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**Submission to the Senate Select Committee on Autism inquiry**

**Children and Young People with Disability Australia**

**July 2020**

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# Introduction

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. To do this, we focus on the following:

* Listening and responding to the voices and experiences of children and young people with disability
* Advocating for children and young people with disability for equal opportunities, participation and inclusion in the Australian community
* Educating national public policy-makers and the broader community about the experiences of children and young people with disability
* Informing children and young people with disability, their families and caregivers about their citizenship rights and entitlements
* Celebrating the successes and achievements of children and young people with disability.

CYDA appreciates the opportunity to provide this submission to the Senate Select Committee on Autism. Our submission primarily responds to items (f), (g) and (i) in the inquiry’s terms of reference, and focuses on the need to implement genuinely inclusive practices for children and young people with disability in their early years, at school and in their post school transition.

CYDA operates from a human rights perspective, with all of our work informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As such, we advocate taking a strengths-based, developmental approach to providing support to all children and young people with disability, rather, including autism, rather than taking a diagnostic approach. We also recognise the diversity of disability and note that many children and adults with disability, including autistic people, experience more than one form of disability; therefore we are concerned that taking a diagnostic-specific approach can be limiting and may not encompass the individuals’ experiences as a whole. Because strategies and approaches that might work for one type of disability work across disability, if you only take a diagnosis approach this misses the benefits of what can be achieved by adopting a social model of disability rather than a medical/diagnostic approach.

In response to item (h) in the inquiry’s terms of reference, we provide our submission to the 2019 Tune Review as an attachment. This submission, *Improving the NDIS for children and young people with disability and their families*, outlines the key challenges facing children and young people, and their families and caregivers, through their interactions with the NDIS, and beginning even before they enter the Scheme.

We recognise there are considerable NDIS-related challenges facing autistic children and young people, however we consider that addressing the broader challenges facing all children and young people will go a large way to addressing these specific challenges, and will allow for a more inclusive Scheme in general.

# Our recommendations

**Develop a truly inclusive education system**

* Promote inclusion from the early years of life
* Phase out the segregation of students with disability in Australian schools
* Address low expectations for students and young people with disability
* Boost investment from governments for students with disability

**Deliver strong post-school outcomes for young people with disability**

* Improve employment outcomes for young people with disability
* Ensure income support programs allow young people with disability to live above the poverty line
* Enable access to further education and training for young people with disability

**Ensure access to appropriate disability services and support**

* Ensure the NDIS is relevant and works for children and young people
* Guarantee direct supports are safe, appropriate, and come from a rights-based approach
* Address the interface issues between the NDIS and other systems
* Investigate and address gender inequality and promote inclusion.

# Develop a truly inclusive education system

As well as the usual challenges students often face in their school lives and transitions out of school, students with disability, including autistic students, face a range of additional barriers. They generally do not have access to education of the same quality as students without disability, and are often segregated in special schools or excluded in mainstream schools. Students with disability are also significantly more likely to face restrictive practices such as restraint and seclusion.

During and after school, people often hold lower expectations for young people with disability, and they receive little tailored information or assistance around career planning and early employment. This discrimination and inequality continues throughout people’s lives, with significantly poorer outcomes for people with disability in areas including higher education, employment, health, and social participation.

Extensive evidence shows that inclusive education is a major part of improving academic and social outcomes for students with disability[[1]](#footnote-1), consequently having positive impacts for their adult lives. The right to inclusive education is protected under the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disability (Article 24), of which Australia is a signatory.[[2]](#footnote-2)

### Promote inclusion from the early years of life

“Children with disability [including children with autism] are children first, and have the same core needs as other children. These core needs are: good health care and adequate nutrition, security and safety, responsive caregiving, opportunities for early learning, experiences of a range of environments, and opportunities for meaningful participation in home and community activities. In focusing too much on trying to address the child’s impairments, it can be easy to lose sight of these basic needs.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

Therefore the focus for children with autism in the early years should be about supporting strong families, and inclusion in community activities such as high quality early childhood education and care, playgroup and having a strong transition to their local schools, not segregated from their non‑disabled peers during these critically important early years. Extensive evidence shows the benefits of early childhood education on cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes for children, and that particularly large benefits can be seen for children experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.[[4]](#footnote-4)

### Phase out the segregation of students with disability in Australian schools

Improving post-school outcomes for young people with disability begins with positive and inclusive experiences in schools and supports wellbeing throughout their lives. People with disability in Australia are less likely to finish school and more likely to leave before the age of 16, and less than a third of people with disability aged 20 or over have completed Year 12-level schooling – compared with 62 per cent of people without a disability.[[5]](#footnote-5) High rates of school disengagement, lack of tailored support, and continuing segregation in schools contribute to poorer post-school opportunities and outcomes for young people with disability.

