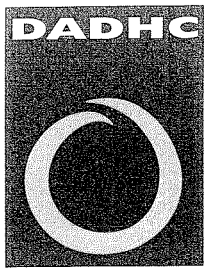


INQUIRY INTO POST SCHOOL DISABILITY PROGRAMS

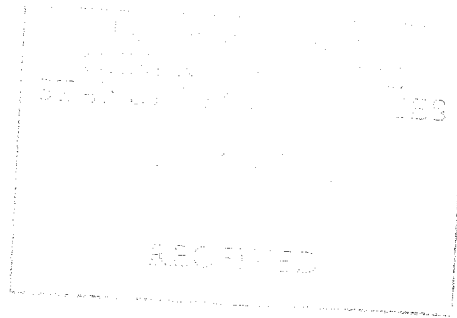
Organisation: Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care
Name: Mr Brendan O'Reilly
Position: Director General
Telephone: 8270 2000
Date Received: 22/03/2005

Subject:

Summary



**Department
of Ageing,
Disability &
Home Care**



Office of
the Director
General

The Hon Patricia Forsythe MLC
Chairperson
Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No 2
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

D05/3628

Dear Ms Forsythe

I refer to the Inquiry into Changes to Post School Programs for Young Adults with a Disability being conducted by the General Purpose Standing Committee No 2.

Please find enclosed the submission of the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care to the Inquiry.

Alison Wannan, Director, Community Access, is the Department's contact person in relation to this matter. Ms Wannan can be contacted on (02) 8270 2254.

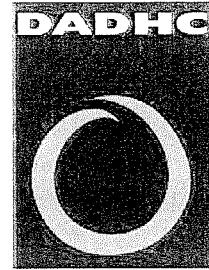
Yours sincerely

**Brendan O'Reilly
Director-General**

18 MAR 2005

Encl:

Legislative Council
GENERAL PURPOSE
STANDING COMMITTEES
23 MAR 2005
RECEIVED



Department
of Ageing,
Disability &
Home Care

Submission to the Inquiry into changes to post school programs for young adults with a disability

March 2005

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Abbreviations

aCe	Advancing Competencies through Experiences (ACT)
ACE	Adult and Community Education
ACROD	Australian Council for Rehabilitation of Disabled
ADD	NSW Ageing and Disability Department
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
ARIA	Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia
ATLAS	Adult Training Learning and Support
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CBF	Case Based Funding
CP	Community Participation
CSDA	Commonwealth State Disability Agreement
CSTDA	Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement
DADHC	Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care
DET	NSW Department of Education and Training
DEST	Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training
DEWR	Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
DNAWS	Disabled New Apprentices Wages Subsidy Scheme
DSC	Disability Services Commission (Western Australia)
DoCS	Department of Community Services
DSQ	Disability Services Queensland
FaCS	Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services
FFYA	Futures for Young Adults (Victoria)
HACC	Home and Community Care Program
HSC	Higher School Certificate
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
IDSC	Intellectual Disability Services Council (South Australia)
ISP	Individual Support Packages (ACT)
JSCI	Job Seeker Classification Index
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
PSO	Post School Options
RTOs	Registered Training Organisations
SNAP	Support Needs Assessment Profile
SPRC	Social Policy Research Centre
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TVET	Technical and Further Education Vocational Education and Training
TTW	Transition To Work
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Summary

Leaving school is one of the most critical periods in a person's life as they transition to adulthood. All Australian States and Territories have developed post school programs to assist people with a disability with this transition.

In 2005, the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care introduced two new programs to support young people leaving school: Transition to Work and Community Participation. These programs replace the Adult Training Learning and Support (ATLAS) program that operated from 1999 to 2004.

Transition to Work is a time-limited program to improve employment outcomes for school leavers who are able to transition to work within one to two years of leaving school, while Community Participation is a longer-term program designed to improve skills and community participation for school leavers who require an alternative to paid employment in the medium to long term.

Chapter 1 outlines the history and basis of reforms associated with the implementation of the new programs. The chapter demonstrates the importance of providing post school transition programs that are responsive to the range of needs of young adults with a disability. This is why, in 2005, the Department introduced one program to focus specifically on the transition to work, and another program on skills development and community participation.

In introducing Transition to Work and Community Participation, the Department is also working to strengthen linkages with other relevant State and Commonwealth programs to improve access for school leavers to employment, vocational training and higher education.

As part of the reform process much greater emphasis is being placed on measuring how effective the programs are in achieving outcomes for young people with a disability. This includes a strong focus on equity. The programs will have a new operational and performance management framework, the elements of which are described in Chapters 1, 3, 6 and 7.

Funding for the programs is discussed in Chapter 2. While there is no universally agreed approach to funding post school programs, governments nationally and internationally continue to explore options for improving the capacity and cost effectiveness of services as well as their responsiveness to the individual support needs of young people with disabilities. New funding arrangements for Transition to Work and Community Participation are designed to improve the capacity of service providers and thereby participant outcomes through block funding, while also ensuring that people with very high support needs have access to supplementary funding support. The impact of these arrangements will be closely monitored to ensure the programs provide good outcomes and represent value for money.

Chapter 5 describes the process used to assess people for placement in the new programs. The Department recognises the importance of providing a consistent approach to assessing support needs that also takes into account the individual circumstances of school leavers. As part of the next phase of implementation the

Department will lead research and development on assessment and screening practices that relate specifically to transition programs for young adults.

In moving forward with the reforms, the Department will actively engage with young adults with a disability, their families, carers and advocates, as well as other stakeholders. The Department will also participate in national policy discussions about post school programs.

Chapter 1 NSW post school programs: policy and program framework

Leaving school is one of the most critical periods in a person's life as they transition to adulthood. Young people may follow a range of post school pathways as they move into adult life roles, including employment, further education and training, or other community based activities. All jurisdictions in Australia have developed specific programs to assist young adults with a disability to transition from school.

This chapter describes the policy framework for the new post school programs introduced by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) in 2005. It also provides an overview of related programs in other Australian jurisdictions and the roles of the Commonwealth in assisting young people with a disability.

Post school programs: the administrative and funding context

- 1.1 In 2005 DADHC implemented two new programs: *Transition to Work* and *Community Participation* for young adults with a disability who were unable to transition directly from school to employment or further education, or who require an alternative to paid employment. In 2005 120-130 non-government service providers will assist over 2,330 young people who have a disability in these programs.¹
- 1.2 The post school programs operate in accordance with the *NSW Disability Services Act 1993*. The Act also requires conformity with the Disability Services Standards.

The Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement

- 1.3 The administrative and funding context for post school programs also includes the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA). The CSTDA 'forms the basis for the provision and funding of specialist services for people with a disability'.²
- 1.4 The Commonwealth has administrative responsibility for open and supported employment services. State and Territory governments administer accommodation support, community access, respite care and community support services. All governments share responsibility for advocacy, information, print disability services and research.
- 1.5 One of the five priorities of the CSTDA (2002 to 2007) is to 'strengthen across-government links', so that people with a disability have opportunities to transition between Commonwealth and State/Territory services.³ This is important given the intersection between the post school programs provided by the states and territories and the employment programs provided by the Commonwealth.

¹ This will comprise about 670 people who left school in 2004 and about 1,660 people who participated in the ATLAS Program in 2004.

² Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services 2005*, p. 13.1.

³ Productivity Commission, p. 13.11.

Pathways to vocational education, employment and higher education

- 1.6 There is an inextricable link between post school programs and the supported and open employment programs of the Commonwealth as well as the vocational education and training provided by NSW TAFE.⁴
- 1.7 The Commonwealth is part way through significant reforms to supported employment services (or Business Services, which were previously known as sheltered employment).

The development of post school programs in NSW

- 1.8 In NSW there have been three major stages in the development of post school programs to assist young people with a disability transition from school into employment, or further education, or community participation. The three stages are *Post School Options Program (PSO)*, *Adult Training Learning and Support Program (ATLAS)* and the new programs introduced in 2005.
- 1.9 The Post School Options Program was introduced for young people with a disability who completed school in the years 1993 to 1998. School leavers in the subsequent years to 2003 entered ATLAS. That program had been funded as a time limited two year program. In 2005, two new programs replaced the ATLAS Program: *Transition to Work* and *Community Participation*.
- 1.10 Prior to the development of these post school programs some adults with a disability attended day programs. In other words, there has been a two tiered system in NSW. People who have left school in the last decade have had access to post school programs (albeit with different funding arrangements). Some people who left school before 1994 accessed day programs.⁵

Day Programs: 1970s to 1980s

- 1.11 Day programs were established in NSW and other Australian jurisdictions under the *Commonwealth Handicapped Persons Assistance Act 1974*.⁶ This Act distinguished between Sheltered Workshops (as they were then called), which provided employment, and Activity Therapy Centres, which aimed to provide prevocational training to people with disabilities, with a view to assisting them to transition to employment.⁷
- 1.12 The *Handicapped Person's Review* in 1985 found that service users and providers were dissatisfied with the operations of the Activity Therapy Centres. Independent Living Training was subsequently developed as a new service type under the provisions of the *Commonwealth Disability Services Act 1986*.⁸

⁴ See Chapter 4 for an overview of the assistance provided by the Commonwealth and NSW TAFE to assist people with a disability.

⁵ Brian Elton and Associates, Sept 2002, *Review of Disability Day Programs in NSW: Final Report Parts 1 and 2*, Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, p.9.

⁶ In Victoria day programs have been established since the early 1950s.

⁷ Brian Elton and Associates, p. 9.

⁸ Brian Elton and Associates, p. 9.

- 1.13 Other government-funded day activity programs were established by the states as part of the deinstitutionalisation of people moving from large residential centres to community-based settings in the 1970s and 1980s.
- 1.14 Continuing concern about the effectiveness of day programs led the Commonwealth to introduce community access and support models. The Commonwealth funded non government day programs were transferred to the states in 1993 under the first Commonwealth State Disability Agreement (CSDA). At that time most jurisdictions also managed government-funded day programs. In NSW day programs continue to be delivered by both DADHC and non-government providers.⁹

Review of day programs in NSW, 2002

- 1.15 A review of DADHC funded and provided day programs was undertaken in 2001/02 to provide information about their operation and to help inform a broader review and reform of ATLAS services.¹⁰ The review found that:
- one third of people in day programs lived at home, while two thirds lived in supported accommodation (group homes or residential centres). In contrast two thirds of ATLAS and PSO clients lived with their families, while the other third lived in supported accommodation;
 - the age of people varied widely (ranging from 18 to 95 years);
 - 85% of people had an intellectual disability and 55% of people had no effective means of communication;
 - there were significant differences in the number of hours of support provided through day programs, ranging from 12 hours to 5 days per week. On average both PSO and ATLAS services provided 18-20 hours support per person each week. Where people received a service for 24 or more hours a week it was usually the result of the person attending TAFE or an (unsupported) work placement, in addition to the PSO/ATLAS program;
 - while the median unit cost for a day program was \$9,667 (2001) per person, there was a wide variation in funding levels, ranging from \$458 to \$34,500 per person per year;
 - while many service users and families in day programs were satisfied with the type and quantity of activities and the level of support provided, some people were concerned about activities being merely about 'filling in time' and not addressing individual aspirations, abilities or interests leading to real outcomes;
 - services lacked flexibility in responding to individual needs;

⁹ There are two important contextual factors about the operation of day programs in NSW. Services directly managed by DADHC have been provided only for people with intellectual disabilities who are classified as functioning in the moderate to severe range of disabilities. People with other disabilities receive services in the non government sector. The other major factor is that day programs were primarily the result of the devolution of large residential centres.

Brian Elton and Associates, Sept 2002, *Review of Disability Day Programs in New South Wales: Final Report Parts 1 and 2*, Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care p 10.

¹⁰ Brian Elton and Associates, 2002.

- there were a lack of pathways to employment or education from day programs. Similarly, in PSO/ATLAS services it was found that few people left the program as there were no other options;
- there was a lack of 'whole-of-life' planning; and
- there was no formal monitoring or evaluation framework.

Post School Options Program: 1993 to 1999

- 1.16 The PSO program was initiated in 1993 by the NSW Department of Community Services¹¹ as part of the State's responsibilities under the then CSDA.¹²
- 1.17 To be eligible for the programs, school leavers had to be 18 years or over, with moderate or high support needs and no appropriate alternative post school placement.¹³
- 1.18 The program provided school leavers with a disability with an individualised package of services to enable them to:¹⁴
- develop pre-employment skills;
 - develop independent living skills including personal care, social skills and transport skills;
 - participate in community, leisure and recreational activities; and
 - achieve linkages with employment opportunities.
- 1.19 The Program was initially funded in September 1993 as a one-off initiative for 1993 school leavers (\$3.6 million). It was intended as a transition between school and longer-term programs (employment or adult day programs).¹⁵ In September 1994, funding was approved to enable the 1993 school leavers to continue in the Program and to provide funds for the 1994 - 1996 school leavers. Eligible school leavers in the years up to and including 1998 continued to be accepted into the Program.

¹¹ The Post School Options Program was established by then Department of Community Services in 1993. The Program became the responsibility of the newly created Ageing and Disability Department (ADD) in 1996. From 1997 ADD took full administrative responsibility of the program. *The Post School Options Program Guidelines* were published in April 1997.

¹² A PSO Program had been operating in Western Australia since 1990. That program targeted school leavers, linking them to individual assistance and then to employment or day activity as required.

