



**Government
of South Australia**

**Ministerial Advisory Committee:
Students with Disabilities**

Annual Report 2010

January 2011

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 2010 the Standing Committee met eight times.

Membership 2010

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)
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 Pat Coidan	Office for Disability and Client Services - Appointed May 2010
Ms Judy Davies	Office for Disability and Client Services - Resigned March 2010
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 – Resigned October 2010
Mr Nick Schumi	Minister's Nominee, Student
Ms Wendy Wake-Dyster	National Disability Services, Sub Committee: Children, Young People and their Families – Resigned September 2010
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 2010 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 (Resigned October 2010)

Funding Approval Group non-members for 2010 were:

- Ms Christel Butcher, MAC:SWD Executive Officer
- Ms Betty Tsoutouras, MAC:SWD Project Officer (Funding) – resigned November 2010
- Ms Jo Shearer, MAC:SWD Project Officer (Research) – from November 2010
- 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 2010 the Funding Approval Group met eight times.

Secretariat Staff

Ms Christel Butcher	Executive Officer
Ms Jenny Knight	Executive Secretary – up to June 2010
Ms Maria DeFazio	Executive Secretary – from July 2010
Ms Betty Tsoutouras	Project Officer (Funding) - resigned November 2010
Ms Jo Shearer	Project Officer (Research)
Dr Helen McLaren	Project Officer (Research) – resigned June 2010
Ms Miriam Parsons	Project Officer (Research) – commenced July 2010

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 in the past 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 have been 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 were allocated according to Categories 1 to 3 in descending order of priority. Per capita amounts for all organisations were 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 identified certain services as indicators of curriculum based support provided by organisations. The number of hours attached to an individual's service provision determined 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 2010 was based on the same proportion of funding organisations had received in 2009.

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. In 2010 the process for funding allocations remained the same as for previous years, but from 2011 funding allocations will have been determined using a different funding allocation process. 2010 represented a transition year towards implementing the new funding process. Funding will remain retrospective, according to the services provided over a defined data collection period, but Categories 1,2 and 3 will no longer apply. The total amount of funding available for distribution will be divided into three elements: 30 per cent of funds will be for General Support, 60 per cent of funds will be for Specific Services Support, (i.e. occupational therapy services, physiotherapy services, auditory-verbal therapy, individual intensive support, developmental educator support and specialist psychiatric services) and 10 per cent of funds will be for Outreach Support (specific services support provided to children and students in country regions). Exceptions will continue to be made for the *Tutoring Program for Children in Residential Care* and two small early intervention programs receiving base grants. Data collected from organisations who provided services in Terms 1 and 2 2010 have been used to inform funding allocations for 2011 using this new funding model.

The funding provided to organisations has been and will continue to be 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 2010, 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 2010 the program received \$2,363,000 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 requirements on return to school after hospitalisation. An amount of \$45,000 was allocated to support this program in 2010.

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 allocation of funding to South Australia under the Commonwealth Government's Non-Government Centres Support (NGCS) Grants used to be guaranteed by the Commonwealth at a minimum of \$4,157,000 per annum and was paid directly to the Minister for distribution in the role as the agent for the Commonwealth. Funding for this element now comes to South Australia as part of the Specific Purpose Payments and is paid to the Department of Treasury and Finance for distribution to the Department for Education and Children's Services and the Minister. Funding for this program remains at the same level of \$4,157,000. Any additional funds are the result of unexpended capital grants, which have been re-allocated to recurrent grant funding.

The Commonwealth/State Government total amount allocated in 2010 was \$6,565,214.