Evidence shows that inclusive education “has positive benefits for everyone”[[6]](#footnote-6) – students with and without disabilities, as well as teachers and the broader school community – but a range of barriers prevent it from being implemented, and in many places the rate of segregated schooling is actually increasing.[[7]](#footnote-7)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities emphasises that no form of segregation constitutes inclusive education,[[8]](#footnote-8) but many students with disability in Australia currently experience segregated education programs, including attending special schools, participating in special units in mainstream schools, or having no appropriate option except home‑schooling. More students with disability are attending special schools over mainstreams schools than a decade ago.[[9]](#footnote-9) For example, recent data shows that there are 15,521 students enrolled in 108 special schools across Victoria, with enrolment rates in special schools increasing by 53 per cent since 2010.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Further data collected by CYDA through our 2019 National Education Survey[[11]](#footnote-11) showed that:

* 12.5 per cent of the 505 respondents report were refused enrolment
* 16.6 per cent do not attend school full-time
* 14 per cent have been suspended
* 1 in 4 have been subject to abuse by being restrained or secluded.

These negative experiences through their school years, as well as a lack of appropriate transition support, contribute to lower school completion rates for young people with disability. Research from the University of Melbourne finds that at least 50,000 children and young people of school age are disengaged from the Australia education system, including students with disability, and to date there has been no national response to this issue.[[12]](#footnote-12)

CYDA’s submission to the Disability Royal Commission around inclusive education makes extensive recommendations to address the violence, abuse and neglect of students with disability, and to deliver truly inclusive education for students in Australia.[[13]](#footnote-13)

CYDA is also chair and co-convenor of the Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education and has provided a roadmap for transitioning Australia’s education to provide inclusive education, *Driving change: A roadmap for achieving inclusive education in Australia* (Appendix C).[[14]](#footnote-14) This roadmap provides recommendations for stepped changes to achieving inclusive education to ensure Australia complies with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD)

### Address low expectations for students and young people with disability

“Everyone just said I’d never get a job, even though I wanted to”

 — Young person with disability over 25 years old, regional New South Wales

Low expectations for children and young people with disability throughout their schooling – from schools, communities, and government and policy approaches – significantly undermine inclusion and can affect students’ career planning and post-school outcomes. This is reflected by responses to CYDA’s 2019 survey, in which 70 per cent of students with disability and their families reported facing specific challenges in their post-school planning because they experience disability.

Low expectations can manifest in a lack of encouragement for students with disability to choose subjects that will lead to an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score.

“Yes, I was told not to bother applying for postgraduate study due to my disability by a disability support officer.”

 — Young person with disability aged 19-20 years old, metropolitan Queensland

Roughly 70 per cent of students with disability responding to our survey report they were not encouraged to complete or to choose subjects to lead a good ATAR score for higher education (Table 4 in Appendix A).

“Low expectations of students. Teachers told parents at an assembly that "most [students] would not "go onto university." Situation even worse for those with both visible and invisible disabilities. My application for special consideration as part of HSC exams was denied by the school, without adequate explanation”

 — Young person with disability over 25 years old, metropolitan Victoria

The need to improve career-planning supports for students with disability is recognised in a recent report from the Education Council, which recommends “all senior secondary students with disability… have access to work exploration in school and, in collaboration with disability support groups, have an individual post-school transition plan put in place prior to leaving school.”[[15]](#footnote-15)

### Boost investment from governments for students with disability

To date, there is little prioritisation or commitment shown by governments across the country for inclusive education, despite commitments through the UN CRPD. For example, the 2019 Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration,[[16]](#footnote-16) which aims to improve outcomes for all young Australians and promote excellence and equity in the Australian education system, and has been endorsed by all Australian Education Ministers, only includes one mention of the word ‘disability.’ The Australia Coalition for Inclusive Education (ACIE), of which CYDA is the convenor, has expressed strong disappointment with the lack of recognition for the needs of children and young people with disability in this plan,[[17]](#footnote-17) which means the systemic barriers to implementing inclusive education remain unresolved.