¹³ NSW Ageing and Disability Department, *The Post School Options Program Guidelines*, April 1997.

¹⁴ In general a person was funded at two levels commensurate with their support needs: \$13,500 (moderate support needs) and \$16,500 (high support needs). Each year these rates were indexed (between 2-3%). The indexation did not apply to new school leavers. See Chapter 2.

¹⁵ Ernst and Young, 1997, *Evaluation of the Post School Options Program: Final Report*, Ageing and Disability Department, p.33.

Evaluation of the Post School Options Program, 1997

- 1.20 The major findings of the 1997 evaluation of Post School Options¹⁶ were that the Program:
- provided participants with opportunities to develop their confidence and skills, including improvements in communication skills and independence;
 - had a positive impact on school leavers and their families. As 70% of people lived at home with their families, the Program supported families to continue to care for their school leaver at home;
 - services provided school leavers with half the level of support that had been expected;¹⁷
 - had limited success in assisting school leavers transition to longer-term options. The significant barriers were a lack of vocational options for people with high support needs, lack of vacant positions, Commonwealth-State funding arrangements, and financial disincentives if people moved to work and lost the benefits provided by the Disability Support Pension.
- 1.21 The evaluation also found that the demand for services was increasing as a result of population growth, better diagnosis and medical intervention, and an increased proportion of people with higher and complex needs. It also found that the majority of people had high support needs and required long-term day program options, as employment or vocational training was not a short or medium term objective for them. That is, there was a discrepancy between the intent of the Program (as a short term transition program) and the type of support participants needed.
- 1.22 Some of the key recommendations of the evaluation were to continue the Program. However, the evaluation proposed that the focus should be changed to provide a range of individual development opportunities on a medium to long term basis designed to increase people's opportunities for employment, independent living and non employment options. The evaluation also proposed the redevelopment of day programs to incorporate the positive features of the PSO Program (that is, individual planning, a developmental approach and individualised funding).
- 1.23 In 1998, the Minister approved the recommendations of the Ageing and Disability Department (ADD) to:
- develop a time-limited program to enable school leavers to receive the support in skills development necessary to transition to employment; and
 - provide appropriate longer-term day program options for those unable to transition to employment.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ernst and Young, 1997.

¹⁷ *The Post School Option Program Guidelines* stated that service providers should deliver an individualised service for 20-35 hours per week. NSW Ageing and Disability Department, 1997 p. 15.

¹⁸ The Evaluation Reference Group presented the Minister with an alternative proposal for a regional pilot program to test a new service delivery system. A summary report of the Review was circulated to the non-government sector.

Adult Training, Learning and Support (ATLAS): 2000 to 2004

- 1.24 The *Adult Training, Learning and Support (ATLAS) Strategic Framework* was approved in December 1998. In June 1999 the Minister approved the proposal of ADD to reshape the Post School Options Program into the ATLAS program.
- 1.25 The goal of ATLAS was stated as follows:
People with disabilities will be able to make the most of their abilities through an integrated spectrum of services providing: quality training, lifelong learning, skills development, access to employment and support (where possible) to enjoy the opportunities and experiences which are available to other people in the community, so as to maximise their participation as active citizens.¹⁹
- 1.26 The ATLAS program replaced the PSO Program for the 1998 school leavers and provided time-limited funding for two years. However, at the end of the two-year period 'where a user has not transitioned to employment, DADHC has extended funding on a year by year basis'.²⁰
- 1.27 When ATLAS was introduced, the existing PSO and day program clients continued in their programs and were exempted from the ATLAS changes.
- 1.28 In 2003, it was decided that the 2003 school leavers who were able to transition to full-time employment or higher education would no longer be eligible for assistance under the ATLAS program.²¹
- 1.29 While there were differences in the amount of funding and the duration of services provided under the new ATLAS Program, ATLAS services operated under the same guidelines as PSO services.²²

ACROD day services project issues paper: 2000

- 1.30 In 2000, as part of the development of the ATLAS system ACROD, the service providers' peak body, prepared a discussion paper which identified some of the problems with day programs they believed needed to be addressed with the introduction of ATLAS services (eg focused lifestyle, prevocational and employment options for people with disabilities).²³
- 1.31 The paper outlined five priority issues identified by service providers as impacting on day service delivery, including: funding levels, difficulty recruiting good staff and the provision of training, difficulty meeting the needs of people with high support needs and vocational issues, and the lack of work experience and employment options available with adequate workplace support.
- 1.32 Another key theme in the report was not to position 'day programs' as 'second best' to employment.

¹⁹ NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, *Adult Training and Learning Support (ATLAS) and Post School Options Policy and Operations Manual*, undated, pp 5-6.

²⁰ NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, *Adult Training and Learning Support (ATLAS) and Post School Options Policy and Operations Manual*, undated, p.18.

²¹ The Department continued to fund 15 people who were already enrolled at University.

²² The executive summary of the Guidelines refers to the document as an Interim Policy and Operations Manual for service providers. NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, *Adult Training and Learning Support (ATLAS) and Post School Options Policy and Operations Manual*, undated, p.4.

²³ ACROD NSW Division, 2000, *NSW Day Services Project Issues Paper*, ACROD.

2005 post school programs: policy framework

- 1.33 In July 2004 the reforms to the ATLAS Program were announced with the implementation of two new programs to replace the existing ATLAS and PSO Programs from January 2005.²⁴
- *Transition to Work* – a time-limited program to improve employment outcomes for school leavers who could transition to work within one to two years; and
 - *Community Participation* – a longer-term program designed to improve skills and community participation for school leavers who require an alternative to paid employment.
- 1.34 Although PSO participants were originally to be included in the reforms, it was announced in August 2004 that PSO participants would continue their current arrangements and be exempted from the reforms.
- 1.35 The reforms were necessary as a number of assumptions, which had underpinned the policy framework for the ATLAS Program, had proved to be inaccurate (for example, the assumption that a two-year time period was sufficient to support people with medium to high support needs). The key differences were:
- there were more school leavers eligible for assistance than estimated and the demand was continuing to grow;
 - the number of school leavers who were able to move straight from school to employment or education was half the original estimate;
 - the number of people who left the program was significantly less than originally predicted.²⁵ It had been assumed that 100 per cent of participants would move to work or another program provided by either the State or the Commonwealth after two years; and
 - there was a need to improve performance reporting.
- 1.36 The 2005 reforms to the NSW post school programs address the major policy gaps in the ATLAS program by providing:
- a clearer focus on improving employment outcomes for school leavers with a disability;
 - a requirement for the Community Participation services to focus on skills development, rather than provide general 'fill in' activities or 'care',²⁶

²⁴ At that time a policy framework was released. The major elements of this framework included objectives, policy principles and the new service models of Transition to Work and Community Participation. NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, July 2004, *Policy Framework: Transition to Work and Community Participation Programs*.

²⁵ Despite numerous good outcomes for specific individuals, the ATLAS Program had a very low success rate in assisting school leavers into employment.

²⁶ The need for community participation programs and day programs to focus on meaningful activities is consistent with the findings of the Report by the NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues, Nov 2002, *Making it Happen: Final Report on Disability Services* (Sections 13.1-13.2).

- certainty of longer term support for people who are not able to participate in the workforce;²⁷ and
- certainty of assistance for all eligible school leavers with a disability from 2005 onwards.

1.37 The other policy changes which have been introduced relate to the:

- move to block funding service providers rather than individualised funding;²⁸
- development of a new operational framework for the administration of the programs;
- establishment of a supplementary pool of funds to support people with very high support needs to participate in Community Participation;
- establishment of an equipment and minor modifications fund for both Programs; and
- introduction of a tender process for all new Transition to Work providers and non-ATLAS providers who expressed interest in providing a Community Participation service.

1.38 The new programs are being introduced from early February 2005 for 2004 school leavers and from early April 2005 for existing ATLAS participants.²⁹

²⁷ The NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues also recommended that people with a disability who are not able to access supported employment services should have guaranteed and continuing access to day programs (Recommendation 55). The new 2005 Community Participation program provides that certainty. It is acknowledged that there is a high level of unmet need by older adults for meaningful day activities.

²⁸ The funding arrangements for the administration of block funding are described in Chapter 2.

²⁹ Initially it has been proposed that the 2004 ATLAS participants would commence in the new programs from January 2005. This changed in November 2004 to allow ATLAS services 4 months until April 2005 to reconfigure their services around the new program objectives and funding levels.

Overview of post school programs in 2004/05

1.39 The major components of the two programs are summarised in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: NSW Transition to Work and Community Participation Programs

Components	Transition to Work	Community Participation
Objective	To assist school leavers with a disability achieve employment (open or supported) or enrolment in vocational education and training or enrolment in higher education	To provide people with a disability who have moderate to high support needs and require an alternative to paid employment or education with opportunities for continued learning and skill development, and community participation which increase their independence.
Outcomes	Over a two year period each person has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ acquired prevocational and work readiness skills; and/or ▪ moved to employment or vocational education and training or higher education or a Commonwealth employment program. 	Each person will achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ continues to develop and/or maintain life skills; ▪ continues to develop social networks and use community facilities and activities; ▪ participates in activities that are similar to other community members of a similar age and cultural background; and ▪ receives a service that is coordinated with other services they may receive.
Service types	Services may include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ prevocational training and or support to access prevocational or adult education courses; ▪ work placements; and ▪ independent living skills linked to work or further education 	Services may include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ skill development in areas including self-care, communication, social skills, community access, health and fitness, and managing behaviour; ▪ participating in community activities; ▪ assistance with moving to other programs.
Eligibility ³⁰	A person who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ has moderate to high support needs and has the capacity to work; ▪ is not undertaking employment or higher education or vocational education & training; ▪ is assessed by DADHC; ▪ wishes to participate in a program to support their work or study goals; and ▪ is at least 18 years in the first year. 	A person who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ has moderate to high support needs who because of their disability cannot pursue paid employment; ▪ is not undertaking higher education or vocational education & training; ▪ is assessed by DADHC; and ▪ is at least 18 years in the first year.
Base funding	\$15,699 per place per year	\$13,500 per place per year ³¹
Very high support		Additional funds for individuals with very high support needs
Time period	Maximum two years	Ongoing

³⁰ Details about the assessment process are provided in Chapter 5 and program performance indicators are outlined in Chapter 7.

³¹ Initially in July 2004 it was proposed to have two bands of funding for Community Participation services: base funding of \$9,000 per person per year and \$13,500 per person per year for people with higher support needs. In November 2004 it was announced that the funding would be \$13,500 per person per year. Under both arrangements there was provision for additional supplementary funding for people with very high support needs.

- 1.40 It is estimated that in 2004/05 DADHC will spend approximately \$62 million on post school programs. This is \$4.6 million more than in 2003/04 and represents an 18% increase since 2002/03.

Table 1.2 Grant Funding for NSW Post School Programs 2001/02 to 2004/05 (\$'000)

Program	2001/02 Actual	2002/03 Actual	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Estimate
PSO and ATLAS	43,650	52,506	57,369	49,800
Community Participation	0	0	0	8,300
Transition to Work	0	0	0	3,900
Total	43,650	52,506	57,369	62,000

Source: DADHC

- 1.41 In 2004/05, post school programs will assist over 3,700 people.

Table 1.3: 2004/05 NSW post school programs

Program	No. of clients	Average cost per place	Service hours per week
Post School Options	1,400	\$20,000	Average 18 Range 5 to 35
ATLAS ³²	1,660	\$16,600	Range 9 to 30
Community Participation	294	\$13,500	Average 17 Range 6 to 36
Transition to Work	376	\$15,699	Average 20 Range 7 to 35
Total	3,730		

Source: DADHC

- 1.42 In 2005, over 2,330 people will be assisted in the two new programs. This will comprise about 670 school leavers and about 1,660 people who participated in an ATLAS service in 2004.

- 1.43 By March 2005, 658 people who left school in 2004 had been allocated a place in a post school service. It is estimated that 670 (87%) of the 769 eligible school leavers will be assisted in a post school program in 2005. The other 99 people chose to withdraw from a program.

Table 1.4: Participation of 2004 school leavers in 2005 post school programs

Number of Eligible 2004 School Leavers	Community Participation					Transition to Work				
	In Program	Pending	Exit	No contact	Total	In Program	Pending	Exit	No Contact	Total
10 January 2005	246	54	12	3	315	304	103	24	24	455
31 January 2005 ³³	281	15	12	3	311	348	49	52	9	458
21 February 2005	291	8	13	0	312	368	24	62	5	458
11 March 2005	291	4	17	0	312	376	9	73	0	458

Source: DADHC Regional Offices

³² In 2005 people will transfer to Transition to Work or a Community Participation program.

³³ The school leaver, their family or carer were to have submitted their preferred service provider(s) to DADHC by December 2004. However, many people did not submit their preferences until February 2005.

- 1.44 Of the 2004 ATLAS clients who are to transfer to one of the two DADHC post school program by 4 April 2005, it is anticipated that, based on current trends, one quarter of people will be placed in a Transition to Work service and three quarters in a Community Participation service.

