

**Submission
No 118**

INQUIRY INTO POST SCHOOL DISABILITY PROGRAMS

Organisation: Country Women's Association of NSW

Name: Mr Colin Coakley

Position: General Manager

Telephone: 02 9358 2923

Date Received: 04/03/2005

Subject:

Summary

GPSC2 GPSC2 - Submission from Country Women's Association of NSW

From: "Andrea Pulford" <a.pulford@cwaofnsw.org.au>
To: <gpscno2@parliament.nsw.gov.au>
Date: 4/03/2005 3:01 PM
Subject: Submission from Country Women's Association of NSW
CC:

Dear Steven,

On behalf of the Association, thank you for the opportunity of making a submission into Post School Disability Programs.

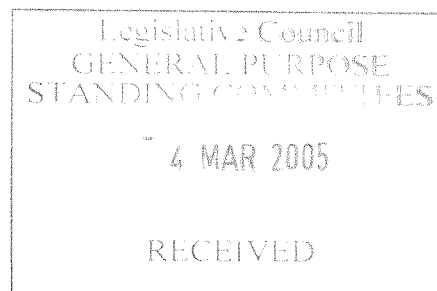
Yours sincerely,

Andrea Pulford,
Country Women's Association of NSW

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COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES



Legislative Council
GENERAL PURPOSE
STANDING COMMITTEES

4 MAR 2005

RECEIVED

**SUBMISSION TO THE NSW
GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO 2**

ON

**CUTS IN DISABILITY PAYMENTS
ADULT TRAINING LEARNING AND SUPPORT (ATLAS)
AND POST SCHOOL OPTIONS (PSO) PROGRAMMES**

TO: General Purpose Standing Committee No 2
Attention: Mr. Steven Reynolds

Email: gpscno2@parliament.nsw.gov.au

FROM: Mr. Colin Coakley,
General Manager,
Country Women's Association of
NSW,
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4 March, 2005

Since Mid 2004, repeated approaches have been made to the State Government strongly condemning the funding cuts to the PSO and ATLAS programmes for school leavers with a disability.

We perceive that Government policies always seem to target the most disadvantaged, the most vulnerable in the community? In this case, the policy is hurting the young and older disabled – in some cases – severely disabled and, when these people are hurt, the hurt extends and is greatly magnified to their parents/carers/siblings

When the changes were originally announced, the Minister said “the reforms were not intended to result in a reduction of hours for clients”.

The latest funding level - \$13,500 for the community participation clients (High Support clients being “hopefully” eligible to apply for higher funding) is the same as offered 10 years ago when the Programme first started. It was insufficient then, and is certainly not enough now.

Both programmes PSO and ATLAS were designed to prepare young people with a disability for the work force, most commendable but, sadly, only a very small percentage – 3% - can take that step, so community access programmes are so very important for the well-being and self esteem for these disabled people.

They have to have a reason for getting up of a morning, dressing, an incentive to “go to work” like other people, to meet up with others, to be taught and encouraged to extend themselves to their limits. Lack of funding could result in cancellation of outings, being put back in front of a TV rather than being engaged in activities designed to improve the quality of their lives.

As important as this Scheme is to these disabled people, it is even more important and essential to their parents/carers/family members. If the number of hours/days is cut, this will impact dreadfully on the family. Families have to have respite. If they can get 3 to 4 days respite, with the knowledge that their disabled family member is being looked after in a safe environment, they can cope with the rest of the week and week-ends.

But, if the number of days is cut at community access programmes, the families/carers are going to suffer dreadfully. At the moment, carers can socialise, catch up on sleep, or go to work for a few hours/days a week, not just for the money, but to be in company which allows them to be something different for those few hours – different to the caring role which will be theirs until they or their child dies.

If the worst happens and days at community access are cut, the strain on the parent/carer of 24 x 6 caring for the disabled family member will make parents consider – most reluctantly – that, for the sake of the family/siblings, the disabled one “has to go”. It is only by making him “homeless” that he has any chance of entry into accommodation for the disabled, where placements are very limited and

sought after. However, these accommodation places – hostels, etc. – also expect their clients to go as many days a week as possible to sheltered work or access community programmes. They need the homes nearly empty during the day so they can catch up on work and their endless reports. Just a vicious circle!! **The cost of building and staffing more accommodation units for the disabled would certainly be more than the “savings” made by the Government cutting funds to the disabled.**

There have been numerous instances where distraught mothers have killed their handicapped children being unable to cope 24 x 7. Last year after another such distressing case, a concerned Premier said “This must not happen again; these people need all the help they can get”.

Cutting funding to the disabled is not the way to achieve this.

In this State, there are only about 3,500 families affected. To save the sanity of carers and to prevent disruption to family units

Funding has to be sufficient for 4 days – preferably 5 days - a week for community access participation.

We urge the Government to consider carefully cuts to these essential payments. These carers and disabled people live under real stress in our society and it is one of the basic duties of any society to provide care for those who are unable to care for themselves.