Over 200 organisations have recently called for the development of a national Action Plan for inclusive education,[[18]](#footnote-18) and for it to “include a legislative and policy framework that fully complies with Article 24 and General Comment 4.”[[19]](#footnote-19) CYDA considers the development and effective implementation of an inclusive education Action Plan would ensure access to genuinely inclusive education for autistic students as well as students with dual disability and other primary disabilities.[[20]](#footnote-20)

“What would I like to see change?

Cut the red tape, consider that as a human being I am entitled to a quality equitable education just like anyone else, with access to the curriculum, supports tailored to my needs, provide good communication, proper measures in place to support me socially and with mental health. Many of the things that can make it better for students with disability do not cost more, they just require someone to care enough to consider my needs, so attitudes here are very important.”

 — Autistic university student in NSW

# Deliver strong post-school outcomes for young people with disability

Inclusion begins before and at school. School systems that promote segregation and exclusion contribute to continued educational, economic and social exclusion for people with disability throughout their lives. Early school leaving and the disengagement of students with disability in post-school pathways also have an impact on the Australian economy, with direct fiscal and social costs, such as higher reliance on welfare and government health programs, reduced tax payments and productivity losses.[[21]](#footnote-21) In order to improve post-school outcomes for autistic young people and young people with disability in general, it is critical to address the attitudinal, structural and systemic issues facing these students and young people.

### Improve employment outcomes for young people with disability

Compared with other OECD countries, Australia has one of the lowest employment participation rates for people with disability.[[22]](#footnote-22) Only nine per cent of people with disability report they have the same employment opportunities as other people,[[23]](#footnote-23) and complaints about discrimination in employment make up a significant proportion of all disability discrimination complaints made to Australian anti-discrimination agencies.[[24]](#footnote-24)

The youth unemployment rate in Australia remains stubbornly high, generally around double the overall unemployment rate[[25]](#footnote-25) – and there is evidence young people are among those most affected by the employment impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.[[26]](#footnote-26) There is little available data about unemployment for young people with disability in particular, but this rate is likely to be considerably higher as Australia has one of the lowest employment participation rates for people with disability.[[27]](#footnote-27)

According to the NDIS Employment Outcomes Report 2018, only 41 per cent of 15 to 24 year-olds have a paid job in open employment at full award wages, with a further 14 per cent in open employment at less than full award wages, and 35 per cent working in an Australia Disability Enterprise.[[28]](#footnote-28) Like segregated education, segregated employment in Australian Disability Employment ‘sheltered workshops’ constitutes a form of neglect of people’s rights.

There is little evidence to date that the NDIS has improved employment outcomes for many people with disability, although an NDIS Participant Employment Taskforce was established in early 2019.[[29]](#footnote-29) Collectively this means young people with disability are likely to rely heavily on income support such as the Disability Support Pension, Jobseeker (formerly Newstart) or Youth Allowance.

“Yes, more difficult to know of suitable work options. Hard to get work placements that are not lip service”

 — Family of a young person with disability aged 21-22 years old, metropolitan VIC

National data is reflected by the responses CYDA received to our 2019 post-secondary survey. Survey participants who are no longer at school were asked about the activities they are currently undertaking. Almost 30 per cent are currently working in some capacity (ranging from full-time to casual), 24.5 per cent are undertaking volunteer work, 21.3 per cent participate in day programs, and 19.6 per cent are studying or training part time (Table 10, Appendix A).

However, less than half of the respondents who are currently in the labour force are working in open employment (Table 11, Appendix A). Additionally, around half of our survey respondents who are currently in work report that they are paid less than a full award wage (Table 12, Appendix A).

“Currently in open employment. However, after graduating from my degree, I spent about 1 year in unemployment and on Centrelink, with Job Active reporting requirements. I believe disability discrimination was a barrier to employment. Due to my disability type (mental health) did not even bother trying to go through DSP, went onto Newstart and was tormented by Centrelink staff and Job Active providers, making me more unwell, and destroying my confidence. However, have been in work since.”