The following table lists those organisations/programs that received recurrent grants in 2010:

- 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 2010**

State Government Recurrent Grants for January to December 2010	\$ (GST exclusive)	
Children, Youth & Women's Health Service Access Assistant Program	\$2,363,000	
Joint Sector Intensive & Crisis Support	45,000	TOTAL \$2,408,000

Commonwealth Government Recurrent Grants for January to December 2010	\$ (GST exclusive)		
Autism SA	Early Intervention	223,301	
	School Support	1,236,790	1,460,091
Novita Children's Services	Early Intervention	212,606	
	School Support	677,927	890,533
Down Syndrome Society	Early Intervention	125,134	
	School Support	299,866	425,000
Cora Barclay Centre	Early Intervention	60,175	
	School Support	154,341	214,516
Townsend House	Early Intervention	103,656	
	School Support	140,354	244,010
Guide Dogs Association	Early Intervention	3,565	
	School Support	32,585	36,150
Miriam High Special Needs Centre	Early Intervention	66,778	
Inclusive Directions	Early Intervention	443,656	
Early Intervention and Support Program (Port Lincoln)		15,000	
Early Development Program (Seaton)		27,500	
Families SA Children in Residential Care Tutoring Program		50,000	
Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities (operating grant)		283,980	\$4,157,214

Total amount allocated \$6,565,214

Commonwealth Government Capital Grant Allocations

Under the previous 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. Capital grants were allocated 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.

The Committee decided from 2010 to no longer allocate funding for Capital Grants. The amount of funding previously made available (i.e. 5 per cent of the total Commonwealth Grant) was re-allocated to Recurrent Grant funding.

Number of Students Supported during the 2009/2010 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 2009 and Terms 1 and 2 2010. Averaged over the four terms, 3481 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 256 children and students with complex health needs. Additionally, 36 children and students were supported (for 1256 hours in total) through the crisis care program.

Administrators for the Children in Residential Care program reported that during 2009 a total of 37 students with a disability received services. This was a reduction from the previous year, when 69 students were supported through this program. This reduction was mainly due to budget restraints from Families SA who were not able to support the program with as much funding as the previous year.

Overall, there was an increase of 28 per cent of children and students with a disability who received support compared to the preceding year. This was mostly due to more students being supported through school support programs, particularly by Autism SA, Novita Children's Services and Townsend House. These three organisations had an increase in the number of students receiving services by 76 per cent 41 per cent and 34 per cent respectively. Overall, school support programs had a 54 per cent increase in the number of students receiving services compared to a 6 per cent increase in the number of children receiving early intervention services.

AVERAGE PROGRAM NUMBERS based on service provision data provided by organisations from Term 3 2009 to Term 2 2010		
Autism SA Early Intervention	246	
Autism SA School Support	1147	1393
Novita Children's Services Early Intervention	323	
Novita Children's Services School Support	513	836
Down Syndrome Society Early Intervention	49	
Down Syndrome Society School Support	137	186
Cora Barclay Centre Early Intervention	58	
Cora Barclay Centre School Support	122	180
Townsend House Early Intervention	106	
Townsend House School Support	78	184
Guide Dogs Association Early Intervention	3	
Guide Dogs Association School Support	32	35
Children in Residential Care (CIRC)	37	
PLCHS Early Intervention and Support Program	14	
Early Development Program (Seaton)	16	
Miriam High Special Needs Centre Early Intervention	43	
Inclusive Directions Early Intervention	557	
TOTAL	3481	

3. Projects

Each year, the Committee undertakes a number of statewide projects that have been approved by the Minister for Education and Minister for Early Childhood Development. 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 most projects and members are chosen for their experience and expertise in the particular topic. Two new projects were conducted in 2010 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 these, two projects from 2009 were completed in 2010. It was also a transition year to the New Funding Model, which will be implemented in 2011. Relevant information is provided below.

Mental Health for Students with a Disability—Successful Practice

The Committee undertook a project in the latter half of 2009 in conjunction with the KidsMatter Primary Evaluation team based at Flinders University to evaluate the outcomes of the KidsMatter Primary Mental Health initiative for South Australian students with a disability. The report of this project was completed in 2010 and approved for publication by the Minister. It is available on the Committee's website. The project found that students with a disability experienced improved mental health over the time that the KidsMatter Primary Mental Health initiative was implemented at their school (one to two years), and that students with a disability are more likely to experience mental health problems than their peers without a disability. The findings of the project were shared with the KidsMatter Primary partners: Commonwealth Government Department of Health and Ageing, beyondblue: the national depression initiative, the Australian Psychological Society, Principals Australia and Australian Rotary Health. The findings were also presented at the Research in Special Education (RISE) Conference, 10 November 2010, hosted by Flinders University, Adelaide.