Table 1.5: Status of 2004 ATLAS service users in 2005 post school programs

Number of Eligible 2004 School Leavers	Community Participation					Transition to Work				
	In Program	Pending	Exit	No contact	Total	In Program	Pending	Exit	No Contact	Total
28 February 2005	909	266	5	156	1,336	212	44	2	54	312
14 March 2005	1,085	121	15	126	1,347	243	45	9	17	314

Source: DADHC Regional Offices

Programs in other jurisdictions

- 1.45 While post school programs vary across jurisdictions in terms of their scale, structure, funding and delivery arrangements there are many similarities between the policy frameworks.³⁴
- 1.46 The policy elements of the new NSW post school programs which are similar to interstate programs include:
- eligible people must be 18 years or older when entering the program and/or to have finished Year 12 (Queensland, Victoria);
 - eligible people do not have access to higher education, vocational training or employment options (Queensland);
 - some funding is time limited (for example, two years in Tasmania);
 - an emphasis on prevocational outcomes (Tasmania, South Australia);
 - individual plans are formally reviewed (Queensland); and
 - different outcomes are needed for people with higher support needs (eg skills development, community participation) (South Australia).
- 1.47 The major differences relate to the policies about:
- the length of time people could be assisted after leaving school (eg people are still eligible to enter the post school program up to three years in Victoria, and two years in Western Australia);
 - individualised funding, which is allocated to the service providers (ACT, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia)³⁵;
 - funding levels are differentiated according to the support needs of the school leaver (South Australia, ACT, Victoria);
 - a 'safety net' option that gives younger people in the Victorian Futures for Young Adults program the ability to move to Commonwealth employment programs (Victoria);³⁶ and

³⁴ More detailed information about these programs is provided in Appendix 1.1.

³⁵ See Chapter 2 for more information about funding models in other jurisdictions.

³⁶ The safety net allows eligible young people to seek support and advice from FFYA until 31 December in the year they turn 21 years of age. After this time, young people will need to seek assistance from other supports.

- formal program links with the Commonwealth's employment programs to create more flexible pathways (Western Australia).

1.48 Table 1.6 summarises the reforms in post school programs in the rest of Australia. It is significant to note the prevalence of program reviews.

Table 1.6: Australian Post School Programs: Major Policy and Program Reforms

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Policy and Program Reforms</i>
<i>ACT Post School Options Advancing Competencies through Experiences (aCe)</i>	2005: Joint review with Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations about flexibility between post school and employment. ³⁷
<i>Northern Territory Post School Options</i>	Program recently reviewed and new guidelines to be developed in 2005.
<i>South Australia Moving On</i>	<i>Working Party for Moving On Report</i> (October 2004). ³⁸
<i>Tasmania Supporting Individuals Pathways Program</i>	2000: Parliamentary Review into the Post School Options Program. ³⁹
<i>Victoria Futures for Young Adults (FFYA)</i>	FFYA reviewed by Deakin University in 2000. ⁴⁰ Ministerial Advisory Group established 2005. Greater focus on employment outcomes for 2004 school leavers.
<i>Western Australia Alternatives to Employment (Post School Options Program)</i>	Two year pilot <i>Learning to Work</i> to be implemented for some 2004 school leavers who would receive non-recurrent funding for 12 months to support the development of skills to Transition to Work. 2004: <i>Policy Framework for Alternatives to Employment</i> .

Source: Departmental web sites and officer level discussions

1.49 Similar policy debates about post school programs are evident internationally and these are summarised in Appendix 1.2. These debates suggest that there is no universally agreed approach to delivering post school programs.

Post school programs policy framework: future directions

1.50 The policy framework for the 2005 post school programs incorporates many aspects of contemporary thinking about programs for school leavers with a disability with moderate to high support needs. This includes an emphasis on:

- the Transition to Work program having clear objectives about prevocational training and work readiness;
- the Community Participation program focusing on life skills development and community participation rather than a general activities approach which has characterised many day programs;

³⁷ ACT Government, The Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, *Request For Tender No. T04381: Developing Future Directions in Service Delivery to Better Support Community and Employment Participation of People with a Disability in the ACT*, September 2004

³⁸ Working Party for the Moving On Program, October 2004, *Report to the Minister Hon Jay Weatherill MP*, Department of Families and Communities.

³⁹ Tasmanian Legislative Council Select Committee, 2000, *Post School Options for Young Adults with Disabilities*, Parliament of Tasmania.

⁴⁰ Institute of Disability Studies, Deakin University, 2002, *Futures for Young Adults Program: Evaluation*, Department of Human Services, Victoria.

- person-centred planning as the way of creating responsive services according to the needs of individuals and linking individual planning in post school programs with other disability services;
- pathways between the post school and other employment and education programs; and
- measuring the performance of individual services as well the outcomes of the programs.

1.51 The next phase in the development of the policy framework for the 2005 post school programs will include further work on:

- accessible information about the objectives and operations of the post school programs for school leavers and their families or carers;
- streamlining the intake process which results in young people and service providers being informed of placements in Term 4 of the school year;
- monitoring the outcomes of the supplementary fund in assisting people with very high support needs;
- improving the linkages with NSW Department of Education and Training, the Association of Independent Schools and the Catholic Education Commission about transition planning at school;
- greater coordination between the Commonwealth's open and supported employment services and the NSW transition program;
- the feasibility of introducing incentives which encourage young people with disabilities to transition to other services, while also proving a 'safety net' should the transition not work;
- improving access for young Aboriginal people with a disability;
- improving the cultural appropriateness of post school programs for young people from culturally diverse communities, who are currently under represented in all programs as a proportion of the school leaver population; and
- program guidelines and practice guides which demonstrate innovative and responsive practice.

Chapter 2 NSW post school programs: 2005 funding arrangements

In 2005 the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) introduced new funding arrangements for the two post school programs: *Transition to Work* and *Community Participation*. Funding for these programs will be administered predominantly as block grants with smaller amounts administered as individualised funding. This section provides details about these new funding arrangements, an overview of how these new arrangements differ from previous DADHC post school programs and a brief analysis of the funding arrangements for related programs in other jurisdictions. The last section is a broad overview of emerging cost trends in the 2005 Transition to Work and Community Participation programs.

An overview of funding models in disability services

- 2.1 Published research on trends in disability services funding policy across Australian jurisdictions is restricted.⁴¹ In 2000, the Australian Institute of Health of Welfare (AIHW) published a comparative survey in the context of research on performance measurement in the sector.⁴²
- 2.2 The AIHW research grouped service funding and delivery models into two broad categories: *provider-based*, where funding is directed to service providers, and *consumer-based* (or 'individualised'), where funding is allocated to individual consumers.⁴³ Six funding approaches were identified, although the field is characterised by many 'hybrid models'.⁴⁴

Table 2.1 AIHW classification of funding models⁴⁵

Funding Type	Funding Model	Description
Provider-based	Block	Funding generally based on historical precedent, related to cost of inputs.
Provider-based	Output-based	Amount of funding linked to number of units of service output (eg hours) purchased.
Provider-based	Outcome-based	Providers funded on outcomes achieved.
Consumer-based	Voucher	Consumers are given vouchers to purchase services from approved providers.
Consumer-based	Direct-consumer	Funds allocated to the consumer, who purchases services directly from providers.
Consumer-based	Brokerage	Funding allocated to consumer via a service broker, who purchases services.

⁴¹ This overview draws primarily on the AIHW research (comprising two separate reports) and more recent research on individualised funding models undertaken in Victoria and the ACT.

C Laragy, "Individualised Funding in Disability Services" in T. Eardley and B. Bradbury (eds), *Competing Visions: Refereed Proceedings of the National Social Policy Conference 2001*, SPRC Report, 2002, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney. R. Maher, *Evaluation of the Individual Support Package Program: A Report on the Evaluation of the Individual Support Package Program in the ACT*, July 2003, ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services.

⁴² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Integrating Indicators: Theory and practice in the disability services field*, AIHW cat. No. DIS 17, 2000, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Performance indicators: Review of current practice in the Australian disability services field*, Working Paper No 26, 2000, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra.

⁴³ This classification of funding models is used to inform the analysis of the funding arrangements for post school programs in NSW and other jurisdictions.

⁴⁴ AIHW, *Integrating Indicators*, p. xii.

⁴⁵ AIHW, *Integrating Indicators*, p. xi.

The 2005 post school programs: overview of funding arrangements

- 2.3 The new funding arrangements for the 2005 DADHC post school programs comprise a hybrid funding model, predominately block grant funding but with some aspects of individualised funding. The funding components comprise:
- block funding allocated on an annual fixed amount per place (Transition to Work: \$15,699 and Community Participation: \$13,500). The fixed amount is not differentiated by the support needs of clients;
 - supplementary funding for people with very high support needs in Community Participation services. In 2005, up to \$1.4 million will be allocated for the *Community Participation Program: Supplementary Funding to Support People with Very High Support Needs*. Should a person move to another Community Participation service this funding will follow the person; and
 - additional funding for equipment and building modifications.⁴⁶ This will assist with the acquisition of assistive equipment and technology, minor building modifications and equipment required to establish or expand services. The 2005 budget allocation for the *Transition to Work and Community Participation programs Equipment and Modifications Fund* is \$650,000.⁴⁷ Where equipment is acquired to support an individual that equipment will follow them to another service, should they be approved a transfer.
- 2.4 Under the block funding arrangements a service provider operating for the full calendar year will receive base funding for the number of people approved for that year (Transition to Work: \$15,699 and Community Participation: \$13,500). This means that the grant income is fixed for the year. This is irrespective of whether a person leaves the program and/or there is another school leaver to fill a vacant funded place. One of the benefits of block funding is the certainty it provides for service providers. The advantages and disadvantages of block funding are explored further in Sections 2.28 - 2.31.

Funding arrangements for other DADHC post school programs

- 2.5 The funding arrangements for PSO and ATLAS services involved the allocation of an individual funding package to an eligible provider that had been chosen by the person, their family or carer.
- 2.6 Funding for PSO services was provided on the basis of each individual's assessed level of support need with initial funding benchmarks of \$13,500 per year and \$16,500 per year for an individual with high support needs.

⁴⁶ Guidelines have been developed to administer the additional funds for people with very high support needs and equipment and modifications. The criteria for the equipment and modifications fund are more specific than the previous criteria for the ATLAS Program.

⁴⁷ The total allocation for the *Equipment and Modifications Fund* will increase as the result of the phased intake of 2004 school leavers. In contrast to previous years providers are only being funded from the first week the school leavers were approved to attend their service. As the 2004 school leavers have been placed with service providers in four funding rounds the savings will be allocated to the *Equipment and Modifications Fund*.

Packages have been indexed annually, so that high support packages were as high as \$22,486 in 2003/04 for a person who has been in the PSO program since its inception eleven years ago.

- 2.7 The average cost of a PSO funding package in 2003/04 ranged from \$18,685 to \$21,428, depending on the year the person entered the program.

Table 2.2: Average Post School Options funding in 2003/04 ⁴⁸

	Year Person Entered Post School Program					
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Average funding	\$21,428	\$20,649	\$21,289	\$20,054	\$18,943	\$18,665

Source: DADHC

- 2.8 The funding for ATLAS services was provided on a similar individualised basis, although funding was calculated from a different base.⁴⁹ The average funding per person ranged from \$15,386 to \$17,897 depending upon the year the person entered the program.

Table 2.3: Average ATLAS funding in 2003/04

	Year Person Entered ATLAS Program				
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003 ⁵⁰
Average funding	\$17,897	\$17,400	\$15,386	\$15,958	\$15,699

Source: DADHC

- 2.9 From April 2005 over 1,600 people who used an ATLAS service in 2004 will transfer either to a Transition to Work or Community Participation service.

Different funding levels for different programs

- 2.10 DADHC set different funding levels for Transition to Work and Community Participation as these programs aim to achieve different types of outcomes for people over different time periods.
- 2.11 The Transition to Work Program is a time limited and more intensive program in which people are assisted over a two year period to move to work, vocational education and training, or higher education. DADHC expected that service providers would reconfigure their services in line with the objective to provide vocational outcomes, that is able to enter work or further education.
- 2.12 In contrast, the Community Participation program is an ongoing program that aims to work with people on a longer-term basis to further develop their skills and independence. The fixed base rate of \$13,500 per annum is equivalent to many similar interstate programs and is greater than the \$9,000 that the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services will provide under the Targeted Support Program for similar

⁴⁸ An indexation rate is applied to the amount funded in the previous year: 2000/01 - 2.75%; 2001/02 - 2.20%; 2002/03 - 2.66% and 2003/04 - 2.00%.

⁴⁹ Since 2001 the start rates for a person entering the ATLAS Program have been fixed as follows: 2001 - \$16,876; 2002 - \$15,699 and 2003 - \$15,699.

⁵⁰ The amount funded in 2003/04 for 2003 school leavers is for the calendar year 2004. The figures for the school leavers in the period 1999 to 2002 are calculated by financial years.

assistance.⁵¹ In addition, further supplementation will be provided to assist people with very high support needs and it is anticipated that the funding level per person with very high support needs will be similar to the funding level for Transition to Work.

- 2.13 As the Community Participation program has a long term focus on the development of life skills development and community participation rather than the shorter term intensive focus of Transition to Work, DADHC expected ATLAS services to reconfigure their programs and costs to provide longer term support.⁵² The base rate of \$13,500 is seen to be reasonable as it is equivalent to many interstate programs.

Funding arrangements for interstate post school programs

- 2.14 Most jurisdictions appear to use a mixture of output-based and individualised funding, with non-government providers contracted to provide services to funded clients.⁵³
- 2.15 The range of funding levels for the post school programs in other jurisdictions ranges from a per person cost of \$12,500 to \$17,500 a year.