 — Young person with disability over 25 years old, metropolitan Victoria

### Ensure income support programs allow young people with disability to live above the poverty line

As outlined above, a range of systemic factors contribute to higher rates of social security uptake and poverty for people with disability, including young people. Around 50 per cent of young people with disability aged 15 to 24 years rely on income support payments, compared to 14 per cent of people aged 15 to 24 years without a disability.[[30]](#footnote-30). Changes to the eligibility criteria for the Disability Support Pension (DSP) since 2012 mean that many young people must instead apply for Jobseeker (formerly Newstart) or Youth Allowance, which provide a significantly lower rate of pay than the DSP.[[31]](#footnote-31)

As at June 2019, data shows that approximately 10.5 per cent of all recipients of Newstart and Youth Allowance – 31,798 people – were people with a partial capacity to work from illness or disability, however, this public data is not broken down by age. Data obtained by CYDA from the Department of Social Services shows that:

* The number of Newstart recipients aged between 20 and 25 years with partial capacity to work has increased by 258 per cent in the decade from 2009, growing from 5,308 in 2009 to 19,017 in 2019
* The number of Youth Allowance recipients under 19 years old with partial capacity to work has increased by 121.8 per cent, from 2,299 in 2009 to 5,100 in 2019
* The number of Youth Allowance recipients aged between 20 and 25 years with partial capacity to work has increased by 720.6 per cent, from 936 in 2009 to 7,681 in 2019
* The number of DSP recipients under 19 years old has decreased by 24.8 per cent, from 18,414 in 2009 to 13,843 in 2019
* The number of DSP recipients aged between 20 and 25 years has increased slightly, by 10.9 per cent, from 36,128 in 2009 compared to 40,092 in 2019.

These data are highlighted in Figures 2 and 3 in Appendix A.

Along with addressing the barriers facing young people with disability in employment, the additional challenges experienced in the social security and the high levels of poverty for people with disability must be urgently addressed. Social security payments need to be at a level that supports people to live above the poverty line.[[32]](#footnote-32) We have seen the positive impacts of higher Jobseeker payments through the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, with many people reporting they are now able to purchase three meals a day or fresh fruit and vegetables for their households.[[33]](#footnote-33) The exclusion of DSP recipients from the COVID-19 supplement was another example of inconsistencies and exclusionary treatment for people with disability.[[34]](#footnote-34)

### Enable access to further education and training for young people with disability

Students with disability continue to face significant barriers to accessing and participating in higher education and training. Within the 15-65 year age group, only 17 per cent of people with disability have a bachelor degree or higher, compared to 30 per cent for individuals without disability. People with disability are more likely to have attained a certificate-level qualification (28.4 per cent) than those without disability (22.5 per cent).[[35]](#footnote-35).

The impact of exclusion and poor post-school planning opportunities on students’ further education is highlighted by our survey respondents. Almost half of the respondents to our 2019 survey have completed Year 12 but have not completed further education, and around 20 per cent have completed Year 10 or 11 as their highest educational attainment to date. Twelve per cent have completed some form of higher degree or certificate.

“I did not choose to have Autism, but the Uni has chosen to design their curriculum to not be flexible and include my needs”

 — Autistic university student in New South Wales

Improving participation rates for students with disability in employment, education and training will require reviewing funding approaches to further education and post-school options. A recent paper from the Mitchell Institute recommends addressing the different funding arrangements for universities and the VET sector, and reforming the Australia Qualifications Framework (AQF) to removing inappropriate hierarchies in the descriptions of VET and higher education. It also recommends including micro-credentials as a recognised short-term learning program in the AQF structure.[[36]](#footnote-36)

CYDA agrees that a new, more cohesive approach to funding the tertiary education sector is required, and urges the consideration of appropriate funding and support for students with disability as part of this. The Education Council’s 2020 report, *Looking to the Future*, provides 30 recommendations to improve post-school planning and opportunities for young people.[[37]](#footnote-37)

# Ensure access to appropriate disability services and support

The social model of disability, first articulated in the 1980s, holds that disability arises from the intersection of an impairment with the environment – that it is not the impairment itself that ‘disables’ but instead an inequitable society.[[38]](#footnote-38) The social model does not discount the impact of impairments but focuses on the need for appropriate individual supports alongside structural change and progress towards inclusion. As such, access to safe, high-quality supports when and where they are needed is essential, and it is crucial these are delivered from a rights‑based perspective with the individual’s rights and best interests at their core.

### Ensure the NDIS is relevant and works for children and young people[[39]](#footnote-39)

The importance of early childhood, adolescence and early adulthood for lifelong inclusion, employment, economic independence and wellbeing is well known. The NDIS was essentially initiated in an adult paradigm, and then adapted to fit the context of children and young people with disability.

Even before entering the NDIS, families of children and young with disability often encounter challenges with eligibility criteria and difficulty obtaining medical diagnostic reports and assessments to ‘prove’ the child’s disability. This leads to significant costs and stress to families, and means there is inequitable access for children living in families experiencing poverty or hardship. Many find it hard to access to the Scheme without support or advocacy services. Families are also concerned their child only receives support for what is considered the “primary disability” rather than support for their full spectrum of needs.

