

Inquiry into children and young people with disability in NSW educational settings 2024 Inquiry – 23 April 2024

Transcript Questions

Managing Director, TAFE NSW

TITLE: TAFE NSW employees who have identified as having a disability and also for people with First Nations backgrounds and people who have both.

QUESTION 1, PAGE NO 52

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: We've certainly had witnesses today speak about school refusal, and I think it was the Ageing and Disability Commissioner doing a special—that was more to do with children in out-of-home care. It's something obviously that I know all agencies are grappling with. I just was curious about that. Just going to a few other issues now. Would you be able to provide—I think we asked earlier when we had representatives from the First Nations community—the statistics on how many department staff are currently employed who have identified as having a disability and also how many teaching staff we currently have in public schools? Do you have any data on that with you or that you could take on notice?

MARTIN GRAHAM: I don't. I could take that on notice. I don't have that with me. But we certainly do have staff with disability. We'd like to have more staff with disability. We have a strategy around improving that as well.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: And for TAFE as well?

STEPHEN BRADY: We can provide that as well.

The CHAIR: And also for people with First Nations backgrounds and people who have both. That would be very useful.

MARTIN GRAHAM: Yes, I'll see what we have got on that.

ANSWER

I am advised:

- TAFE NSW has 357 (2.2% of the workforce) who identify as having a disability.
- TAFE NSW has 373 (2.2% of the workforce) who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- TAFE NSW has 29 (0.2% of the workforce) who identify as having a disability AND identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

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Managing Director, TAFE NSW

TITLE: Educational Pathways Program

QUESTION 2, PAGE NO 53

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Fantastic. Mr Brady, I have a couple of TAFE questions now, if that is okay. Another area that had been raised, particularly from the young people that have appeared before us as lived experience with disability—a lot of them have spoken about those education pathways from school into further education and training, so it probably crosses both Education and TAFE. I note in the submission that you talk about the Educational Pathways Program, which I know has been very successful and recently expanded, but are there any specifically for students with disability, in terms of school-based pathways into TAFE and further training? I know that they are captured in a lot of the existing programs as a cohort, but are there any training pathways specifically for those students with disability?

STEPHEN BRADY: Not specifically. We tend to work on an individualised basis, so we've got disability teacher consultants who tend to work with individual students about what their support needs are and then would work with the teachers to help them work out what sort of adjustments might be required, whether there are note-takers or whatever other supports might be required for that student—not at a formalised level for a whole of disability young person pathway.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Is there any data? Again, I note in some of the examples that you have given about different scholarships and things that there are particular numbers of those with disability who have been awarded them. With the Educational Pathways Program—again, happy for this to be on notice—is there any data in terms of the number of students with disability who have been engaged in that program?

STEPHEN BRADY: I'll come back to you on notice.

ANSWER

I am advised:

TAFE NSW has recorded 400 valid enrolments under the Educational Pathways Program from students under 18 who identify as having a disability.

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Transcript Questions

Managing Director, TAFE NSW

TITLE: Certificate III and IV in School-based education support

QUESTION 3, PAGE NO 54

The CHAIR: From a lot of what we've heard, particularly about the process to get reasonable adjustments and the extra layers of organisations involved in testing, has consideration been given by the department on what the additional complexities are for outsourced testing?

MARTIN GRAHAM: That's been an important part of the transition, and we can certainly provide you some more information on that. But it absolutely has been considered in the transition to online testing in the same way it was with NAPLAN—very similar. We have that lived experience of going through that process to be able to provide adjustments.

The CHAIR: Very good. This issue about needing more SLSOs and occupational therapists to go through TAFE and to basically undertake relevant cert III and IV—has there been any thought given to how we might incentivise the uptake of those courses? Are there any current plans?

STEPHEN BRADY: The courses are available. In terms of encouraging, one of the biggest challenges is getting some of the workplace placements. We are seeing strong demand coming through for a lot of the allied health courses. Some of those courses have been supported through Smart and Skilled at a subsidised level. We can come back to you on notice with a breakdown of what that is. It is an area where we've got a challenge and where there's high demand. It can be difficult to get the job placements and, also, in some of the job settings, the wages really are not very high, so you have this situation where actually sourcing sufficient students can be challenging and actually finding the placements for them to help them complete their courses.

The CHAIR: Is there availability of the relevant courses? I think it's school-based education support, isn't it—cert III and IV? Is that available broadly across the State? How many of our TAFE centres have those courses available?

STEPHEN BRADY: I'll have to come back to you with the detail. It has been one of our high-demand courses in recent times. I think, under fee-free, it's actually been very high demand. It's been one of the top half-a-dozen courses.

ANSWER

I am advised:

TAFE NSW delivers Certificate III in School Based Education Support and Certificate IV in School Based Education Support in a variety of delivery modes through multiple locations as well as self-paced learning through TAFE Digital. Tables below provide a list of these locations.

Certificate III in School Based Education Support
Albury
Armidale
Bankstown
Bathurst

Certificate IV in School Based Education Support
Bankstown
Dubbo
Goulburn
Meadowbank

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Managing Director, TAFE NSW

Bourke
Broken Hill
Campbelltown
Coffs Harbour Education
Coonabarabran
Dubbo
Forbes
Glendale
Goulburn
Great Lakes
Hornsby
Kempsey
Kingscliff
Lithgow
Maitland
Meadowbank
Miller
Nepean
Newcastle
Nirimba
Nowra
Orange
TAFE Digital
Ourimbah
Parkes
Petersham
Quirindi
Shellharbour
Tamworth
Taree
Walgett
Wauchope
Wollongbar
Wollongong West
Wyang

Miller
TAFE Digital
Ourimbah
Petersham
Wollongbar
Wollongong