Table 2.4: Funding levels for post school programs in other jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	Average funding per individual				Time Limit
	Average All Levels	Moderate Support	High Support	Very High Support	
Victoria	\$13,619				3 years
Queensland ⁵⁴		\$12,500	\$16,500		5 years
South Australia pilot ⁵⁵		\$12,000	\$15,000	\$17,500	1 year
Western Australia ⁵⁶		\$1,500	\$21,050		Ongoing
ACT ⁵⁷	\$15,000				3 years

Source: Departmental web sites and officer level discussions

- 2.16 In summary, the funding levels per person under the new post school programs in NSW are consistent with the funding provided by most other jurisdictions to purchase a similar number of hours of support per person.
- 2.17 Victoria and the ACT have used brokerage arrangements for post school options services. In the ACT, 'funds are allocated to a brokerage agency, in respect of a particular individual, and the brokerage agency then

⁵¹ See section 2.25 for an overview of the Targeted Support Program.

⁵² In November 2004 DADHC announced that existing ATLAS participants would be able to stay in their existing program until April 2005 as this would allow ATLAS service providers a period of three months to reconfigure their services in line with the objectives for Community Participation.

⁵³ AIHW, *Integrating Indicators*, p. 20.

⁵⁴ In Queensland funds are allocated within bands up to these upper limits. In addition \$2,000 is available to assist with transport for some clients. The hours of service provided vary - ranging between 10-20 hours a week.

⁵⁵ In South Australia the Department of Families and Communities is currently implementing a pilot project with the Intellectual Disability Services Council to test the feasibility of providing a service for 5 days a week (32.5 hours), 48 weeks per year. The pilot uses fixed funding differentiated by support needs. Department for Families and Communities, *Request for Proposal: Pilot for the provision of day services through a reconfigurations of current funding arrangements to individuals with an intellectual disability and moderate to high support needs, who are currently receiving day options funding*, SPU 01897.

⁵⁶ In Western Australia service users can negotiate hours of service (average 15-25 hours) directly with service providers in accordance with their needs.

⁵⁷ Nationally Disability Administrators, December 2003, *"To Take Part": Economic and Social Participation for Australians with High Support Needs*, NDA, Canberra, p.10.

provides services directly to the individual and/or purchases services from other providers'.⁵⁸

- 2.18 Western Australia and South Australia have adopted practices designed to enhance client control over their funding allocation. In rural and remote South Australia, families can design their own services using self-employed contractors through Community Support Incorporated,⁵⁹ while Western Australia provides scope for clients to have input into the hours of service they receive.
- 2.19 All the individualised funding models involve the use of one or more assessment tools although funding structures vary across jurisdictions. Under individualised funding arrangements, clients are generally streamed into a particular funding band linked to support needs.
- 2.20 The current 'state of play' can be summarised as follows:
- *New South Wales.* A hybrid block funding arrangement is in place for the *Transition to Work* and *Community Participation* programs. Funds are administered to providers as a block grant, and most participants select their preferred provider. The individual goals and number of hours of service are negotiated with the service provider. Like most grant funding programs the focus is on inputs rather than prescribing outputs linked to different funding levels.⁶⁰
 - *Victoria.* The *Futures for Young Adults Program* uses individualised funding. Funding allocations are linked to a support needs assessment.⁶¹ Day programs are funded on a block grant basis with prescribed outputs for individuals.
 - *Queensland.* The *Post School Services - Adult Lifestyle Support Program* uses individualised funding. The Government is currently examining options for enhancing programs to better address the needs of specific client groups.
 - *South Australia.* A mixture of block grant and individualised funding arrangements are in place for the *Moving On Program*. The Government is currently piloting a grant model with three funding tiers to determine benchmark costs for a five-day per week service.
 - *ACT.* Post School Options services are funded on an individualised basis, with services purchased through brokerage arrangements.
 - *Northern Territory.* The post school options program uses block grants to approved service providers.
 - *Western Australia.* Individualised funding is in place for both post school and day programs under *Alternatives to Employment*.

⁵⁸ AIHW, *Integrating Indicators*, p. 23.

⁵⁹ Working Party for the Moving On Program, October 2004, *Report to the Minister Hon Jay Weatherill MP*, Department of Families and Communities, p. 2.

⁶⁰ The Service Description Schedules for both *Transition to Work* and *Community Participation* programs include performance measures but the output measures are not directly linked to funding levels as under output or outcome based funding models. See Chapter 7 for summary of the preliminary performance indicators.

⁶¹ Institute of Disability Studies, Deakin University, 2002, *Futures for Young Adults Program Evaluation*, Department of Human Services, Victoria, p. 21.

- 2.21 An emerging policy trend is that over the last five years, some State and Territory governments, including Victoria, ACT and Queensland, have moved to replace block grant funding with output and consumer-based funding arrangements for post school programs, with funds allocated on the basis of an individual needs assessment or service plan.

Commonwealth employment programs for people with a disability

- 2.22 The Commonwealth recently introduced two changes to the funding of employment related programs (*Case Based Funding* and *Targeted Support*) for people with a disability that are relevant to the funding arrangements for post school programs in NSW.

Case based funding

- 2.23 In January 2005, Case Based Funding started for job seekers accessing disability employment assistance. The new arrangements follow a four-year trial conducted by the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS). Under the new arrangements, disability open employment services will be administered by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), while supported employment services (known as Business Services) will continue to be administered by FaCS.

- 2.24 *Case Based Funding* is a fee-for-service arrangement where fees are paid to providers to assist job seekers with disabilities to find and keep employment. The fees are based on the job seekers' needs and their employment outcomes.⁶²

Targeted support program

- 2.25 The *Targeted Support Program* has been introduced as part of the Commonwealth's *Security, Quality Services and Choice for People with Disabilities Package*.⁶³ To assist business services (supported employment) remain viable, a targeted support package will be provided for an individual if they have 15% or below productivity. Where a person in a business service chooses to leave employment their service guarantee will be provided through targeted support for four years. The types of activities that an individual can undertake in targeted support are non vocational and life skills.⁶⁴ The annual funding per person is \$9,000 to cover the cost of the person's wages, a support worker and purchasing day programs.

⁶² The reforms were designed to link specialist disability employment funding more effectively "to the needs of individuals and to remove inequities in block grant funding arrangements." Under block grant funding, "job seekers only have access to funding where service providers have vacancies" and 'funding levels for job seekers in similar circumstances are inequitable'. Case Based Funding is regarded as more responsive to demand because 'funding will 'follow' the job seeker.' Department of Family and Community Services, August 1999, *Case Based Funding Trial: Questions and Answers*, p. 3.

⁶³ Department of Family and Community Services, *Targeted Support* www.facs.gov.au.

⁶⁴ The Targeted Support information sheet refers to 'examples of non-vocational activities include arts and crafts. Examples of life skills include: (1) independent living skills including shopping, travel training, money handling, self-care and communication skills, (2) community integration and social participation activities and/or (3) literacy and numeracy training, including the use of computers. www.facs.gov.au.

Australian trends in the funding arrangements for disability services

2.26 In Australia, there has been a trend in disability services towards more individualised and output-based⁶⁵ funding models.

Individualised and outcome-based funding

2.27 Broad factors influencing the trend in disability services in Australia to individualised and output-based funding include:

- the shift towards more person-centred values and the principle of self-determination;⁶⁶
- a trend towards the restructuring of human services where the introduction of 'competition' among non-government service providers has been seen as a way of increasing efficiency and improving choices for people with a disability;⁶⁷
- the move from focusing on inputs and processes towards the service outputs and outcomes of government programs⁶⁸; and
- an increased demand for accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of government funded services.⁶⁹ In particular, increasing demands for services has led to exploring options for enhancing the cost-effectiveness of programs. Individualised and outcome-based funding is seen as a way of tailoring funding to the specific needs of particular client groups, delivering greater value for money and enhancing the measurability of outcomes.

Comparative benefits of individualised and block grant funding

2.28 In funding the 2005 post school programs, DADHC moved from a hybrid individualised funding model to a predominately block grant model.⁷⁰ The change from individualised funding was made to improve client outcomes, by providing certainty of funding support so that staff could be more easily recruited and retained. Many service providers and the industry peak group (ACROD) made representations about the need to address perceived impacts on service provider viability associated with individualised funding arrangements.

⁶⁵ See Table 2.1 for an outline of these approaches.

⁶⁶ AIHW, *Integrating Indicators*, p. xii; Laragy, 'Individualised Funding in Disability Services', p. 1; R. Maher, *Evaluation of the Individual Support Package Program*, p. 13.

⁶⁷ AIHW, *Integrating Indicators*, p. xii.

⁶⁸ AIHW, *Integrating Indicators*, p. 10.

⁶⁹ AIHW, *Integrating Indicators*, p. 10.

⁷⁰ It was a hybrid model, as although the funding was allocated to an individual and could follow a person to another service, it was not tailored to individual support needs.

- 2.29 Individualised and output-based funding models have been perceived by some commentators as preferable to block grant funding because:
- they are better tailored to addressing individual needs and other factors such as family supports;
 - the funding is portable between service providers and locations which provides flexibility as 'funding follows the client';
 - the individualised approaches can be used to encourage client input into service planning and assessment, as funding is focused on the needs of specific clients rather than the needs of providers; and
 - output-based models create a more efficient, accountable service system. 'Commonly, reporting arrangements under block grant funding models are limited to a financial acquittal of funds. Agencies may be required to specify how funds were used to purchase inputs ... but are usually not required to report on service outputs provided.'⁷¹

2.30 In contrast, block funding is seen as a way to address the limitations of individualised funding arrangements.⁷² The perceived benefits of block funding include the potential to:

- improve the viability of service providers, particularly in relation to service provision in rural areas, infrastructure costs and the capacity to provide long term programs.⁷³ Under individualised funding the annual budget is not definite and can vary significantly during the year as clients choose to enter and leave the service. Block grants provide better funding stability for service providers, many of which are small, community-based organisations;
- encourage providers to assist people to transition into other services (eg employment) without a financial disincentive of losing the funding which may have a flow on effect to the staffing budget; and
- address the potential for funding inequities where needs classification systems are inflexible or ambiguous.⁷⁴ Block grant funding enables service providers to cross-subsidise the cost of providing support to service users with different levels of need, as their needs change.

⁷¹ AIHW, *Integrating Indicators*, p. 20.

⁷² AIHW, *Integrating Indicators*, p. xii.

⁷³ The impact of case based funding on provider viability has been one of the key issues in the public debate about the transition from block grant funding to case based funding. S. Biggs, June 2000 *Review of Mental Health Employment Issues*, Mental Health Co-ordinating Council Employment Sub-Committee, p. 5; Laragy, 'Individualised Funding in Disability Services', p. 275.

The Commonwealth trailed case based funding in two phases. While it found that a large proportion of service providers would not be viable under Phase 1, under the Phase 2 adjustments it found that many open employment providers would be viable without having to adjust their existing cost structures. It found that providers less viable under Phase 2 had higher costs and that these costs were not due to characteristics of the job seeker, but relative inefficiencies in the provision of support and higher indirect costs. *Case Based Funding: Trial Final Evaluation Report*, p. 26.

⁷⁴ Determining adequate funding benchmarks for different levels of need has been a key consideration for many jurisdictions, including the Commonwealth in relation to Case Based Funding.

- 2.31 While block funding improves funding certainty for service providers, and by implication should improve service quality, a perceived limitation of this funding model is that the person with a disability or their family or carer may have less choice. It has been argued that if a person is dissatisfied with a service or the service can no longer offer relevant programs they can only move to a new program when a vacancy arises. However, services funded under either block or an individualised funding must have the capacity to take an additional person.

2005 post school programs: selection of service providers

- 2.32 The organisations selected to provide a Transition to Work service were approved as a result of a tender process. The tender documentation specified two criteria about inputs: that the service is open to clients for 48 weeks per year and that the service could be provided on fixed funding of \$15,699 per person. The tender documentation stated that 'as a benchmark, 3 days of service per week is required, however this may vary in order to meet the individual needs of service users'.⁷⁵
- 2.33 In total, 101 service providers were approved as eligible service providers for the Transition to Work program for the two calendar years 2005/06.
- 2.34 The organisations approved as eligible providers for the Community Participation services were assessed according to an Eligibility Checklist, or a tender process if they were not an existing ATLAS provider. In September 2004 each service provider submitted a budget based on fixed funding of \$9,000 per person per year for people with low support needs and \$13,500 for those with higher needs. In October-November 2004 services were asked to submit revised hourly unit costs when the fixed funding was increased to \$13,500 per person and for services to have client contact for 48 weeks per year.
- 2.35 In total, 138 service providers were approved to provide a Community Participation service in the two years 2005/06.⁷⁶ Of these 138 providers, DADHC has detailed budgets from 46 organisations which indicate that the hourly cost per client remained the same when the funding changed from a two-tier system to a flat \$13,500 per client per year.⁷⁷
- 2.36 These funding arrangements, where DADHC only specified two criteria (the number of client weeks and total funding per person), albeit administered as a block grant, were a continuation of the previous approach of Post School Options and ATLAS whereby a person with a disability and/or their parents or carer would negotiate with an approved service provider the number of hours they would receive each week.

⁷⁵ NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, *Request for Tender: Eligible Providers of Transition to Work Programs*, 2004.

⁷⁶ Nine of the 138 eligible providers were selected as part of the Community Participation tender process. The other providers were ATLAS providers.