Information about accessing the Scheme, and throughout the planning and implementation processes is often confusing. Families are unclear on what the Scheme can and cannot fund and are not supported to access services and supports outside the NDIS when these are not included in the NDIS plan. The interface issue with the NDIS and other systems such as health and education need to be urgently resolved by the NDIA and state and territory governments.

During the planning stage, families reported the NDIS was not designed for children and there is a lack of family-centred practice. NDIS plans consider children and young people in isolation from their families despite extensive research which shows the development and wellbeing of children and young people is facilitated through supportive home learning and support environments. Families can be denied support and services as these are considered to be ‘parental responsibility,’ and there is a push to medicalise the supports in the plan rather than consider the natural environments and supports in the community which promote the wellbeing and development of children and young people.

“This year we have not been able to access support for any social community inclusion for our eldest son with autism. NDIS deemed it parental responsibility. We cannot take him to social events like a sport group with someone available to solely focus on him. He has to have a support person with him to guide him through the difficulties that arise from social difficulties.”

 — Family with two children in the NDIS, metropolitan South Australia

The lack of knowledge by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) partners and Local Area Coordinators (LACs) about disability, development transitions for children and young people, and family-centred practice was criticised by families. They also need to work with multiple staff rather than having a one single point of contact throughout the planning process, which proves challenging.

The emergence of thin markets, long wait lists and little choice of service providers in local communities is providing challenges and this issue is more pronounced for families living in regional, remote or rural areas as well as children with complex needs and those from culturally and linguistic diverse backgrounds.

Families also reported that once the NDIS plan is approved it can be difficult to know what the next step is, how to use the funds or how to find and compare providers. This can contribute to under-spending and under-utilisation of plans.

There are considerable concerns with the review and appeals processes, including the language used by the NDIA staff and its partners which is confusing and unclear. Families reported issues with the lack of clear timeframes when requesting a review decision as well as the stress and financial pressure to cover the services while waiting for a review decision.

“Plans didn’t reflect child’s support needs and contained inaccurate information. A large proportion of funds were allocated to things we didn’t ask for or need (i.e. incontinence nurse) whilst things that would have made a tremendous difference were denied.”

 — Family of a child aged 7-9 years, metropolitan Victoria

### Guarantee direct supports are safe, appropriate, and come from a rights-based approach

CYDA would like to endorse the submission to this inquiry from Reframing Autism, provided in April 2020. In particular, CYDA emphasises our support for Reframing Autism’s discussion of best practice support services for children and young people:

“Reframing Autism has grave concerns about the provision of any therapy or intervention which “normalises” Autistic people or suppresses intrinsic Autistic behaviours. We also reject any intervention which suggests (whether tacitly or explicitly) that a non-autistic neurology is superior or even preferable to an Autistic one.

Reframing Autism specifically rejects the use of any therapy or intervention which utilises a system of rewards and punishments to modify Autistic behaviours and train Autistic individuals to act and perform non-autistically, or which are intensive in nature.”[[40]](#footnote-40)

Therapies or interventions along these lines reflect the medical model of disability and take a ‘curative’ approach to autism, denying children’s fundamental human rights. CYDA considers there is a risk that by adopting a diagnosis-specific approach to disability policy (such as the development of a National Autism Strategy) this medical approach becomes more embedded, rather than taking a rights-based approach.

It is CYDA’s view that the NDIS and other government systems should ensure that support services provided to children and young people with disability are safe and appropriate and that they respect and uphold individuals’ human rights.

### Address the interface issues between the NDIS and other systems

Although the NDIS is more than five years old in many parts of the country, considerable issues remain in the way that the Scheme interacts with other systems that affect the lives of children and families. This includes the education system, as well as other government systems including health,[[41]](#footnote-41) child protection and out-of-home care,[[42]](#footnote-42) and youth justice. Continuing interface issues for children and young people and their families/caregivers navigating these systems lead to poorer outcomes and can contribute to tragic outcomes for children who fall through the cracks between systems.[[43]](#footnote-43)

Our 2019 education survey results showed that almost 60 per cent of respondents are out-of-pocket for a range of supports or equipment and have paid personally to enable a student with disability to access and participate in education.[[44]](#footnote-44) Recent data collected through the COVID-19 pandemic shows this has become an even greater challenge during periods of remote learning.[[45]](#footnote-45)

“Being asked to have the child do schooling online, which is basically impossible for a child with ADHD and ASD. This will require full-time oversight by me, which means I can't work!”

