

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

Ministerial Advisory Committee: Children and Students with Disability

Report for the Minister for Education and Child Development



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Introduction

Role and purpose

The Ministerial Advisory Committee: Children and Students with Disability (MAC:CSWD) was established in 1989 by the Minister for Education as an advisory committee under Section 10 of the *Education Act 1972*.

The committee:

- provides advice to the Minister on the allocation and application of Government grants to assist children and students with disability
- conducts research and manages projects, as required or approved by the Minister
- provides advice to the Minister on issues that impact on access and participation for children and students with disability in early childhood education and care (ECEC) services and schools. This work is undertaken with the view to supporting these children and students to access and participate in an inclusive education on the same basis as their peers without disability
- supports the capacity of non-government organisations to provide services to children and students with disability in early childhood education and care services and schools across the three education sectors
- consults with community and key stakeholders
- provides advice on other matters referred to it by the Minister
- provides information about the role and function of the committee and consults with community based organisations who have an interest in the work of the committee.

Context statement

MAC: CSWD is supported by the Non-Government Schools and Services Unit, in the Department for Education and Child Development.

Our vision

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

Our mission

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

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.

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

Members of MAC: CSWD are appointed by the Minister for Education and Child Development. Members are chosen for their knowledge and experience in relation to children and students with disability.

In 2016 the committee was redesigned following recommendations from the *Boards and Committees: Interim Report* published by the Premier. The new structure included five nominations from the Minister to the committee. They are:

- a parent
- a student
- a person who is Aboriginal
- a person who has a professional involvement in disability services, care and education,
- chairperson

The new structure also included a nomination from:

- Catholic Education SA
- Association of Independent Schools of SA
- Department for Education and Child Development (Early Years)
- Department for Education and Child Development (School Years)
- Australian Education Union (SA Branch)
- Independent Education Union (SA)

The term of appointment for membership in 2016 expired on 31 December 2016.

The committee meets at least 6 times per year. In 2016 the committee met six times.

Membership

Ms Margaret Wallace, Chairperson

Ms Cathy Leane, Minister's Nominee (Aboriginal people)

Ms Alice Duffield, Association of Independent Schools of SA

Ms Sue Bailey, Independent Education Union (SA)

Dr Kerry Bissaker, Minister's Nominee (professional)

Ms Kerri Vowles, Minister's Nominee (parent)

Ms Mary Carmody, Catholic Education SA

Ms Jocelyn Neumuller, Minister's Nominee (student)

Ms Gael Little, Department for Education and Child Development, School Years

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

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

Committee leadership and secretariat staffing

Ms Margaret Wallace continued as Chairperson in 2016.

The committee's secretariat provides funding, research, project, administrative and organisational support. In 2016 it consisted of the following staff.

Mr Skye Yuill Executive Officer (full-time)

Ms Jane Fairlie Senior Project Officer (0.8 FTE)

Ms Kerry Pienaar Project and Policy Officer (0.7 FTE) until 30 June 2016.

Ms Alexandra Christopher Project and Policy Officer (0.8 FTE) until 10 March 2016

Ms Maria DeFazio Administration Officer (0.6 FTE) until 30 June 2016

Ms Thea White, Project Officer (full time) from 18 July 2016 to 14 October 2016

Funding

Overview of funding process

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

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

Funding allocations

National Equity program grants

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

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

The current funding model came into effect from 2011. It was agreed that grants should continue to be allocated based on retrospective service delivery and the amount would depend on the level and type of service provided by the organisations. An exception was made in one case – where a base grant was allocated to a small early years intervention program in 2016.

The funding model consists of three elements:

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

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

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

The allocation of funds for the National Equity program for the 2016 calendar year was \$4,454,410.

State Government grants

The Women's and Children's Health Network's Access Assistant program and Joint Sector Intensive and Crisis Support program received funding administered by MAC:CSWD on behalf of the Minister for Education and Child Development..

The Access Assistant program supports children with severe physical disability and/or complex health care needs in preschools and schools across the three education sectors in South Australia. Without this program many children would not be able to attend their school. The South Australian Government wholly funds the program. In 2016 the program received \$2,937,796.

