

**Submission  
No 100**

## **INQUIRY INTO POST SCHOOL DISABILITY PROGRAMS**

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**Date Received:** 04/03/2005

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**Subject:**

**Summary**

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**Date:** Fri, Mar 4, 2005 4:10 pm  
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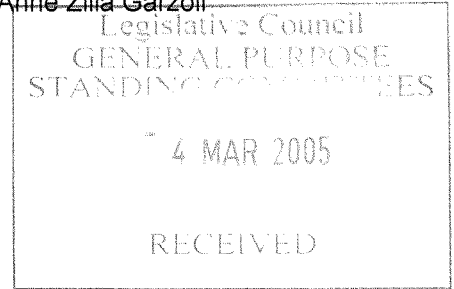
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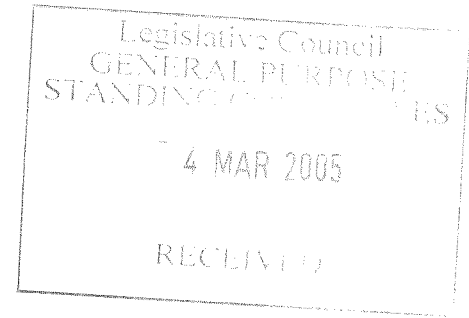
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Inquiry into changes to Post School Programs for young adults with a disability

Inquire into and report on the appropriateness of changes to post school programs for young people with a disability and in particular

The main areas of concern is the eligibility criteria and assessment of current Post School participants

- 1 The program structure and policy framework, including eligibility criteria for the new transition to work and community participation programs**
  - a. This is primary areas of concern. For the following reasons
    - i. Eligibility Criteria: with the assessments of all Post School participants in our region Griffith City Council does not wish to see a negative impact on our local service provider, Post School Options. Given the very clear move away from post school program (non-acceptance of new participant since late 1990's and the current review of eligibility), we are keen to seek reassurances that the assessment will be meaningful and for the benefit of the participants and their families. We are hoping that there will be a lot of consultation in regional and rural centres to ensure that the process will address the needs of people with a disability who are further disadvantaged due to isolation from resources;
    - ii. Diminished funds to local service provider: Whilst it has been made clear that Post School program will not have a change of funding, what is not being made clear upon enquiry is that the assessment will in fact impact on the funding of Post School Services. The "spin" is potentially misleading, and in our local government area, we know of parents who have found it incredibly difficult to ascertain information which tells the whole picture. Further, Griffith Non Government Organisation's experiences incredibly high operational costs due to the buoyancy of the local economy. There is an endemic need for low cost accommodation for NGO's. Reductions of funding due to the transition program will in fact increase the local service providers' pressure to find additional monies to cover operating costs. Potentially this can draw staff away from their cause business, and thus have a direct impact upon participants and their families. We wish to see that an element of core or operational funding be allocated if over 10% of participants move to the new programme after the assessment;
    - iii. Cooling Off Period: we are concerned that the 3 month cooling off period is not readily known or discussed. We also are unaware of how it is monitored and assessed. Again, if it is merely the department making decisions dislocated from local issues (both for families and local industries) then the decisions may not be equitable. We would advocate a longer cooling off period of 6 months be initiated across the board.

Further, Griffith City Council is aware of the important work that Post School Options undertakes. We have seen the State Government rationalise resources to NGO's in recent times in way that have a negative impact on the ground for services providers (such as the Adult and Community Education sector).

The proposed rationalisation has a strong hint of cost-shifting to the federal government. As such we are concerned that these alterations are being made without the Post School participants best interests at heart, rather that it is about economical rationalisation. In general, funding to this area from Department Aged Disability and Home Care is incredibly low and families are suffering the burden of State Budget policy and Budget decision. We seek reassurances that local providers and families will have face to face consultation and input into new processes, and that Federal agencies will also be involved at that time to ensure a smooth handing over and cross referral system is in place.