

Submission
No 2

**INQUIRY INTO TRANSITION SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS
WITH ADDITIONAL OR COMPLEX NEEDS AND THEIR
FAMILIES**

Organisation: Hay School Of The Air P&C

Date received: 8/08/2011

To the committee for the inquiry into transition support for students with additional and/or complex needs and their families.

Background

- Hay School of the Air is a school of distance education where students whose special circumstances prevent them attending regular schools whether it be geographical isolation, or other- such as travelers around Australia or overseas or significant support enrolments (for students who may have a mental health condition or autism or severe disruptive behaviours or school phobia) . They obtain their education through means other than direct personal contact through communication media such as mail, phone, fax and the internet. The schooling is completed by the student with supervision from a supervisor (who in most cases is the child parent) and returned to the teacher for marking. For isolated rural enrolments, satellite technology is available- satellite lessons are a more direct way for the teachers to instruct the students and assess their learning.
- Hay School of the Air P&C is the parent body behind the school and its students.
- Hay School of the Air is located in Hay in Western New South Wales but its students spread across a wide section of New South Wales with some students even further afield.

Additional needs

- It is through this form of isolation from mainstream classrooms that we feel our students and their families have additional needs.
- Due to isolation, there is a greater emphasis placed on effective communication ; our students are currently using computers that do not support many of the current means of communication between student and teacher- our current technology is preventing quality teaching.
- Our students and staff do not have access to school counselors.

Isolation

Many of the students live on remote rural properties and their classrooms spread from the kitchen table, the spare bedroom or specially built schoolrooms. Most behavioral enrolments face social isolation, often working alone at home, with minimal supervisor support.

Technology

As the modern teaching world moves ever faster with technology our students continue to struggle with computers that are preventing quality teaching. Many of the programs that the students should be able to use are either not accessible by the computers or fail to function properly.

Teaching staff and students have to struggle with faulty technology during the allocated half hour of satellite lessons often resulting in incomplete lessons. So much could be available to assist our children's learning if only we had modern computers.

Counselors

Access to school counselors for both isolated and special needs students is of major concern. If students need to be assessed there is no clear process or access to school counselors, especially for significant needs students.

Transition

Additional support for all Distance Education students and their supervisors is vitally important, as students transition from each stage of their education. Supervisor Training is extremely necessary as students transition from Kindergarten to Stage 1 and from Stage 2 to the Middle Years of schooling.

Significant needs enrolments need additional support when transitioning from Distance Education back to mainstream settings.

Currently, no transitional support, for both isolated or significant needs students, is available.