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

The Committee undertook a project in 2009 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 of development and how they interface with the education sectors concerning physical wellbeing.

The project group collected information on recreational and physical activity; and sporting programs available to students with a disability in the community. They found that 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.

Schools were surveyed by electronic questionnaire to gather information on how students are included in a range of physical activity options available in schools. Demographic information on the location of PE teachers was gathered prior to the dispatch of this questionnaire. This information was analysed to determine whether there was 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. 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 of this project was completed in 2010 and includes an overview of available programs for students with a disability. The Minister approved publication of the report, which is available on the Committee's website.

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>Helen McLaren</i>	Project Officer
<i>Fiona Snodgrass</i>	Project Officer
<i>Christel Butcher</i>	Executive Officer

New Funding Model

With the Minister's approval, the Committee had been reviewing the funding formula and associated processes since 2008. It had become apparent that the funding formula (developed in 1997/98) was not proving to be 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.

In addition, 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 collected information from organisations to be able to gauge the number of children and students involved and took that information into consideration in the development of the new funding model.

The Minister gave approval for the new funding model to become effective from 2011. The 2010 funding year was regarded as 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 is 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 is dedicated to this element.
- *Outreach Support Element* – Additional funding to the Specific Service Support Element described above is available for Outreach services. 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 did not award capital grants to organisations in 2010 but intends to review this decision after three years.

Representatives of the Committee met with affected non-government organisations in 2009 and continued to consult with these organisations during 2010 as they worked with the new funding model and used new data recording forms for the first time. Data on services provided during terms 1 and 2 of 2010 using the categories of General Support, Specific Service Support and Outreach Support were used to determine funding allocations for 2011.

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

The Committee was aware that the inclusion of children and students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) continued to be a topic of interest for the Minister, parents and teachers. In 2010, with the Minister's approval, the Committee established a project to investigate what care and education options were available for children with ASD in South Australia and in other jurisdictions of Australia and overseas. A project group was formed and colleagues from interstate consulted. A review of the literature was also conducted to examine outcomes of various models of care and education for children and students with Autism Spectrum Disorder from Australia and overseas. The group was particularly interested in the provision of specialist autism schools and satellite autism classes in mainstream schools. The first of six autism specific childcare centres to be established Australia wide had been opened in Prospect, South Australia, in 2009.

The project found that approximately 3400 children and students with Autism Spectrum Disorder attended South Australian schools in 2010 and of these, almost 2000 attended mainstream schools. It also found strong international argument for an inclusive model of care and education with specialist considerations for this cohort. The report of the project was completed in August 2010. It contains advice to the Minister regarding the future direction of care and education options for children and students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in South Australia. The Minister has approved the report for publication and it is available on the Committee's website.

Project Group Membership

<i>Chairperson</i>	
<i>Margaret Wallace</i>	Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities Chairperson
<i>Members</i>	
<i>John Brigg</i>	Department of Education and Children's Services Director Disability Services
<i>Libby Burns</i>	Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities Association of Independent Schools of SA Program Manager, Special Learning Needs
<i>Stephanie Grant</i>	Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities Catholic Education SA Senior Education Adviser – Special Education
<i>Brian Matthews</i>	Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities Minister's nominee
<i>Jon Martin</i>	Autism SA Chief Executive Officer
<i>Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities</i>	
<i>Jo Shearer</i>	Project Officer
<i>Christel Butcher</i>	Executive Officer

Services Provided by Non-Government Organisations

In 2010, the Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities (MAC: SWD) investigated what services funded by the committee have been provided by non-government organisations over the past three years (2007 to 2009).