— Family of a child aged 7-12 years old, metropolitan NSW

“We desperately need ideas on how to utilise remote/online (Zoom, WhatsApp video calls etc.) supports for our daughter (intellectual impairment and autism) as my husband and I are both working from home and finding it very hard to keep our daughter occupied while we need to have online meetings ourselves. We need help to facilitate her interactions with her social group too, to give her something to look forward to during the week - she is very social and is struggling to cope without seeing her regular support workers and friends.”

— Family of a young person aged 18-25 years, metropolitan Queensland

### Investigate and address gender inequality and promote inclusion

Another area of inequity currently playing out through the NDIS is gender, with male-identifying people over-represented among participants.[[46]](#footnote-46) Further investigation is needed around why women, girls, and gender diverse people are under-represented in the Scheme. This may be of particular interest to the Committee given the evidence around the under-diagnosis of autistic women and girls as well as gender diversity among autistic people.[[47]](#footnote-47) It is critical to ensure the NDIS and its workforce are cognisant of gender diversity, trained in intersectionality and promote genuine inclusion for all people with disability.

# Appendix A: Results from CYDA’s 2019 post-secondary survey and supplementary information

CYDA conducted a national survey between November and December 2019 *‘Pathways for young people with disability after school’* to collect information about the experience of senior students with disability and their families with career planning and post-school options.

In total, 86 people had responded to the survey at the time of writing this submission. This included representation from all states and territories, and from metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas. The majority of the respondents were from families of young students with disability (81.3 per cent), followed by students with disability (18.6 per cent) and teachers and other school staff (3.4 per cent).

Key findings are presented below in support of our submission.

### Introduction

### *Respondents’ demographic data*

**Table 1. Demographic characteristics of senior students with disability (n=69)**

| **Demographic characteristic** | **Number** | **Percentage** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Gender |
|  Male | 55 | 63.9% |
|  Female  | 27 | 31.3% |
|  Prefer not to say or not specified | 4 | 4.6% |
| Language and cultural background  |
|  English speaking background | 75 | 87.2% |
|  Non-English-speaking background  | 11 | 12.7% |
|  Aboriginal | 0 | 0 |
| State / territory |
|  VIC | 29 | 33.7% |
|  NSW | 25 | 29% |
|  QLD | 10 | 11.6% |
|  WA | 4 | 4.6% |
|  SA | 5 | 5.8% |
|  ACT | 9 | 10.4% |
|  TAS | 3 | 3.4% |
|  NT | 1 | 1.1% |
| Location  |
|  Metropolitan area | 50 | 58.1% |
|  Regional area | 24 | 27.9% |
|  Rural | 10 | 11.6% |
|  Remote | 1 | 1.1% |
| Age of senior student with disability |
|  15-16 years  | 14 | 16.2% |
|  17-18 years | 18 | 20.9% |
|  19-20 years | 20 | 23.2% |
|  21-22 years | 9 | 10.4% |
|  23-25 years | 13 | 15.1% |
|  Over 25 | 12 | 13.9% |
| Type of school  |
|  Government | 54 | 62.7% |
|  Non-government (e.g. faith-based, private school) | 25 | 29% |
|  Distance education or e-learning | 3 | 3.4% |
|  Other  | 7 | 8.1% |

### Address exclusion in schools

### *Ongoing segregation in Australian schools*

**Table 2. School setting of survey respondents (n=83)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **School setting**  | **Number** | **Percentage** |
| Mainstream school | 47 | 56.6% |
| Special school | 21 | 25.3% |
| Dual enrolment | 5 | 6% |
| Other | 13 | 15.6% |

**Table 3. Type of class of survey respondents were/are enrolled (n=70)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of class** | **Number** | **Percentage** |
| Regular class | 42 | 60% |
| Special unit | 19 | 27.1% |
| Other (combination of both) | 17 | 24.2% |

### *Low expectations for students and young people with disability*

**Table 4. Students with disability who completed ATAR score of survey respondents (n=83)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Students with disability who completed ATAR score** | **Number** | **Percentage** |
| No | 58 | 69.8% |
| Yes | 17 | 20.4% |
| Don’t know  | 7 | 8.4% |

