

Question on Notice re the relationship between Gonski funding and the NCCD criteria

After reading the relevant parts of the Gonski review, it seems evident that the Gonski funding recommendations are linked directly to NCCD criteria.

- In Section 3.2.4 of the Gonski Report, reference is made to students with Disability (SWD) as consistent with the definitions under The Disability Standards in Education (DSE, 2005) and The Disability Discrimination Act (1992).
- *DES (2005) Definition of Disability*

disability, in relation to a person, means: (a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or (b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or (c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or (d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or (e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or (f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or (g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour; and includes a disability that: (h) presently exists; or (i) previously existed but no longer exists; or (j) may exist in the future; or (k) is imputed to a person.

- The Gonski Report frequently makes reference to the inconsistency of definitions across states and territories, and is of the view that the level of funding for SWD should be linked to the level of adjustment identified in NCCD.

(Finding 23) The lack of robust, nationally comparable data on funding for disadvantaged students and its impact on improving educational outcomes is a significant concern. If Australia is to achieve greater equity in educational outcomes across its schooling system, these data will be paramount in ensuring funding is directed to where it is needed most, and improvements can be measured and strengthened over time.

(Section 4.3.2) There are a number of significant data and definitional issues that hamper the development and rapid implementation of this funding stream for students with disability and which must be addressed urgently before new arrangements can be finalised. The panel is of the view that the recently developed and trialled model for collecting nationally consistent data about school students with disability, and the level of educational adjustment required by them, provides a good basis to inform the development of funding arrangements for students with disability.

The calculation of the amounts of this additional funding should be based on the cost of making reasonable educational adjustments to participate in schooling on an equal basis as other students and should be included as a loading in the schooling resource standard.

Subject: FW: NSW Legislative Council Students with a Disability Inquiry - question on notice to IEU re early childhood funding

Date: Friday, 28 April 2017 3:37:54 PM AET

From: Pam Smith

Date: Wednesday, 26 April 2017 4:12 PM

To: Pam Smith

Subject: Re: FW: NSW Legislative Council Students with a Disability Inquiry - early childhood perspective

Hi Pam,

I can give you some examples that relate to my Preschool in rural NSW. Our money is brokered through Northcott and we apply through a portal in November and late April.

This year we have one child funded at Level Two - \$90 a day. This daily rate has not increased in 2017 despite the fact we are now required to have children attend for 7.5 hours a day to receive their base rate funding from the state govt. so now we have had to increase staff hours each day. Previously enrollment was for 6 hours a day. We only receive disability funding through Northcott for 41 weeks a year and we have to pay staff for 52 weeks a year.

We receive \$7,380 a year for this child. She is high support and requires an aide full time to ensure inclusion, safety and personal needs are met. We pay this staff member \$29,172 per annum for the hours required to support this child and family, plus superannuation plus leave loading. This leaves a deficit of over \$25,000 which the preschool has to find. We cross subsidise by charging other families more and enrolling more children into the group which is not ideal.

This happens every year and often we have up to 5 children with disabilities enrolled, so this can seriously affect fees - extrapolate that and you have a shortfall of \$125,000. Many services now refuse to enroll children with disabilities which is tragic. Many families now don't tell services their child has a disability until they have secured an enrollment. This often means services cannot apply until second round (this year 26th April) and often there is no money left and it is not back paid either.

As 3 year olds are now unfunded we don't even get a base payment for them so 3 year old children with a disability who are enrolled are an even bigger drain on the service - again they are often refused enrollment and this means they miss a year of intervention which is vital at this stage. Services who do take the children (like ourselves) are often overloaded and this impacts hugely on fees and budgets.

It is difficult (especially in rural and remote areas) to get the documentation and reports Northcott require to secure any funding at all. There are huge waiting lists for paediatricians, speech, OT etc and by the time reports are received it is often too late for services to apply. If the children had 2 years of funded preschool this would help with at least securing one years funding.

Services complain continually about the delays in applications being processed and the delays in receiving the funding. Nothing seems to go smoothly. As well as this I had the situation where I received funding for a child and the child left in the first month of the year. I tried to return the money so another child could have it and no-one could work out how to do it. I was then paid the same amount of money for the child for the second half of the year. I again tried to return it and I was told someone would let us know how. It never happened - We still have the money and that was in 2014. It seems to be grossly inefficient.

I hope this is helpful. Please let me know if you need any more information.