The committee wanted to develop a profile of previous service provision to form base-line information from which to assess the effect of changes in future service provisions. The profile would take into consideration the new funding structure and guidelines for services developed by the Committee for implementation from 2011.

It was agreed to analyse the data of five of the non-government organisations because these organisations received funding to provide both early intervention and school support services and a broader profile of service provision was therefore possible. Other organisations funded by MAC: SWD provided only early intervention services. The five selected agencies were Autism SA, CanDo4Kids-Townsend House, Cora Barclay Centre, Down Syndrome Society of SA and Novita Children's Services. Summary data for the three year period and more detailed data for Terms 3 and 4, 2007 (which was used to inform funding allocations for 2009) have been analysed for trends over time. The project has been overseen by the Chairperson of the Standing Committee, Ms Margaret Wallace, and the report will be presented to the Minister for Education early in 2011.

4. Activities in 2010

Committee Leadership and Secretariat Staffing

There were no changes in the Committee's leadership during 2010. Ms Margaret Wallace continued as Chairperson, with Dr Mary Bambacas as Deputy Chairperson.

Dr Helen McLaren was appointed to the position of Project Officer (research) 0.5 FTE in January and resigned in June to take up a position in another department full time. Ms Miriam Parsons was appointed to the position of Project Officer (research) 0.5 FTE in July for an initial period of six months to temporarily fill this vacancy and has since been appointed to the position on a fixed term contract.

Ms Betty Tsoutouras, Project Officer (funding) resigned in November to take up a higher position in another department. This position remains vacant at the end of 2010.

Ms Jenny Knight was replaced in the position of Executive Secretary by Ms Maria De Fazio in July, who will continue in this position 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:

- Joint presentation with Dr Katherine Dix, KidsMatter Evaluation, Senior Evaluation Officer, on the findings of the 2010 report *KidsMatter for Students with a Disability: Evaluation Report* at the *Research in Special Education Conference* at Flinders University on 10 November 2010.

5. Future

Projects for 2011

Three projects have been approved by the Minister.

Equipment for Children and Students with a Disability

Members of the committee expressed concern about access to and availability of equipment for children and students with a disability in South Australia.

It would appear that the processes for acquiring equipment to support children's access and participation in care and education services are unclear for families. They often face lengthy waiting times and children's needs might have changed before they receive their prescribed equipment. There appear to be additional complications with the transferability of equipment provided, for example from childcare services to educational services and to home. Members commented that the processes for acquiring equipment to support access and participation in care and education differ from state to state in Australia.

The project's aim will be to develop a report for the Minister informing him about equipment provisions in South Australia for children and students with a disability with a view to improve access and participation in care and education services.

Support for Children and Students with a Disability Information Resource

In 2006, the Committee published a resource for families, educators and care providers, which gave an overview of support services for children and students with disabilities across the education, health and disability sectors. This resource was distributed to all care services, preschools and schools in South Australia. The Committee has received feedback that this resource is very helpful and widely used in the care and education communities. The Committee has received a request that this resource be updated with more current information.

KidsMatter Early Childhood for Children with a Disability

MAC:SWD has kept a watching brief on the topic of mental health of children and students with a disability since 2006. Two reports have been published since then; *Mental Health and Children and Students with a Disability* in 2007 and *KidsMatter for Students with a Disability: Evaluation Report* in 2010. The latter project was undertaken in partnership with the KidsMatter Evaluation team, chaired by Prof Phillip Slee at Flinders University. The KidsMatter initiative has received ongoing Australian Government funding and has developed KidsMatter Early Childhood, which is currently being piloted in childcare settings and preschools across Australia. KidsMatter Early Childhood is also subject to evaluation by the Flinders University based team.

The Committee has been approached by the manager of the KidsMatter Early Childhood evaluation to again work in partnership to evaluate the effectiveness of this initiative for South Australian children with a disability and their families in the early years.