### *Develop tailored transition support for students with disability*

## ***Lack of appropriate support for students’ career-planning***

**Figure 1. Respondents’ level of agreement with statements around the transition support they received**



**Table 5. Career-planning support reported by students (n=67)**

| **Type of support** | **Number** | **Percentage** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Individual career counselling and advice | 20 | 29.8% |
| Opportunity to participate in career related activities (e.g. workshops, seminars, information sessions) | 19 | 28.3% |
| Individual assistance with planning any study or training post-school (e.g. university, TAFE, traineeships or apprenticeships) | 13 | 19.4% |
| Assistance in understanding your strengths and skills for your post-school transition | 12 | 17.9% |
| The opportunity to undertake work experience and assistance to organise this | 31 | 46.2% |
| Information about upcoming University or TAFE information sessions or expos | 15 | 22.3% |
| Practical assistance such as resume writing, assisting with job applications, assistance with applications to university or TAFE | 11 | 16.4% |
| Other | 23 | 34.3% |

### *Inconsistencies around the country*

**Table 6. Current school programs to support pathways after school**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **State / territory** | **Program** | **Purpose** |
| Australian Capital Territory | Pathways Website  | * A Website assisting young people with their transitions and career planning however not specific for students with disability
 |
|  New South Wales  | School to Work Program  | * The School to Work Program is for all students in NSW public schools with a secondary enrolment and actively supports their informed, planned and quality transitions through school and particularly from school for each student. It also includes collaboration with primary schools to coordinate career related learning as student’s transition from Year 6 to Year 7.
 |
| Northern Territory  | Transition from School Services  | * Provide support for students with a disability when they leave school to go to further education, employment or community access programs. The transition process can begin in Year 9 or 14 years of age.
 |
|  Queensland | 1. Senior Education and Training (SET) plans
2. My Future, My life
 | 1. SET Plans are completed with all students during Year 10.
2. My Future, My life is an Initiative designed to help students with disability achieve the goals they have set for themselves in their SET plans. This early intervention strategy has been developed to provide practical assistance to young people with disability in their final years of school to begin their transition from school. My Future, My Life is run by a non-government organisation
 |
| South Australia | 1.  Better pathways program  2. Transition Centres    3.  The Transition Program  | 1. Provides coaching and mentoring services to students with disability. The program assists students to create, pursue and achieve their vocational goals. This is done through one-on-one support with a dedicated worker.
2. The Transition centres offers a range of courses for secondary students with disability to develop their employability skills. It is also a consultative service for teachers and leaders in the school to facilitate the planning and successful transition to post school options.
3. This 12 month training program is designed to assist final year students with disability and learning difficulties to make a smooth transition from school to future pathways
 |
| Tasmania  | My Education  | * An online resource that guide all students from Kindergarten to Year 12. It supports students to identify their personal interests, values, strengths and aspirations, and teaches them how to use this knowledge to make decisions about their future learning, work and life opportunities.
* My Education 7–12 is an online tool, ME Online. This tool will connect your child to resources, materials and data that will assist them in developing a life and career plan.
 |
| Victoria | Transforming career education.Career Education Funding CEF replaced Managed individual pathways (MIPs) funding in 2019.  | * Supports schools to provide career education activities for all students in Years 7 to 12.
* Additional funding is provided to schools with Student Family Occupation (SFO) densities greater than a threshold value to support young people at risk of disengaging or not making a successful transition to further education, training or secure employment.
* PSD: Program for students with disability.
 |
| Western Australia  | Transition Planning Program | * To assist young people with a disability make a smooth transition to adult life. Transition planning activities are from 8 to year 12.
 |

### *Starting planning earlier*

**Table 7. Year when student with disability start receiving career planning support (n=68)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year level when student with disability start receiving career planning** | **Number** | **Percentage** |
| Year 9 | 3 | 4.4% |
| Year 10 | 15 | 22% |
| Year 11 | 15 | 22% |
| Year 12 | 19 | 27.9% |

### Provide more information to students with disability and their families

### *Improve support for parents and family members*

**Table 8. Parent involvement in career planning process of their child (n=54)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Parent involvement in career planning process** | **Number** | **Percentage** |
| Not involvement  | 23 | 42.5% |
| Very little involvement  | 12 | 22.2% |
| Involved in planning meeting with DHS and not school (program before NDIS) | 3 | 5.5% |
| Involvement in transition meetings, expos, open days meeting with providers | 14 | 25.9% |
| Parents did the career planning  | 3 | 5.5% |
| Parent involved in subject selection meetings with school staff  | 1 | 1.8% |
| School provided parents with formal feedback on potential ATAR and engagement with Coordinator  | 1 | 1.8% |
| Learning support teacher helped and helped student and parent but not the career teacher | 1 | 1.8% |
| Parent involved in two planning meetings in a year  | 1 | 1.8% |
| School offered insurance for work experience | 1 | 1.8% |
| Info session about tertiary study.  | 1 | 1.8% |

