



Inquiry into Sustainable Employment for Disadvantaged Jobseekers

Submission by Children and Young People with Disability Australia, August 2019

Overview

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) is the national representative organisation for children and young people with disability aged 0 – 25 years. CYDA has an extensive national membership of over 5,000 young people with disability, families and caregivers of children with disability with the majority of our members being families.

CYDA's purpose is to advocate systemically at the national level for the rights and interests of all children and young people with disability living in Australia and it undertakes the following to achieve its purpose:

- Listen and respond to the voices and experiences of children and young people with disability.
- Advocate for children and young people with disability for equal opportunities, participation and inclusion in the Australian community.
- Educate national public policy-makers and the broader community about the experiences of children and young people with disability.
- Inform children and young people with disability, their families and care givers about their citizenship rights and entitlements.
- Celebrate the successes and achievements of children and young people with disability.

CYDA is pleased to provide this brief submission to the Inquiry into Sustainable Employment for Disadvantaged Jobseekers. CYDA has not had the opportunity to consult broadly about this submission with our members and thus we are drawing on our previous work, submissions and joint submissions.¹

Background

According to the ABS² there are 274, 600 young people aged between 5 and 14 with disability in Australia and 249,600 young people with disability aged 15 and 24.

Compared with other OECD³ countries, Australia has one of the lowest employment participation rates for people with disability.⁴ Only 9% of people with disability report they have the same employment opportunities as other people.⁵ Complaints about discrimination in employment make

¹ See a) Children and Young People with Disability Australia (2018) Submission to the Department of Jobs and Small Business, Future Employment Services, Discussion Paper

b) Children and Young People with Disability (2015) Post School Transition, The Experiences of Student's with Disability <https://www.cyda.org.au/post-school-transition>

c) Disability Rights Now 2019 Australian Civil Society Shadow Report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: UN CRPD Review 2019 <https://dpoa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/CRPD-Shadow-Report-2019-English-PDF.pdf>

² ABS, 44300DO020_2015 Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2015 Released at 11.30am (Canberra time) Thursday 12 January 2017

³ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), <http://www.oecd.org/>

⁴ See Price Waterhouse Coopers (2011) [Disability Expectations: Investing in a better life, a stronger Australia.](#)

⁵ National CRPD Survey (2019) Findings. <https://dpoa.org.au/crpd-shadow-report-consultation-survey-results/>

up a significant proportion of all disability discrimination complaints made to Australian anti-discrimination agencies.⁶

People with disability have significantly lower levels of educational attainment than those without disability. Only 36% of people with disability aged 15-64 years complete secondary education compared to 60% of people without disability.⁷

The youth unemployment rate in Australia is 11.2% for those aged 15 to 24 in the labour force, and remains stubbornly high and is still more than twice Australia's overall unemployment rate (5%).⁸ Unemployment for young people with disability is not well measured, but will be considerably higher as Australia has one of the lowest employment participation rates for people with disability.⁹ Only 9% of people with disability report they have the same employment opportunities as other people.¹⁰

In order to ensure sustainable employment for young people with disability, there are multiple structural, attitudinal and systemic issues that need to be addressed. In CYDA's report, Post School Transition, the Experiences of Students with Disability¹¹ we found:

A critical need for education reform

Australia, including Victoria, is not meeting its obligations under the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD) for inclusive education¹². The common education experience of students with disability is poor, at times harmful and not providing the opportunities for post-school transitions.

Changing attitudes and misconceptions

Discrimination and a culture of low expectations are the mainstay of post school transition for students with disability in their education, in the community and with businesses.

Creating opportunities and access

Post school transition for students with disability is addressed in an ad hoc manner and appears to be an optional extra for schools, and the wider support system for young people with disability. Information, services, programs and resources to assist young people during the transition are fragmented across state and Commonwealth programs and services.

The importance of resources and planning

Professional development of teachers in supporting young people with disability in their post school transitions is needed along with adequate resources and funding.

Streamlining coordination, partnerships and accountability

Post school transition for young people with disability occurs across sectors including education and training, employment and welfare and any approach to addressing post-school transition must take a collaborative-cross sectoral response.

⁶ Australian Human Rights Commission (2016) [Willing to Work: National Inquiry into Employment Discrimination Against Older Australians and Australians with Disability](#), AHRC, Sydney. (2015)

⁷ Sands, T. (2017), Disabled People's Organisations Australia (DPO Australia) [Submission to the 2017/2018 Federal Budget](#).

