

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

**Organisation:** Griffith Youth Support Service

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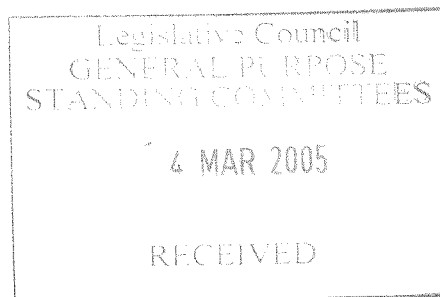
**Date Received:** 04/03/2005

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**Subject:**

**Summary**

Griffith Youth Support Service  
106 Binya Street, Griffith NSW 2680



SUBMISSION TO

THE DIRECTOR, GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE No 2,  
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

For

**Inquiry into changes to Post School Programs for Young Adults with a Disability**

**Background:**

- Griffith Post School Options opened their doors to Service Users in 1994 with three clients. Working with Department of Community Services as a pilot program.
- The centre was supporting people with moderate to high needs in all aspects of their lives.
- Initial program was community integration for 2 days per week.
- One staff member was employed.
- In the following year the service user numbers increased to 7 and more staff was employed.
- There were vast and varying needs for each client, some with profound physical and intellectual disabilities requiring the assistance of 2 staff for personal care and support.
- Parents and families were able to go about their daily lives some returning to the work force out of necessity due to increasing costs to support their son/daughter/sister/brother 24 hours per day 7 days per week.
- Illness due to stress was alleviated to a degree as daily pressures of caring for a person with a disability was relieved.
- The service users found that they are an important part of our community thus greatly increasing their self esteem and ability to complete tasks and programs. Empowering them to a better quality of life.
- Post School Options formed solid working relationships with other service providers with in the community, including TAFE, Western Riverina Competitive Employment.

**Current:**

- 2005 we have a total of 24 clients
- All programs are structured on client needs and obtainable goals.
- Community Participation client funding currently ranges from \$15,000 to \$18,000.
- The majority of these clients require 2:1 support for all daily activities.
- Transition to Work clients are assisted by staff for work experience placement.
- There is 15 staff on varying part time hours, 1 full time manager, 1 administration person (for 6hrs per week) and 3 casual staff providing support to clients.
- Formal Partnership with other service providers to assist clients in reaching their full potential/goals as per individual plan.
- We are providing a day service for ten, Department of Ageing Disability & Home Care - Group Home clients.
- We provide transport to our clients who live in other towns some as far as 100kms away.

**Effects of Reform:**

- Not all Post School Options Centres are included in eligibility process in transition from school to Post School Options Services. The Department of Education completes this task.
- Griffith hasn't been involved in any consultation apart from filling in statistical information.
- Funding cuts back to \$13,500, less hours offered to clients.
- Impacting on working families, one parent would stay home or siblings would take on the role as carer.
- Families would then rely on government payments to help compensate for loss of wages.
- Ageing parents having no respite due to limited resources within the Griffith area and high cost to access some of these services.

- Service providers already supporting local families would therefore be working above recommended case loads.
- Family breakdown due to increased pressure placed upon them.
- Clients structured routines disrupted.
- Clients at risk due to lack of support and services.
- Some Transition to Work clients require more than the two year period specified to go into work placement.
- Employers reluctant to employ clients if ongoing support not provided to address work performance issues.
- Future client base will increase, as will the need for resources.
- With new funding levels staffing hours will decrease and some losing their positions.
- Duty of Care and Occupational Health & Safety issues with staff to client ratios.
- Brokerage to other support services would be limited. Including adult education programs that are currently being accessed.

### **Recommendations**

- Consultation to be held **with all** Post School Options/ATLAS Service providers; Families; Service Users and Advocates by formal meetings in local areas.
- Costs in country/rural and remote areas need to be addressed. Including the costs of transport with no local public transport except for taxi services. Community Transport for some clients costs \$44 per day to access a service.
- Department of Ageing Disability & Home Care need to inform families and services of changes well in advance so issues can be discussed and addressed with a better understanding of the changes being made.
- Current funding levels of Community Participation and Transition to Work clients remain as they are and not decrease. This will have a great impact on their daily routines and add undue stress to their lives, especially to clients that display challenging behaviours.

- Assessments for Transition To Work clients need to allow them the opportunity to continue if there is a foreseeable outcome.
- Eight hours per week supported or open employment should not be an outcome. Funding should not be jeopardised and be used to develop their skills further. Clients would still be relying on government subsidies with only 8 hours work per week.
- Business Services – supporting persons with disabilities should be supported by the government initially to become stand alone businesses and pay award wages which would lead to social equity for these people.

Written by: Tracey Spadaccini Service Manager Griffith Post School Options

Authorised by: Hazel Carusi - Chairperson, Board of Management,  
Griffith Post School Options Inc.