⁷⁷ In the case of the other 71 eligible providers under the *Community Participation* program they provided a revised hourly rate, but did not submit reworked budgets.

2005 post school programs: unit costs and service levels

2.37 This section provides an analysis of the level of service and unit costs of the *Transition to Work* and *Community Participation* programs. This is an indicative analysis only as it is based on the budget information submitted by service providers in 2004, adjusted for the increased funding for Community Participation services.⁷⁸ As the vast majority of people will not be allocated a placement in the new programs until mid March 2005 it has not been possible to analyse the impacts of the placements on the average cost of the services.

2.38 A comprehensive analysis will be undertaken after the 2004 ATLAS participants have been placed in their new programs. As the analysis of the tender and associated documentation below shows, there is a wide variation in costs and proposed level of service between providers. The comprehensive analysis will provide a more accurate assessment of the cost drivers for the 2005 Transition to Work and Community Participation programs and the resultant level of client service.

Cost and number of hours of support provided each week

2.39 On average, 20 hours of support will be provided each week to a person by a Transition to Work service and 54% of services will provide between 18-22 hours per week.⁷⁹ This level of service is consistent with the program benchmark of funding 18 hours per support per service. Overall, 78% of Transition to Work services will provide 18 or more hours a week.

Table 2.5: 2005 Community Participation and Transition to Work: weekly hours of support per person

Figures being calculated

Eligible Providers	Median hours	Average number of hours per week						Total
		Less 8	8-12	13-17	18-22	23-27	28 plus	
<i>Transition to Work</i>	20							
▪ Number of providers		3	7	12	55	12	12	101
▪ Percentage of providers		3%	7%	12%	54%	12%	12%	100%
<i>Community Participation</i> ⁸⁰	17							
▪ Number of providers		7	21	48	34	15	5	130
▪ Percentage of providers		5%	16%	37%	26%	12%	4%	100%

Source: DADHC

⁷⁸ In early 2004 DADHC commenced negotiations with the University of Wollongong to conduct a Classification and Costing Study which will develop a pricing and classification model and develop an understanding of cost drivers. This project was delayed with the contract arrangements being finalised in 2005.

⁷⁹ This is equivalent to the findings of the Day Programs Review in 2001 that concluded that PSO/ATLAS packages were providing on average of 18-20 hours per week, although ATLAS users on average received fewer hours than those on PSO packages. Brian Elton and Associates, October 2001, p. ii.

⁸⁰ The median was derived from the units cost from 130 Community Participation services, where as the more detailed breakdown by hours is derived from the proposed budgets for 46 Community Participation services. Data was not available for 8 of the existing ATLAS services.

2.40 Based on the information collated to date, a person in a Community Participation service will receive on average 17 hours service per week, which is almost equivalent to the benchmark target of 18 hours support per week. However, Community Participation services will provide on average fewer hours than Transition to Work, as only 42% of services will provide 18 or more hours of service per week. Once the actual costs for 2005 are available they will be reviewed to examine whether the relationship between cost and hours of service has changed.

Table 2.6: 2005 Community Participation and Transition to Work: unit cost of service per week

Figures being calculated

Eligible Providers	Median cost	Average unit cost of service per week					
		Less 8	8-12	13-17	18-22	23-27	28 plus
<i>Transition to Work (101)</i>							
▪ Hourly cost per person	\$17.34	\$48.48	\$29.67	\$21.79	\$17.66	\$13.84	\$11.58
<i>Community Participation (130)⁸¹</i>							
▪ Hourly cost per person	\$17.05	\$40.00	\$25.91	\$18.42	\$14.00	\$11.47	\$9.24

Source: DADHC

2.41 It was expected that Community Participation services would have a lower cost than Transition to Work services as transition services work intensively teaching work related skills within a short period. However, as Table 2.6 shows the median hourly cost of a Transition to Work service (\$17.34) is almost identical to the median cost of a Community Participation service (\$17.05). However the unit cost for Community Participation services that provide 18 or more hours a week is more cost effective at \$14.00 per hour or less.

DADHC funding compared to other funding sources

2.42 DADHC provides the vast majority of funding for post school services. Transition to Work providers submitted budgets which assumed that on average 3.3% (\$862 per person) of income would be provided from sources other than the DADHC grant, which included fees and philanthropic donations.⁸² About one third of Transition to Work service providers budgeted for other sources of income.

Table 2.7: 2005 Transition to Work and Community Participation: other income per year

Eligible Providers	Average Income	Average annual other income per year					
		Less 8	8-12	13-17	18-22	23-27	28 plus
<i>Transition to Work (101)</i>							
▪ Annual income per person	\$862	\$556	\$643	\$25	\$1,197	\$395	\$839
<i>Community Participation (46)</i>							
▪ Annual income per person	\$267		\$38	\$42	\$610	\$68	\$418

Source: DADHC

2.43 Just less than one quarter (10) of the 46 Community Participation providers budgeted for other sources of income, which averaged \$267 per person per annum.

⁸¹ The median was derived from the unit costs from 130 Community Participation services, whereas the more detailed breakdown by hours is derived from the budgets of 46 Community Participation services.

⁸² This would not include out of pocket expenses paid by people with a disability.

Metropolitan and rural differences: cost and hours of support

- 2.44 Services in less accessible locations often have higher costs as a result of distance and smaller size as they are less able to benefit from economies of scale. All eligible service providers were grouped according to the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) classification to identify services located in Local Government Areas that are less accessible than those in Metropolitan Sydney, the regional centres of Newcastle and Wollongong, and large rural centres.⁸³
- 2.45 The median hourly cost of the 27 Transition to Work services located in less accessible areas was only slightly (\$0.44) more expensive per hour than the median cost for all services. When the cost was compared to the number of hours of service being provided, the average hourly cost in less accessible locations was less than the state average. On average these less accessible services will provide 19 hours per person per week at a cost of \$18.43 per hour.

Table 2.8: 2005 Transition to Work and Community Participation: hourly cost in less accessible locations

Eligible providers in less accessible areas	Median cost	Average cost of hour of support per person					
		Less 8 hrs	8-12hrs	13-17hrs	18-22 hrs	23-27hrs	28 +hrs
<i>Transition to Work (101)</i>							
▪ Hourly cost per person	\$17.88	\$44.86		\$21.30	\$16.60	\$13.66	\$11.24
▪ Number of providers	27	1		8	14	2	2
<i>Community Participation (46)</i>							
▪ Hourly cost per person	\$14.06		\$28.78	\$19.28	\$14.03	\$11.96	\$7.92
▪ Number of providers	13		2	2	6	2	1

Source: DADHC

- 2.46 The lower cost structure was even more evident in the 13 Community Participation services located in less accessible localities. The median hourly cost was \$14.06 per hour compared with the state-wide median of \$17.05 per hour.

Larger providers and economies of scale

- 2.47 Two approaches were used to analyse whether larger providers were more cost efficient than smaller providers. The hourly unit costs of the service providers who have been allocated most of the 2004 school leavers were compared with the average state-wide cost, as was the cost of the largest established PSO and ATLAS providers.
- 2.48 A small group of eligible providers received half the funding allocated under the first three rounds of 2004 school leavers for both programs. For Transition to Work, 21 (20%) of the 101 eligible providers received 62% of the funds while in Community Participation, 19 (14%) of the 138 providers received 60% of the funds allocated under the first three funding rounds.⁸⁴

⁸³ ARIA was developed by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care as an attempt to develop a standard classification and index of remoteness for the whole country. Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, *Measuring Remoteness: Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia*, Occasional Papers New Series Number 41, October 2001. The 'least accessible' services were defined in this analysis to mean a LGA classified by ARIA as: Remote, Moderately Accessible or Accessible. It excluded the Highly Accessible localities.

⁸⁴ In the first three rounds of funding to place the 2004 school leavers, 658 of an estimated total of 670 people had been allocated a place.

Table 2.9: Providers with whom the major proportion of 2004 school leavers were placed

Providers	Median cost	Average hourly cost					
		Less 8 hrs	8-12hrs	13-17hrs	18-22 hrs	23-27hrs	28 +hrs
<i>Transition to Work (101)</i>							
▪ Hourly cost per person	\$16.69		\$28.50	\$21.98	\$16.83	\$13.45	
▪ Number of providers	21	0	3	2	13	3	0
<i>Community Participation (46)</i>							
▪ Hourly cost per person	\$16.40		28.88	\$17.46	\$14.20	\$11.45	
▪ Number of providers	19	0	2	8	5	4	0

Source: DADHC

2.49 There is some evidence that economies of scale have been achieved in terms of reduced costs as the median hourly cost of \$16.69 was 4% less than the state-wide cost of \$17.34 an hour. What was more significant is that 66% of the Transition to Work services will provide on average between 18-22 hours per week per person (compared with 54% state-wide). This means that more hours were being provided per person.

Table 2.10: Top 20 biggest 2003/04 ATLAS and PSO providers: 2005 post school programs hourly cost

Providers	Median cost	Average hourly cost					
		Less 8 hrs	8-12hrs	13-17hrs	18-22 hrs	23-27hrs	28 +hrs
<i>Transition to Work (101)</i>							
▪ Hourly cost per person	\$17.73		\$32.76	\$22.74	\$18.01	\$13.09	\$11.48
▪ Number of providers	16	0	1	2	9	1	3
<i>Community Participation (46)</i>							
▪ Hourly cost per person	\$17.36		27.77	\$18.26	\$13.85	\$11.54	
▪ Number of providers	19	0	2	10	5	2	0

Source: DADHC

2.50 In Transition to Work there was no evidence of any cost efficiencies in the cost structures of the 16 services which were the major recipients of ATLAS and PSO funding in 2003/04. However, the 7 Community Participation services did show evidence of cost efficiency.

Direct costs as a proportion of total costs

2.51 Direct costs⁸⁵ are the most significant costs in both programs as they represent on average 80% of total costs in Transition to Work and 78% in Community Participation.

2.52 Almost all of the Transition to Work services (91 of the 101 services) allocated a similar amount for direct costs, ranging from \$13,048 to \$13,749 per person per year.

2.53 Overall, the allocation of direct costs in Community Participation was lower, with an average cost of \$10,069 (median \$9,136) per person each year.

⁸⁵ Direct costs comprise salaries, consumables, transport, service brokerage, assessment and other costs.

Table 2.11: 2005 post school programs: annual direct costs

Providers	Median cost	Average annual direct costs per person					
		Less 8 hrs	8-12hrs	13-17hrs	18-22 hrs	23-27hrs	28 +hrs
<i>Transition to Work (101)</i>							
▪ Annual cost per person	\$13,074	\$11,167	\$14,128	\$13,212	\$13,048	\$13,108	\$13,749
▪ Number of providers	101	3	7	12	55	12	12
<i>Community Participation (46)</i>							
▪ Annual cost per person	\$9,136	\$6,750	\$11,440	\$10,886	\$10,089	\$8,362	\$9,605
▪ Number of providers	46	1	6	12	16	8	3

Source: DADHC

Direct staffing (a direct cost) as a proportion of the total cost

2.54 In both programs the cost of staff working directly with clients is the largest cost driver of the total budget (61% in Transition to Work and 64% in Community Participation). The median annual cost of direct staff in Transition to Work services is \$9,933 per person. However, just over a half of the Transition to Work services have costed staffing at \$9,661 per person which will provide between 18-22 hours of support a week.

Table 2.12: 2005 post school programs: annual unit direct staff costs

Providers	Median cost	Average annual cost of direct staff per person					
		Less 8 hrs	8-12hrs	13-17hrs	18-22 hrs	23-27hrs	28 +hrs
<i>Transition to Work (101)</i>							
▪ Annual cost per person	\$9,933	\$9,687	\$10,648	\$10,428	\$9,661	\$11,023	\$10,742
▪ Number of providers		3	7	12	55	12	12
<i>Community Participation (46)</i>							
▪ Annual cost per person	\$7,626	\$5,067	\$9,706	\$8,983	\$8,083	\$7,059	\$6,444
▪ Number of providers		1	6	12	16	8	3

Source: DADHC

2.55 The selected 46 Community Participation services have proposed a median cost of \$7,626 for direct staff and these costs show a downward trend, with lower rates of expenditure on direct staffing as the number of hours increases. In contrast, the direct staffing costs for the 101 Transition to Work services do not reduce as the number of hours increase.

Travel costs (a direct cost) as a proportion of total costs

2.56 Both programs allocate 4% of their total costs to travel. In Transition to Work the average cost of travel per person each year is \$679, with 79% of services allocating an amount ranging from \$592 to \$726.

Table 2.13: 2005 post school programs: annual unit travel costs

Providers	Median cost	Average annual travel costs per person					
		Less 8 hrs	8-12hrs	13-17hrs	18-22 hrs	23-27hrs	28 +hrs
<i>Transition to Work (101)</i>							
▪ Annual cost per person	\$625	\$280	\$544	\$636	\$726	\$592	\$768
▪ Number of providers	101	3	7	12	55	12	12
<i>Community Participation (46)</i>							
▪ Annual cost per person	\$413	\$67	\$379	\$478	\$617	\$389	\$931
▪ Number of providers	46	1	6	12	16	8	3

Source: DADHC

- 2.57 The proposed median unit cost of transport in the Community Participation services is \$413 with 60% of services proposing to cost travel at \$478 to \$617 a year per place.⁸⁶

Indirect costs as a proportion of total costs

- 2.58 A similar proportion has been allocated for indirect costs⁸⁷ in both programs (20% in Transition to Work and 22% in Community Participation).⁸⁸ In Transition to Work the median indirect costs are \$3,192 while for the 46 Community Participation services the cost is \$2,341. The indirect costs are most similar for the services that will provide services for 18-22 hours per week (Transition to Work: \$3,438; Community Participation \$3,229).