⁸ Brotherhood of St Laurence, Youth Unemployment Monitor, March 2019

http://library.bsl.org.au/jspui/bitstream/1/11134/2/BSL_Smashing_the_avocado_debate_youth_unemployment_hotspots_Mar2019.pdf

⁹ See: Price Waterhouse Coopers (2011) [Disability Expectations: Investing in a better life, a stronger Australia](#).

¹⁰ National CRPD Survey (2019) Findings.

¹¹ Children and Young People with Disability (2015) Post School Transition, The Experiences of Student's with Disability <https://www.cyda.org.au/post-school-transition>

¹² United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General comment No. 4 (2016) Article 24: Right to inclusive education

Young people with disability report to CYDA the direct experience of post school transition is characterised by limited information about options, negative attitudes and low expectations from schools, employment, Vocational Education and Training (VET) and higher education providers.¹³

For young people with disability accessing and maintaining employment is rarely experienced as a positive and meaningful experience. Instead, accessing and obtaining employment is typically characterised by disadvantage and exclusion.

While the Victorian Government has released its *Transforming career education in Victorian government schools plan*¹⁴, this plan does not make specific reference to students with disability who face significant barriers in post school transition. Additionally Victoria continues to run a dual track education system for students with disability, mainstream and special settings, despite Australia being a signatory to the UNCPRD which clarifies that inclusive education is not provided in segregated settings.

The Victorian Government has also not yet fully implemented all of the recommendations of the review of the Program for Students with Disability.¹⁵

Improving and monitoring the educational experience for children and young people with disability needs to be a key priority for the Victorian Government. A comprehensive framework to collect disaggregated data on the enrolment, participation (including suspensions and expulsions), completion, educational attainment and use of restrictive practice for students with disability is urgently required. This framework needs to cover early childhood, through school, post schooling education and pathways after education.

Some of levers for employment of people with disability sit at the Commonwealth level such as Disability Employment Services. The Commonwealth also continues to support segregated employment for people with disability through Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs), enabling employers to pay people with disability lower wages than other people, and with less than 1% having opportunities to move into mainstream employment. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has specifically addressed segregated employment of people with disability and clarified that segregated employment and wage discrimination is in contravention of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

The Victorian government can boost investment in a number of initiatives to ensure young people with disability obtain meaningful and secure work. This includes boosting funding to the Jobs Victoria Employment Network with a specific focus on young job seekers with disability. It is also important to evaluate the take up of free TAFE by young people with disability and provide additional funding to address barriers.

The Victorian Government can address the disadvantage faced by young people with disability in securing employment and secure, rewarding work by developing and funding a whole of government Victorian Youth Employment Plan which includes young people with disability as a priority cohort for action, along with other disadvantaged job seekers. This Youth Employment Plan needs to address the systemic, structural and altitudinal barriers that young people with disability face, and prioritise funding for key actions.

¹³ Children and Young People with Disability (2015)

¹⁴https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/teachingresources/careers/Transforming_Career_Education.pdf

¹⁵ Victorian Government (2016) Review of the Program for Students with Disability
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/department/PSD-Review-Report.pdf>

Recommendations

- Develop and implement a Victorian Action Plan for Inclusive Education that includes a legislative and policy framework that fully complies with Article 24 and CRPD General Comment 4.
- The Victorian Department of Education report on the progress of the career education reform for students with disability.
- The Victorian Department of Education provide a comprehensive framework to collect disaggregated data for children and young people with disability from early childhood, schooling, post school education and pathways after education.
- The Victorian Government ensures students with disability can access a quality post school transition process¹⁶.
- Introduce mandatory professional development for school staff (particularly careers teachers) in post school transition for students with disability.
- Develop and fund a Victorian Youth Employment Plan which includes young people with disability as a priority cohort.

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¹⁶ Post school transition processes for young people with disability must include:

- a. Transition planning to begin early, by Year 9;
- b. Planning to be person-centred;
- c. High expectations to be embedded throughout the process;
- d. Work experience opportunities and the facilitation of part time work — connections with local businesses and employers will be essential for this;
- e. Foundational skills to be addressed;
- f. Career development planning to take place; and
- g. Follow up with young people post school