MAC:CSWD manages funding for the Joint Sector Intensive and Crisis Support program, which is accessible to the three education sectors in South Australia. This funding provides school-based support for children and students during a period of unexpected need, often due to complex health support requirements on return to school after hospitalisation. An amount of \$51,250 was allocated to support this program in 2016.

Total State Government special education grant allocations

The total amount allocated in 2016 was \$7,422,956.

Organisations/programs that received grants in 2016 consisted of:

- 8 non-government organisations offering early years intervention and/or school support programs (see note below)
- Women's and Children's Health Network's Access Assistant program
- Joint Sector Intensive and Crisis Support program.

Note: Funding to seven of the eight non-government organisations was allocated retrospectively (as described earlier). The basis of funding for calendar year 2016 was data on services provided from the beginning of Term 3, 2014 (July) to the end of Term 2, 2015 (June). The remaining non-government organisation that provided an Early Years Intervention program was provided with a base grant.

TABLE 1: 2016 Funding allocations

State Government Special Education Grants for 2016			
State Government Grant (for January to December 2016)		\$ (GST ex)	Total
Women's and Children's Health Network Access Assistant program		\$2,937,796	
Joint sector intensive & crisis support		\$30,750	
			\$2,968,546
National Equity Program Grants (for January to December 2016)		\$ (GST ex)	Totals
Autism SA	Early intervention	\$783,692	
	School support	\$1,149,672	\$1,933,364
Novita Children's Services	Early intervention	\$446,555	
	School support	\$878,842	\$1,325,397
Down Syndrome SA	Early intervention	\$21,796	
	School support	\$69,198	\$90,994
Cora Barclay Centre	Early intervention	\$84,390	
	School support	\$112,002	\$196,392
Townsend House (Can:Do4Kids)	Early intervention	\$123,487	
	School support	\$135,869	\$259,356
Guide Dogs SA/NT	Early intervention	\$17,045	
	School support	\$125,538	\$142,583
Inclusive Directions	Early intervention	\$415,824	
Miriam High Special Needs Centre, Port Augusta Early Intervention		\$70,000	
Joint sector intensive and crisis support		\$20,500	
			\$7,422,956

Number of children and students supported

Data on the number of children and students registered and who received services from July 2015 to June 2016 was collected during 2016. These data were used to inform funding for the upcoming year (2017).

Based on an average over four terms and for all funded non-government organisations, there were 3,966 children registered for early years intervention services and 11086 students for school support services.

Of these (averaged over the four terms), 3,209 children and students received a service, of which 1211 children (38%), received an early years intervention service, and 1,998 students (62%) received a school support service. Overall, approximately 5% more children and students received a service than in the previous year.

During the same period of time, the Women's and Children's Health Network's Access Assistant program provided services, on average, to 225 children and students with complex health needs. In 2016, 20 children and students were supported through the Joint Sector Intensive and Crisis Support program.

Overall, on average, a total of 3454 children and students with disability received additional services to support their early years development and participation in educational and care services from July 2015 to June 2016.

TABLE 2: Average program numbers (based on service provision data provided from Term 3, 2015 - Term 2, 2016)

Non-government organisation	No. of children receiving a service		
	Early Years Intervention	School Support	Total
Autism SA	167	844	1011
Novita Children's Services	479	819	1298
Down Syndrome SA	27	54	81
Cora Barclay Centre	23	82	105
Townsend House (Can: Do4Kids)	76	104	180
Guide Dogs SA/NT	9	95	104
Inclusive Directions	396	N/A	396
Miriam High Special Needs Centre (Port Augusta)	34	N/A	34
Sub totals	1211	1998	3209
Other programs	No. of children receiving a service		
Women's and Children's Health Network Access Assistant Program			225
Joint Sector Intensive and Crisis Support Program			20
Total			3454

Projects

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

Projects focus on children and students with disability and their education and care services. Project groups are convened for most projects and members are chosen for their experience and expertise on a particular topic. Some projects are ongoing. Summaries of the work undertaken in 2016 are provided below. Once approved by the Minister, reports from project work are made available at the committee's website: www.decd.sa.gov.au/departments/about-department/maccswd.