## ***Provide relevant information to organisations in students’ lives***

**Table 9. Source of assistance or information available other than school (n=67)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assistance or information available out of school for post school pathways** | **Number** | **Percentage** |
| Disability Employment Services | 20 | 29.8% |
| JobActive Employment Service | 2 | 2.9% |
| Support by education or training provider to participate and maintain enrolment  | 12 | 17.9% |
| Online and web searches  | 11 | 16.4% |
| Community Service organisation | 12 | 17.9% |
| NDIS provider or disability provider | 30 | 44.7% |
| Advocacy organisation | 4 | 5.9% |
| Other | 24 | 35.8% |

### Deliver strong outcomes for students with disability after school

### *Employment outcomes for young people with disability*

**Table 10. Current post school activities of survey respondents (n=61)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Current post school activities**  | **Number** | **Percentage** |
| Currently in a day program | 13 | 21.3% |
| Currently working full-time in an ongoing permanent position | 1 | 1.6% |
| Currently working full-time in a fixed or short term position | 1 | 1.6% |
| Currently working part-time in an ongoing permanent position | 6 | 9.8% |
| Currently working part-time in a fixed term or short term position | 3 | 4.9% |
| Currently working in a casual position | 7 | 11.4% |
| Currently looking for work | 7 | 11.4% |
| Currently not looking for work | 8 | 13.1% |
| Currently studying/training part-time | 12 | 19.6% |
| Currently studying/training full-time | 8 | 13.1% |
| Currently undertaking a traineeship or apprenticeship | 2 | 3.2% |
| Currently undertaking voluntary work | 15 | 24.5% |
| Other  | 20 | 32.7% |

**Table 11. Type of employment of survey respondents. (n=37)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Employment**  | **No** | **Percentage** |
| Working in the general labour market  | 18 | 48.6% |
| Working in an Australian Disability Enterprise ADE | 4 | 10.8% |
| Other | 18 | 48.6% |

**Table 12. Type of award wages of survey respondents (n=37)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of award wages**  | **No** | **Percentage** |
| Receiving full award wages  | 14 | 37.8% |
| Receiving less than full award wages  | 16 | 43.2% |
| Don’t know | 7 | 18.9% |

### *Income support programs*

**Table 13. Survey respondents receiving income support payments (n=66)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of income support payments** | **No** | **Percentage** |
| Not receiving income support  | 18 | 27.2% |
| Disability Support Pension (DSP) | 42 | 63.6% |
| Newstart Allowance | 2 | 3% |
| Youth Allowance | 4 | 6% |

**Figure 2. Trends from 2009 to 2019 of Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance with partial capacity to work and Disability Support Pension recipients aged 20 to 25 years**

Source: Department of Social Services data provided to CYDA

**Figure 3.** **Trends from 2009 to 2019 of** **Youth Allowance with partial capacity to work and Disability Support Pension recipients aged 19 years and under**

Source: Department of Social Services data provided to CYDA

### *Access to further education*

**Table 13. Highest level of education of survey respondents (n=81)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Highest level of education**  | **Number** | **Percentage** |
| Postgraduate Degree  | 0 | 0 |
| Graduate Diploma | 1 | 1.1% |
| Graduate Certificate  | 1 | 1.1% |
| Bachelor Degree | 4 | 4.9% |
| Advanced Diploma and Diploma  | 0 | 0 |
| Certificate III / IV | 4 | 4.9% |
| Year 12 | 38 | 46.9% |
| Year 11 | 11 | 13.5% |
| Year 10 | 6 | 7.4% |
| Year 9 or below  | 20 | 24.6% |

# Appendix B: CYDA’s submission to the Tune Review, October 2019

# Appendix C: *Driving change: A roadmap for achieving inclusive education in Australia*

1. See Cologon, K. (2019). *Towards inclusive education: A necessary process of transformation*, for CYDA; and Alana Institute (2017). *A Summary of the Evidence on Inclusive Education*, available: <https://alana.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/A_Summary_of_the_evidence_on_inclusive_education.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
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14. Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education. (2020). *Driving change: A roadmap for achieving inclusive education in Australia*. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
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