Table 2.14: 2005 post school programs: annual indirect unit costs

Providers	Median cost	Average annual indirect costs per person					
		Less 8 hrs	8-12hrs	13-17hrs	18-22 hrs	23-27hrs	28 +hrs
<i>Transition to Work (101)</i>							
▪ Annual cost per person	\$3,192	\$5,568	\$2,205	\$2,905	\$3,438	\$3,247	\$3,321
▪ Number of providers	101	3	7	12	55	12	12
<i>Community Participation (46)</i>							
▪ Annual cost per person	\$2,341	\$2,250	\$2,442	\$3,401	\$3,229	\$2,208	\$1,326
▪ Number of providers	46	1	6	12	16	8	3

Source: DADHC

Service management (an indirect cost) as a proportion of total costs

- 2.59 A similar amount was costed for service management in both programs. The median annual unit cost for management in Transition to Work was \$1,267, while the median for the 46 Community Participation providers was \$1,024.

Table 2.15: 2005 post school programs: annual service management unit cost

Providers	Median cost	Average annual cost of service management					
		Less 8 hrs	8-12hrs	13-17hrs	18-22 hrs	23-27hrs	28 +hrs
<i>Transition to Work (101)</i>							
▪ Annual cost per person	\$1,267	\$1,623	\$881	\$1,133	\$1,222	\$1,385	\$1,244
▪ Number of providers	101	3	7	12	55	12	12
<i>Community Participation (46)</i>							
▪ Annual cost per person	\$1,024	\$1,080	\$460	\$1,322	\$1,149	\$1,362	\$293
▪ Number of providers	46	1	6	12	16	8	3

Source: DADHC

Accommodation (an indirect cost) as a proportion of total costs

- 2.60 While the cost of accommodation varied significantly, most likely as a result of providers operating from a range of properties (owned, community facility, privately rented) there was no difference between Transition to Work and Community Participation (3.5% of total costs) services.

⁸⁶ This is the cost or subsidy of transport provided by the service and not that funded by people with a disability.

⁸⁷ Indirect costs comprise service management, administration, accommodation and other costs.

⁸⁸ This is similar to the 2001 Day Programs Review, where it was found that between 18-20 percent of each funding package was typically used for administrative overheads. Brian Elton and Associates, p. ii.

Table 2.16: 2005 post school programs: annual accommodation cost

Providers	Median cost	Average annual cost of accommodation					
		Less 8 hrs	8-12hrs	13-17hrs	18-22 hrs	23-27hrs	28 +hrs
<i>Transition to Work (101)</i>							
▪ Annual cost per person	\$442	\$225	\$215	\$468	\$646	\$479	\$753
▪ Number of providers	101	3	7	12	55	12	12
<i>Community Participation (46)</i>							
▪ Annual cost per person	\$392	\$450	\$1,057	\$600	\$641	\$321	\$126
▪ Number of providers	46	1	6	12	16	8	3

Source: DADHC

Community Participation: higher support needs

- 2.61 In the first three rounds of placing 2004 school leavers in the 2005 post school programs, 164 individuals had been classified in the assessment process⁸⁹ as having higher support needs and 146 of these individuals had been placed in services. It is not assumed that these are the final costs for supporting these people as the allocations are yet to be made for the *Supplementary Fund to Assist People with Very High Support Needs*.
- 2.62 Although the hourly median cost is \$15.65, which is less than the statewide median of \$17.05, the cost for providing 13-17 plus hours per week is equivalent to the state-wide costs.

Table 2.17: Community Participation Program: unit costs for people with higher support needs

Providers	Median cost	Average hourly cost of service					
		Less 8 hrs	8-12hrs	13-17hrs	18-22 hrs	23-27hrs	28 +hrs
<i>Community Participation (46)</i>							
▪ Hourly cost per person	\$15.65		\$22.62	\$18.74	\$14.71	\$11.20	\$9.37
▪ Number of providers	20		2	7	6	4	1

Source: DADHC

Implications of funding arrangements for NSW post school programs

- 2.63 The findings from the preliminary analysis of the cost drivers in the 2005 Transition to Work and Community Participation budgets are indicative of a traditional grant funding model, whereby the cost of programs is derived from locally-based budgets rather than an outputs or outcome approach. One of the incentives underpinning the block grant is that a service provider can assist a person to move to another program and they are not 'penalised' by having their funding reduced. However, the incentives for young people to move to another program may be more limited.

⁸⁹ See Chapter 5 for an explanation of the assessment process. The classification of a person as having high support needs in the functional screening and behavioural assessment is not assumed to be an accurate predictor of eligibility under the *Community Participation Supplementary Fund to Assist People with Very High Support Needs*.

2.64 The next phase for DADHC in implementing the new funding arrangements for the post school programs in 2005 will include:

- monitoring the cost structure of any Community Participation service which has significantly reduced hours and/or significantly increased costs compared with their 2003/04 ATLAS unit costs;
- monitoring the extent to which the block funding for the 2005 post school programs achieves the intended outcomes in terms of improved service quality and service viability. In assessing the success of block funding arrangements, DADHC will take into account the experiences of people with a disability, their families or carers, as well as feedback from peak advocacy and service organisations;
- monitoring the adequacy and effectiveness of the *Supplementary Fund For People With Very High Support Needs* in assisting people with very high support needs to participate in Community Participation services;
- monitoring the actual unit cost of services by each program, including the identification of key cost drivers and variations by client need, cultural background, provider size and service location;
- developing financial performance benchmarks and targets; and
- exploring the feasibility of introducing a tiered funding model which is linked to assessed client need and/or trialling an output-based funding arrangement where funding is linked to achieving outcomes for people with a disability.

Chapter 3 Advocacy organisations and consultation

Prior to the announcement of the new post school programs in mid 2004, DADHC had consulted with advocacy organisations over the previous two years about the ATLAS reforms. As part of that process a number of working parties were established which included representation from advocacy organisations and industry representatives. While aspects of this consultative process did not meet the expectations of some stakeholders, many of the matters raised informed the development of the new post school programs.

This section focuses on the Department's information and consultative mechanisms that have operated since July 2004, which have actively helped to inform the new programs.

Consultation about the introduction of the 2005 post school programs

- 3.1 In mid 2004, following the announcement about the establishment of the new post school programs, the Department undertook an active round of information and briefing sessions. This involved the utilisation of regular stakeholder forums across the state, convening and attending specific purpose meetings, as well as convening small working groups.

Senior departmental staff also attended a number of information sessions, which had been organised by either advocacy groups or service providers. At these sessions, the implementation of the new programs was discussed with people and their families, and advocates of people with a disability. Senior executives also attended state wide forums with the Minister for Disability Services, which included representatives of both advocacy and service providers.
- 3.2 At the regional and state briefings, people with a disability, their families, carers, service providers and advocates were actively involved. They raised both individual and systemic issues regarding the reforms. People were also asked to provide feedback about how best the new programs should be implemented. In addition, the Department responded to a large number of individual enquiries from parents and advocates.
- 3.3 All of the issues that were raised by individuals or advocacy organisations, as with the issues raised by service providers, were referred and considered by the Central Office of DADHC in their detailed development of the programs.
- 3.4 Some of the peak advocacy organisations were also involved in small working groups. The Department specifically convened these groups to assist, for example, in the development of the Transition to Work program.
- 3.5 The feedback from these consultations, particularly from parents and advocates, was important in influencing changes to the funding arrangements and other elements of the programs. These included the decision to:
 - introduce a single tier of funding for Community Participation providers; and

- continue the funding for the existing ATLAS providers until the end of March 2005 to provide a transition period during which services could reconfigure for the new programs.

Consultation on program guidelines and resources

- 3.6 In late 2004, DADHC established a working group with ACROD and representative service providers, to consult about the development of the guidelines for the *Community Participation Supplementary Fund for People with Very High Support Needs*. In January 2005, this consultation process was extended to include two major peak organisations that could advocate on behalf of people with a disability.
- 3.7 The advocacy and service provider peak organisations were consulted in the development of four major draft documents prepared in February 2005.⁹⁰ The feedback received during this process improved the draft policies and guidelines.

Future consultative approaches

- 3.8 The Department is further developing its consultative structures as part of the next phase of implementing the post school programs. A core component of this consultation will be the inclusion of advocates. This next phase will include consultation about:
- the development and review of the operational guidelines for the service providers in both programs. It is proposed to release these guidelines in April 2005 and to monitor any implementation issues at six and twelve months. This will ensure the guidelines are relevant to practice and incorporate the major issues from the perspectives of people with a disability and their families or carers, advocates, service providers, and the Department;
 - the development of comprehensive performance indicators by July 2005;
 - the implementation of the programs and consideration of the options to address any emerging issues;
 - the most effective ways to ensure the views of people with a disability are included as part of the monitoring and review process;⁹¹
 - how to improve the responsiveness of the programs to Aboriginal school leavers with a disability and their communities; and
 - how to improve the participation rate of school leavers from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and ways to assist services provide more culturally appropriate programs.

⁹⁰ These documents were The Service Description Schedule for the Transition to Work Program, The Service Description Schedule for the Community Participation Program, The Equipment and Modifications Fund, and the Community Participation Supplementary Fund for People with Very High Support Needs.

⁹¹ When consulting with people with an intellectual disability, suitable media should be used and images and descriptive examples to ensure that people can be actively involved. Scales, January 1997.

Chapter 4 Assistance for students in post secondary and higher education

People with a disability in NSW are supported to participate in vocational education and training through the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system and through the higher education system. Specific employment programs are also provided for people with a disability. Financial assistance from the Commonwealth and State is available to eligible people with a disability who are not in full-time employment and to supplement transport costs. The Transition to Work and Community Participation programs assist people with a disability with moderate to high support needs who are not assisted through the above programs.

Initially, the PSO and ATLAS eligibility criteria included people who were to attend university. These people could use their individual funding package for costs associated with personal care and transport.

In 2003 the eligibility criteria for the ATLAS Program was changed and people who were in higher education were no longer eligible for assistance. The 15 school leavers who were already in the ATLAS program and attending university were exempted from the changes. In a continuation of the policy established under ATLAS, the Transition to Work and Community Participation Programs will not assist people in higher education or who are studying at TAFE as these educational sectors have specific programs to assist people with a disability.

Support for people with a disability in post secondary education

The school leaver programs across Australia assist people with a disability who are not in vocational or higher education.⁹² A number of specific arrangements are in place in further education.

- 4.1 In NSW, TAFE, as the largest vocational education and training provider, assists students with a disability through its Disability Services Program.⁹³ This covers, for example, people with an intellectual, neurological, physical, or psychiatric disability, and/or a sensory impairment. Similar programs operate in other jurisdictions for students with a disability.

Higher Education

- 4.2 The Higher Education Disability Support Program provides support to students with a disability who attend university.⁹⁴ The university receives funding from the Commonwealth based on the number of enrolled students that identify as having a disability and the educational supports that have been provided in the previous year.

⁹² Victoria is the exception, as people with a disability who have completed a formal vocational education can participate in the *Futures for Young Adults Program* (a transitional program).

⁹³ The purpose of this Program is to ensure that students with a disability can access TAFE and participate in their chosen course of study. The teacher consultant and student complete an individual vocational plan. Reasonable adjustments can include interpreters, note-takers and adaptive technology. There is no upper funding level for this Program.

⁹⁴ This Program is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training. Support includes interpreters; tutorial support; note-taker and scribe support; examination and assessment assistance; and production of information in alternative formats, eg Braille.

- 4.3 The cost of personal care is not provided under the higher Education Disability Support Program, but people may be eligible through the Home and Community Care program for personal care. For individuals with personal care requirements of less than 15 hours per week, a range of providers can deliver this care. Where an individual requires personal care for over 15 hours per week, this can be provided by Home Care through its High Needs Pool or the Attendant Care Program funded by the Disability Services Program.

Financial assistance towards the cost of transport

- 4.4 People with a disability can receive assistance through two programs - the Mobility Allowance⁹⁵ and the NSW Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme⁹⁶.

Other employment programs for people with a disability

- 4.5 There are two joint Commonwealth/State programs in NSW that assist people with a disability to gain employment in the public sector - the Apprenticeship Program for People with Disabilities⁹⁷ and the Traineeships for People with a Disability Program⁹⁸. (Other State and Territory governments provide equivalent programs). Additional workplace support is provided by the Commonwealth Disabled New Apprentices Wages Subsidy scheme (DNAWS).⁹⁹
- 4.6 Specialist Commonwealth programs support people with a disability to gain employment. The Disability Employment Assistance programs provide employment support and ongoing assistance for people with a disability.¹⁰⁰ In addition, financial incentives are offered to employers under the Wage Subsidies,¹⁰¹ Workplace Modifications¹⁰² and Disabled New Apprentices Wages Subsidy scheme.

⁹⁵ The Mobility Allowance is a Commonwealth payment for a person with a disability aged 16+ who cannot use public transport without substantial assistance and who is undertaking an 'activity' for at least 8 hours per week. An 'activity' can include employment, training, vocational training, education or volunteering. The Disability Support Pension is not a pre-requisite to receive the Mobility Allowance.

