Minister early in 2010. The final report on the full evaluation of the Australian pilot of KidsMatter Primary will also be released early in 2010.

Project Group Membership

<i>Flinders University</i>	
<i>Prof Phillip Slee</i>	KidsMatter Evaluation Team, Project Leader
<i>Dr Katherine Dix</i>	KidsMatter Evaluation Team, Senior Evaluation Officer
<i>Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities</i>	
<i>Jo Shearer</i>	Project Officer
<i>Christel Butcher</i>	Executive Officer

Students with a Disability—Physical Education and Health

In December 2008, the Minister approved a project to investigate how students with a disability are provided with choices and included in physical education in South Australian schools. It was further proposed to investigate how non-government organisations support their clients and their families in this area and how they interface with the education sectors in this area. It is planned to include an overview of available programs for students with a disability.

A project group was convened with representation from the education sectors, the Office of Recreation and Sport, disability sporting agencies and Novita Children's Services. As a first task the project group collected information on recreational, physical activity and sporting programs available to students with a disability in the community. Opportunities to participate in programs seem to occur mostly through schools where sporting organisations provide mainstream programs that include students with a disability or specialist programs.

The second part of the project sought to examine in more detail how students with a disability are included in the range of physical activity options available in schools. An electronic questionnaire to gather this information was sent to all schools in South Australia in early Term 4. Demographic information on the location of PE teachers was gathered prior to the dispatch of this questionnaire. This information will be analysed together with the questionnaire results to determine whether there is any correlation between the presence of specialist PE teachers and the level of participation of students with a disability in physical education and physical activity at school. The questionnaire also sought information on if and how schools link with non-government and community organisations to extend access to physical activity opportunities for students with a disability. The results from this questionnaire are still being analysed.

In addition, six Health and Physical Education teachers (two from each education sector) were interviewed face to face about their inclusion practices, behaviours and beliefs. The report will be finalised in early 2010.

Project Group Membership

<i>Chairperson</i>	
<i>Pam Jacobs</i>	Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities
<i>Members</i>	
<i>Tara Andrews</i>	Office of Recreation and Sport
<i>Emily Ayles</i>	Novita Children's Services
<i>Helen Beavan</i>	Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities Office for Disability and Client Services
<i>Vivian Cagliuso</i>	Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities Parent representative
<i>Adele Mayrhofer</i>	Association of Independent Schools of South Australia
<i>Stephanie Grant</i>	Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities Catholic Education SA
<i>Manuella Reynolds</i>	South Australian Sport and Recreation Association for People with Integration Difficulties
<i>Debbie Wright</i>	Department of Education and Children's Services
<i>Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities</i>	
<i>Fiona Snodgrass</i>	Project Officer
<i>Christel Butcher</i>	Executive Officer

4. Activities in 2009

Committee Leadership and Secretariat Staffing

There were no changes in the Committee's leadership during 2009. Ms Margaret Wallace continued as Chairperson, with Dr Mary Bambacas as Deputy Chairperson.

Ms Jenny Knight continued in the position as Executive Secretary whilst Ms Lyn Kohl is acting in a higher position in another unit.

Presentations of Research at Conferences

The Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students With Disabilities presented at the following conferences:

- Presentation of a paper on the findings of the 2008 report *Early Childhood Transitions for Children with a Disability* at the Australian Association of Special Education (AASE) Conference in Melbourne, April 2009: *Transitions: Facilitating Change for Students with Special Needs*.
- Presentation of the findings of the 2008 report *Early Childhood Transitions for Children with a Disability* and the *Transition Guidelines* at the *Research in Special Education Conference* at Flinders University on 13 November 2009.

Information Sharing with the Department of Education and Children's Services

- Presentation of the resource *Yarnin' It Up* to DECS *Learning Together* staff on 9 October 2009.
- Presentation of the resource *Yarnin' It Up* to DECS Hearing Impairment Coordinators (North Region) and Early Intervention Hearing Coordinators (Special Education Resource Unit) on 16 October 2009.

5. Future

Projects for 2010

Two projects have been approved by the Minister.

Education and Care Options for Children and Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

The inclusion of and services for children and students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) continue to be topics of interest for parents and teachers.

The Committee proposes to investigate what care and education options are available for children with ASD in South Australia, Australia and overseas. It is proposed to connect with colleagues interstate and to conduct a literature search to examine outcomes of international models—as well as New South Wales and Victorian models—that provide specialist autism schools and satellite autism classes in mainstream schools. There is now one South Australian autism specific childcare centre in Prospect, the first of six to open Australia wide, which could also be included in the investigation.

The project's aim would be to develop a report for the Minister informing her about different care and education services available for children and students with ASD and their families, evidence based best practice and possible implications for South Australia.

Services Provided by Non-Government Agencies

The Committee proposes to investigate what services are provided by non-government agencies funded by the Committee. Preschools and schools in particular have asked for a different kind of service to be provided by non-government organisations. The project would use previously collected data (over a defined period), when the guidelines for services were specified by the Australian Government. This profile would form baseline information from which to assess the effect of change in the future, considering the new funding structure and guidelines for services developed by the Committee, which are to take effect from 2011.