Funding for disability services

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

Since the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) commenced in South Australia in 2013, MAC:CSWD has been monitoring the impact of the NDIS on MAC:CSWD funded services and children and students with disability that receive these services.

This project is ongoing whilst the transition to the NDIS continues in South Australia. The Committee has reported back to the Minister previously by reports, briefs and letters and will continue to keep her updated in 2017.

The total number of service minutes delivered by non-government organisations to children and students with disability via MAC:CSWD funding has reduced in recent years as some organisations have transitioned to providing more service minutes via NDIS funding. The committee commenced reviewed the current funding model in 2016 in response to the changing trends in service delivery and will implement outcomes of the review in 2017.

Documenting effective building practices for children and students with a disability

The Effective Building Design for Children and Students with Disability project report has been completed and is available on the MAC:CSWD website: <https://www.decd.sa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net691/f/effective-building-practices-for-children-and-students-with-disability-august-2016.pdf>

The report identifies and documents building processes that facilitate access and optimise participation for children and students with disability at early childhood education and care settings and schools.

Same first day for children with disability and/or additional needs

In 2015 the South Australian Minister for Education and Child Development asked the Ministerial Advisory Committee: Children and Students with Disability (MAC:CSWD) to enquire with families of

children with disability and educators about their experience of the Same First Day policy, and to identify successful models of transition.

This small scale study undertaken by MAC:CSWD reviewed the impact and implications of the Same First Day policy for children with disability and/or additional needs in preschools or schools in 28 sites across the three educational sectors in South Australia.

Consultations were undertaken by MAC:CSWD with families, preschool directors, school leaders, educators, and disability support/advisory consultants regarding children with disability and their introduction and adjustment to preschool and school across the three educational sectors.

A report was provided to the Minister in 2016.

Minister's Specialist Sound Technology Grants 2016

In 2016 the MAC:CSWD administered the Minister's Specialist Sound Technology Grants 2016, on behalf of the Minister. A total of 48 sites were recommended for funding, delivering a total of \$428,005 towards the installation of new Soundfield Systems. Funds were allocated based on a range of considerations, including:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander enrolments
- the index of community socio educational advantage
- children and students with a hearing impairment.

A list of funded schools and preschools is available at www.decd.sa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net691/f/list-of-specialist-sound-technology-grants-schools.pdf .

Additional work

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

In 2016 MAC:CSWD developed new terms of reference which are available at the MAC:CSWD website www.decd.sa.gov.au/department/about-department/maccswd. The committee was restructured with membership streamlined with membership reduced from sixteen to eleven members.

MAC:CSWD secretariat staff represent the committee on reference groups and working parties that are relevant to the committee's work. For example, in 2016 the Executive Officer, MAC:CSWD was a member of the Minister's Post School Transition Taskforce for students with disability and was a member of the National Disability Coordination Officer Program Reference Group.

MAC:CSWD consulted key stakeholders using the *Better Together Principles of Engagement* including the the Chief Executive of the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia, the Director of Catholic Education South Australia, the Director of Disability Policy and Programs, Department for Education and Child Development, key staff from organisations that receive MAC:CSWD Funding, the Australian Education Union and others.

MAC:CSWD continued to convene meetings and have a facilitating role in the establishment of a single equipment pool for children and students with disability at the Domiciliary Equipment Service (DES) to be utilised by the three education sectors. In 2017 MAC:CSWD will no longer be involved as the sectors are able to make arrangements directly with DES without MAC:CSWD's involvement.

In 2016 MAC:CSWD completed a project investigating the extent to which students with disability participate and achieve completion of schooling in South Australia for the Minister. MAC:CSWD also completed a scoping exercise for the Minister regarding professional learning for the team of teacher and school support officer working with students with Autism in South Australia.

The committee continues to distribute the MAC:CSWD developed child protection booklet *A Guide to Protecting Children and Young People with Disability and Preventing Sexual Abuse*, which is a companion to the Families SA booklet, *Protecting Children and Young People with Disability: A Booklet for Parents and Carers*. Requests continue to come for the booklet.