⁹⁶ The NSW Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme is funded by the NSW Ministry of Transport. People with a severe or permanent disability, as certified by a doctor, are eligible, including people with an intellectual disability. Eligible people receive a maximum of one book of vouchers every 21 days. Vouchers entitle users to 50% discounts on taxi fares up to a maximum of \$60.

⁹⁷ The Apprenticeship Program for People with Disabilities is a joint NSW Department of Education, Employment and Training and the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training program. Trainees are selected by a panel of representatives including the employer, The Department of Education and Training (DET) and people with a disability. Applicants considered eligible are assessed by the Commonwealth to decide eligibility for the Disabled New Apprentices Wages Subsidy scheme (DNAWS). DET makes up the difference between DNAWS and the total wage costs. People with a disability are trained and gain employment in the NSW public sector, however the employment is not guaranteed at the completion of the apprenticeship.

⁹⁸ The Commonwealth Disabled New Apprentices Wages Subsidy scheme (DNAWS) is a joint DET New Apprenticeship Centre and the Office of Employment, Equity and Diversity Program. It is funded by the Motor Accidents Authority of NSW and the Public Trustees. A selection panel is comprised of a representative of the employer, the DET and a person with a disability. The person selected may also be eligible for DNAWS support or other incentives from the Commonwealth. People with a disability are trained and gain permanent employment in the public sector. The employment must be guaranteed to continue after the completion of the traineeship for at least 24 months.

⁹⁹ This Scheme offers financial incentives to employers who employ apprentices with a disability.

¹⁰⁰ The Open Employment Program is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. The Business Services Program is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services.

¹⁰¹ Financial incentives are offered to employers to subsidise the wages of the person with a disability entering work.

- 4.7 The Disability Coordination Officer Program¹⁰³ was initiated as part of the Commonwealth's *Australian's Working Together* package.¹⁰⁴ The Program works with people with a disability to support the transition between school, post-secondary education and training, and employment.
- 4.8 In summary, there are many programs to assist people with a disability to participate in education and employment (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Programs to assist people with a disability in education and employment

	NSW	ACT	Queensland	South Australia	Victoria
State and Territory					
Vocational Education	TAFE	TAFE	TAFE	TAFE	TAFE
Employment ¹⁰⁵	Apprenticeship Program for People with Disabilities Traineeships for People with a Disability Program	New Apprenticeships (Apprenticeships and Traineeships) Program	Community Jobs Plan Employment Assistance Community Jobs Plan Work Placements	Government Youth Traineeship Program	Community Jobs Program Youth Employment Scheme
Financial assistance for transport	Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme	Taxi Subsidy Scheme	Taxi Subsidy Scheme	Transport Subsidy Scheme	Multi Purpose Taxi Program
Commonwealth					
Higher Education	Higher Education Disability Support Program				
Employment	Business Services Disability Employment Assistance Disabled Apprenticeship Wage Support Program Disabled New Apprentices Wages Subsidy Jobs in Jeopardy Jobs Pathway Program Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program		New Apprenticeship Access Program New Apprenticeship Incentives Scheme New Apprenticeship Support Services Supported Wage System Wage Subsidies Workplace Modifications		
Other	Disability Coordination Officer Program		Regional Disability Liaison Officer Program		
Financial assistance for transport	Mobility Allowance				

¹⁰² Reimbursement to employers for the cost of providing workplace modifications for an employee with a disability. The person must be employed for a minimum of eight hours per week and in employment which is reasonably expected to continue for a period in excess of 13 weeks.

¹⁰³ The Disability Coordination Officer Program is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Science, Education and Training and complements the Commonwealth Regional Disability Liaison Officers Program. The aim is to increase the awareness of post school options and supports for people with a disability.

¹⁰⁴ The Commonwealth's *Australian's Working Together* package commenced in 2002 and included \$1.7 billion for initiatives to transition people receiving income support into employment.

¹⁰⁵ Some of these programs are funded jointly by the Commonwealth and State governments.

Further action

- 4.9 In the next phase of implementing the 2005 post school programs, the Department will take steps to:
- work more closely with the Department of Education and Training to improve the pathways between the post school programs and the TAFE specialist support programs for people with a disability; and
 - initiate discussions with the Commonwealth about the needs of school leavers with a disability who are in higher education and therefore not eligible for NSW post school programs.

Chapter 5 Client needs assessment and screening for post school programs in NSW

Accurately assessing client support needs is a critical issue in the development and delivery of services for people with disabilities. In an environment of increasing demand and limited resources, service providers and funding bodies need to ensure that available resources are directed towards the people for whom they are intended. Needs assessment provides a basis for prioritising service access, identifying appropriate service alternatives and evaluating the cost and effectiveness of services.

Across Australian jurisdictions, a range of tools are used to measure the functional abilities and support needs of people with disabilities for the purpose of determining both the level of service support they require and funding for the provision of services, including post school programs. There has been considerable debate in some jurisdictions about the advantages and disadvantages of particular approaches, given the complex needs and diverse circumstances of many service users. This Chapter describes the assessment tool used by DADHC to support decisions about program access and funding for post school and day programs, and provides a brief overview of current approaches and trends in other Australian jurisdictions.

Overview of client needs assessment methods used by DADHC

Development of the assessment tool for post school programs

- 5.1 Functional screening and behavioural assessment tools are used to screen school leavers for placement in post school programs.¹⁰⁶ The tools assist in determining the type of service that best suits the needs of a school leaver, whether it is a transitional service, a longer term community participation service or Commonwealth employment assistance.
- 5.2 The assessment tools do not determine eligibility for the programs as this is defined by the program guidelines. Rather, they augment the process for assessing clients against the broader eligibility criteria for the programs by providing a basis for decisions about which post school program is most appropriate or whether the person has a capacity to proceed straight to a relevant Commonwealth employment program.
- 5.3 Clients who are assessed as requiring disability employment assistance, rather than a NSW post school program, are provided with information about the Commonwealth employment programs. DADHC is not directly involved in assessing clients for placement in the Commonwealth programs.

¹⁰⁶ K. Eagar and A. Owen, *Functional Screening and Assessment in the NSW Post School Program: A Guide for the 2004 School Leaver Registration, Assessment and Referral Process*, Centre for Health Service Development, University of Wollongong, April 2004.

- 5.4 The tools used for the NSW post school programs are derived from screening and assessment tools developed for the Home and Community Care (HACC) program. These tools were designed to measure the functional abilities and needs of frail elderly people and people with a disability seeking access to HACC services. The HACC assessment model was endorsed in 2001 by Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments as a standardised and independent measure of functional ability for the purpose of determining the level of HACC-funded assistance required by these client groups. The HACC model incorporates a tiered approach to classifying client need based on an assessment of four main functional areas: self-care functioning, domestic functioning, cognitive functioning and challenging behaviour. The tools are designed specifically to 'quantify the extent to which the person has to rely on someone to help them.'¹⁰⁷
- 5.5 The first tier of the HACC model consists of a simple functional screen to differentiate between clients who have minimal or lower level support needs and those with medium or high needs, while the second is designed to provide a more comprehensive assessment for clients with medium or high needs.
- 5.6 In 2002, the Centre for Health Service Development, University of Wollongong was commissioned by the Commonwealth and NSW Governments to trial the HACC tools with the ATLAS population to determine the most effective measures of need for this particular client group.¹⁰⁸ A variety of measures of need were tested, including age and sex, disability, barriers to economic and/or social participation, current and future capacity to work, self-care functioning, domestic functioning and behavioural functioning. Over 1,500 assessments were completed with young people who left school between 1999 and 2002.¹⁰⁹
- 5.7 A key finding of the trial was that the best predictors of the type of ATLAS assistance required were domestic and self-care functioning, that is, whether a school leaver is capable of performing a task in their daily life and the extent to which they are dependent on others for assistance.¹¹⁰ The trial demonstrated a relationship between:
- the scores on the National HACC Functional Screening Instrument ... and the National HACC Functional Assessment Instrument Part 3: Behavioural Functioning Assessment Instrument ... and the support option to which a school leaver was allocated. In particular, the domestic items from the screen instrument were found to be good indicators of support option allocation. The relationship between the behaviour instrument and the support option was found to be more complicated, but nevertheless an important one.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ K. Eagar, G. Gordon and A. Owen, *NSW ATLAS Consumers and their Prospects*, Centre for Health Service Development, University of Wollongong, 2003, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ Eagar, Gordon and Owen, *NSW ATLAS Consumers and their Prospects*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ Eagar, Gordon and Owen, *NSW ATLAS Consumers and their Prospects*, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ Eagar and Owen, *Functional Screening and Assessment in the NSW Post School Program*, p. 1.

¹¹¹ J. P. Green, *Matching ATLAS Programs to Applicants – A New Methodology*, Centre for Health Service Development, University of Wollongong, p. 1.

- 5.8 The trial found that the HACC functional screen and behavioural assessment provides a satisfactory basis for determining the type of assistance required by the ATLAS population of school leavers and was considered to be a reliable tool for linking support needs to program allocations.¹¹² While the screening tool did not perform as well as the more detailed functional assessments used in the trial, both approaches provided satisfactory indicators of appropriate support options.¹¹³ The trial report concluded that:

Given the high annual expenditure on each ATLAS consumer, both initial screening and then regular assessment (and re-assessment at periodic intervals) of ALTAS clients appears worthwhile.¹¹⁴

Assessment and Transition to Work and Community Participation

- 5.9 The first tier (or functional screen) of the HACC assessment model is used to determine the program placement for NSW school leavers. The second tier is not used for streaming school leavers into these programs.
- 5.10 The screening tool uses nine questions covering the four functional areas. The questionnaire is completed by transition school teachers, who are also provided with guidelines for completing and submitting the assessment. Responses are rated according to the extent to which the school leaver is able to perform a task and the level of assistance required. Assessments are processed by the Centre for Health Service Development, University of Wollongong.
- 5.11 School leavers are coded according to four support option classifications matched to three broad levels of support need: low, medium and high. The Community Participation program assists school leavers who have medium or high support needs. Transition to Work assists people with lower level needs. Table 5.1 provides an overview of the relationship between 'program pathways' and assessment classifications.
- 5.12 The main advantages of the HACC functional screening and behavioural assessment tools are that they:
- can be completed quickly and efficiently by someone who knows the school leaver without reference to formal records or other assessments. The functional screening questionnaire is designed to take approximately fifteen minutes to complete;
 - minimise the imposition on the school leaver and their family; and
 - provide a framework for broadly classifying eligible school leavers according to the program that is most likely to address their needs.

¹¹² Eager, Gordon and Green, *NSW ATLAS Consumers and their Prospects*.

¹¹³ Eager, Gordon and Green, *NSW ATLAS Consumers and their Prospects*, p. 45.

¹¹⁴ Eager, Gordon and Green, *NSW ATLAS Consumers and their Prospects*, p. 45.

- 5.13 While evidence from the 2002 trial suggested that the HACC screening tool provides a good indication of the type of assistance required to support users of post school services, the Department recognises that no screening process can provide an entirely objective measure of the needs of people with a disability. School leavers and their parents or carers can therefore request a review of the assessment classification.
- 5.14 The appeals process for the Transition to Work and Community Participation programs enables a person to request a review of eligibility and program placement decisions before they are placed in a particular service. As people's needs change, it is also proposed that in the first year of their program a school leaver can request a review of their program placement at 3 and 9 months.

Table 5.1: Assessment for the Transition to Work and Community Participation Programs

<i>Assessment Classification Support Option</i>	<i>Pathway</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Support services provided</i>
<i>Code 01</i> Day program High support needs <i>Code 02</i> Community Access Medium support needs	Community support	Community Participation	Ongoing skills development and community participation, including support with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ self care; ▪ communication; ▪ daily living; ▪ social skills; ▪ community access; ▪ leisure and recreation; ▪ health; ▪ behaviour management; and ▪ literacy and numeracy skills.
<i>Code 03</i> Short to moderate term Transitional needs	Transitional	Transition to Work	Pre-vocational training and/or support to access prevocational education and training programs or community education courses. Work experience and/or work placements. Independent living skills development and community participation activities. Establishing links with relevant State or Commonwealth services that can assist them with moving on to work, vocational education and training, or higher education.
<i>Code 04</i> Open and supported employment	Direct to employment	Commonwealth disability employment assistance	Open employment services Business Services (supported employment)

Needs assessment tools used in other DADHC programs

- 5.15 Needs assessment tools are widely used in disability services in Australia to augment other elements of assessment, including eligibility assessment and individualised service planning. In addition to standard screening tools used for post-school programs, DADHC uses a range of other tools designed to provide a more comprehensive assessment of support needs, including the Vermont Support Needs Assessment¹¹⁵ and the Support Needs Assessment Profile (SNAP).¹¹⁶ These tools have been used primarily in NSW for assessing support needs in accommodation services and for emergency assistance.¹¹⁷

Table 5.2: Comparison of functional areas measured by the Vermont, SNAP and HACC tools

<i>HACC Post School Programs Screening Tool</i>	<i>SNAP Tool</i>	<i>Vermont Tool</i>
Domestic functioning	Social support needs	Social support needs
Cognitive functioning	Physical and health support needs	Physical support needs
Self-care functioning	Personal care needs	Daily living skills
Challenging behaviour	Behavioural support needs	Management of behaviour issues
	Night support needs	Safety issues

Source: DADHC

- 5.16 The SNAP and Vermont assessment models are designed to provide a standardised assessment of people's support levels. Through an assessment of five functional areas, both tools identify the level of support hours required by a person with a disability. The amount of support is then matched to a support band level. The Vermont tool uses five support band levels (minimal to very high), while the SNAP tool uses four.
- 5.17 A range of other tools are used for measuring factors such as cognitive functioning, intelligence and developmental disability.

2005 post school programs: outcomes of client assessment process

- 5.18 In June 2004, DADHC received applications from 826 school leavers for the Community Participation or Transition to Work programs. These applications were assessed and it was determined that 757 school leavers were eligible for placement. A total of 69 school leavers were assessed as ineligible, comprising 26 who did not meet the eligibility criteria and 43 who were ready for work or an employment program. Twelve school leavers successfully appealed their assessment. This meant that 769 school leavers were eligible for the programs.
- 5.19 Of the 769 school leavers, 74 subsequently withdrew their applications. By early March 2004, 658 school leavers had been allocated a place in a post school program. A further 12 had yet to indicate a preferred service provider.

¹¹⁵ This was developed by Vermont Consulting for the then Victorian Department of Human Services in the mid 1990s.

¹¹⁶ The SNAP tool was developed by AGT & Associates for the former Ageing and Disability Department.

¹¹⁷ In Victoria, the Vermont Support Needs Assessment was developed for day programs and its use was then extended to other disability services.

5.20 The total number of school leavers for each support classification is presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: 2004 School Leavers: outcomes of functional screening and behavioural assessment

<i>Program</i>	<i>Ineligible</i>	<i>Code 01 High Support</i>	<i>Code 02 Medium Support</i>	<i>Code 03 Transitional Support</i>	<i>Codes 04 Employment Assistance</i>	<i>Total</i>
Transition to Work	-	-	-	442	-	442
Community Participation	-	164	151	-	-	315
Commonwealth	-	-	-	-	43	43
Other	26					26
					Total	826

Source: DADHC

Overview of approaches to assessment in disability services

5.21 There is broad agreement in disability services that there are four elements to assessment, conceptualised as assessment for eligibility, support needs, priority resource allocation and service responses.

5.22 The four elements can be defined broadly in the following terms:

- *assessment for eligibility* matches client needs against program and/or agency guidelines;
- *assessment for support needs* may involve one or more stages, including an initial assessment of the level of support required by a person and more in-depth investigations to inform appropriate service responses;
- *priority allocation* involves analysing the needs and risks of a given client or client group to determine priority of service access; and
- *assessment for service response* refers to the identification of proposed service delivery and may include individual case planning.

5.23 While functional assessment tools such as HACC, Vermont and SNAP provide a standardised framework for identifying and classifying client support need, they are only one aspect of the assessment process. The type and level of services clients may require, and the priority that should be accorded to them in relation to service access, cannot be determined solely on the basis of a person's abilities. A broader range of factors, including those captured in individual service planning processes, are relevant to identifying an appropriate service response.

5.24 Some assessment tools have been criticised by post-school service users in a number of jurisdictions for ignoring factors that influence future support needs. In Victoria, the application of funding methodologies to the assessment results of the Vermont tool has been criticised by some service providers.

- 5.25 Some tools are also limited by their inability to capture intermittent needs (for example, those associated with bipolar disorder) as well as changes in the nature and level of support required over time. Some stakeholders have also criticised them for failing to account for the social and cultural differences within the target population, including support needs associated with Aboriginality, cultural diversity and sexuality. It is generally acknowledged within disability services that assessment frameworks need to embody universal principles, but should also be flexible enough to respond to diversity.
- 5.26 In 2002, the World Health Organisation launched the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) as a universal classification of disability and health for use in the health and disability sectors.¹¹⁸ The ICF framework is based on the recognition that frailty and disability are a normal part of the continuum of human experience and is designed to promote an orientation within the human services field towards maximising people's participation and integration in the wider community, rather than seeing their issues as distinct or segregated. The ICF framework reflects a trend within community and health services internationally towards a multifaceted approach to defining client need.

Current practice and trends in other jurisdictions

- 5.27 Disability service providers and funding bodies in Australia use a range of assessment processes to place people in employment assistance, transition and day programs and to determine funding allocations under both individualised and block grant funding arrangements. Table 5.4 provides an overview of tools currently in use across a range of Commonwealth, State and Territory programs.
- 5.28 While the use of functional assessment tools is widespread, a number of jurisdictions, including Victoria, Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory and Western Australia, have also implemented individual planning frameworks and other measures designed to provide a more individualised and flexible process for identifying support needs and planning services. These measures also support the allocation of funding on an individualised basis.
- 5.29 Approaches to assessment across jurisdictions include measures such as:
- *Functional screening and needs assessment tools.* The Vermont Support Needs Assessment tool is used by IDSC in South Australia to assess support needs for services under the *Moving On* program.¹¹⁹
- The Department of Human Services in Victoria also uses this tool to assist with the placement of people in day programs and the *Futures for Young Adults* (FFYA) program. However, there is a trend away from more formalised functional assessments towards Individual Planning and Support frameworks. In Victoria,

¹¹⁸ World Health Organisation, *Towards a Common Language for Functioning, Disability and Health, ICF*, World Health Organisation, Geneva, 2002.

¹¹⁹ Working Party for the Moving On Program, *Report to the Minister Hon Jay Weatherill MP*, Department of Families and Communities, October 2004, p.1.

individualised service planning is the preferred model in relation to needs assessment and funding for the FFYA program as this approach provides great flexibility than formalised assessment tools. The use of the Vermont tool for programs in South Australia is also currently under review,¹²⁰ highlighting that there is no standard accepted assessment tool across the country.

- The Australian Government combines *functional measures with other more specific measures* (for example, measures of 'employability') to determine eligibility and funding for *Disability Employment Assistance* and business services (supported employment).

The Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI), which is used by Centrelink as an initial screening tool for clients seeking employment assistance, measures factors such as age, educational attainment, recency of work experience, Aboriginality, geographic location, disability, medical condition, language and literacy. Each factor is given a numerical weight indicative of the average contribution the factor makes to the difficulty of placing a job seeker into employment.¹²¹

Specific instruments have recently been introduced to measure disability-related employment support needs, including the Disability Preemployment Instrument and Disability Maintenance Instrument, which are used to capture disability-related employment support needs.¹²²

- Disability service agencies in Queensland, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory use *broad ranging self-assessment models combined with a face-to-face assessment*. The self-assessment tools cover a broad range of factors including the nature of disability, specific communication needs, abilities and current support (including frequency of required assistance in relation to self-care, mobility, communication, daily living, social skills, self-direction, managing emotions or behaviours, independent travel, health and well being, community access, leisure/recreation, work experience).¹²³

5.30 More broadly, Commonwealth agencies providing health and compensation programs are developing life-planning models that incorporate a single initial assessment process reviewed at different points in time.

¹²⁰ Department for Families and Communities, officer level discussions.

¹²¹ Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Job Seeker Classification Instrument*, Commonwealth Government, 1998, p. 1.

¹²² Department of Family and Community Services, *Disability Pre-employment Instrument Guidelines Version 3*, Commonwealth Government, April 2004.

¹²³ See, eg., Disability Services Queensland, *Guide to completing the Post School Services – Adult Lifestyle Support Program Application Form*, Queensland Government, June 2004.

Table 5.4: Overview of tools used to assess people with disabilities into employment and post school programs

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Assessment tools</i>	<i>Type and Purpose</i>
NSW	<i>Transition to Work and Community Participation</i>	HACC functional screening and behavioural assessment tools	Screening tool
ACT	<i>Post school options</i> <i>Advancing Competencies through Experiences</i>	Registration questionnaire and face-to-face interview	Individualised planning and support
Queensland	<i>Post School Services – Adult Lifestyle Support Program</i>	Post School Services Application Verification Report (incorporating an ability/skills assessment)	Support needs assessment Individualised planning and support
South Australia	<i>Moving On (Post school options and day programs)</i>	Vermont Support Needs Assessment tool	Support needs assessment
Tasmania	<i>Day Options (Day support services)</i>	Inventory for Client and Agency Planning tool	
Victoria	<i>Futures for Young Adults Program and day programs for adults</i>	Vermont Support Needs Assessment tool Individualised Planning and Support Framework	Support needs assessment Individual Service Planning
Western Australia	<i>Alternatives to Employment</i>	Individual Needs Assessment tool	Individualised planning and support
Commonwealth	<i>Disability Employment Programs</i> <i>Open Employment and Business Services (Supported Employment)</i> <i>Personal Support Program</i>	Jobseeker Classification Instrument Job Seeker Classification Instrument Supplementary Assessment Disability Preemployment Instrument Disability Maintenance Instrument Jobseeker Classification Instrument Job Seeker Classification Instrument Supplementary Assessment	These tools incorporate functional and other measures of need specific to a job seeker's capacity to obtain employment. These tools incorporate functional and other measures of need specific to a job seeker's capacity to obtain employment.

Source: Departmental web sites and officer level discussions

Implications of client needs assessment for post school programs

5.31 The HACC screening and behavioural assessment tool is used in NSW to screen school leavers for placement in the Transition to Work and Community Participation programs. While NSW is the only jurisdiction to use this methodology for post school programs there is no one assessment tool used by a majority of Australian jurisdictions to screen and assess client need in post school programs. It is interesting to note that a number of other jurisdictions are reviewing the appropriateness and validity of functional and needs assessment tools.

- 5.32 While NSW uses the HACCC tool to assess school leavers, a person with a disability, their family or carer can appeal the assessment decision. As part of this process additional information can be provided about individual needs.
- 5.33 In the initial implementation phase of the 2005 post school programs, the Department will monitor the outcomes of the appeals process in terms of the number of people who submitted an appeal, the reasons given and the outcomes.
- 5.34 DADHC will closely monitor policy debates in other disability agencies about client assessment methodologies and will sponsor a 'round table' discussion with advocacy and service provider peak organisations, the NSW Department of Education and Training, and Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations the about the possible implications for NSW policy and practice.

Chapter 6 Complaints and appeals mechanisms for post school programs

Complaints and appeals mechanisms provide an opportunity for clients to have input into decisions about service delivery. These mechanisms enable human service agencies to explain the reasons behind the decision, while promoting transparency, consistency and accountability.¹²⁴ Complaints¹²⁵ and appeals¹²⁶ systems should be fair and equitable so that there are improved outcomes for individuals, service providers and the system in general. The principles of good practice include transparency, privacy and confidentiality, accessibility, outcome driven, local resolution, monitoring and timeliness.

Overview of NSW complaints and appeals mechanisms

6.1 The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care's (DADHC) *Feedback and Complaint Handling: Principles and Guidelines* Policy (October 2004) was developed in line with the requirements of the *Disability Services Act 1993* (NSW).¹²⁷ With respect to the Transition to Work and Community Participation appeals process, this Policy applies when a person wants to complain about:

The manner in which an eligibility or intake process may have been managed. That is, where service has been refused without a reason based on clear criteria and reference to the relevant process. This does not refer to situations where a client or their representative disagrees with a decision reached by DADHC about eligibility to receive a service or where an appeal process exists.¹²⁸

- 6.2 There are opportunities under the Transition to Work and Community Participation programs for people with a disability, their family or carer to appeal a decision about their eligibility or program allocation. Service providers were also able to appeal about the determination of their eligibility status.
- 6.3 School leavers can appeal if they are assessed as not eligible or are referred for Commonwealth Disability Employment Support. As part of lodging the appeal, the young person can provide additional information about a range of extenuating factors, including extraordinary personal circumstances, unreasonable hardship, illness, fairness and equity.
- 6.4 In 2004/05 school leavers and ATLAS participants were also able to appeal their program allocation.

¹²⁴ *Good Decision-Making for Government: Reasons for Decision*. Clayton Utz, 2003.

¹²⁵ "A complaint is an expression of concern, dissatisfaction or frustration with the quality or delivery of service, a policy or procedure, or employee conduct". Source: NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, *Feedback and Complaint Handling: Principles and Guidelines*, Draft, October 2004.

¹²⁶ "Appeal rights include any avenues that are open to a person to challenge or appeal against a decision. In particular, if the person is entitled under legislation to seek judicial review of the decision or to appeal to an administrative tribunal, details should be given. Any procedures operating within the agency to enable internal review of decisions should also be spelt out". *Good Decision-Making for Government: Reasons for decision* 2003, Clayton Utz, p. 4.

¹²⁷ The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles that DADHC uses in the handling of complaints and to provide guidelines to assist DADHC employees in responding to complaints received. The Public Accountability Branch in the Office of the Director-General has the role of monitoring the Department's performance in complaint handling.

¹²⁸ *Feedback and Complaint Handling: Principles and Guidelines*, October 2004, DRAFT, p. 15.

- 6.5 DADHC established a *Reform Hot Line* in 2004 in order to assist people to seek information, lodge a complaint or make an appeal. By March 2005, 33 calls had been received from school leavers, parents and service providers appealing their program allocation. Appeals could also be made in writing.
- 6.6 Organisations who submitted a tender for the Transition to Work and Community Participation programs could also lodge an appeal about the outcome of the eligibility process.

Appeal process for school leavers

- 6.7 In October 2004, the Department developed the Community Participation and Transition to Work Appeals Process for School Leavers.¹²⁹ Appeals from 2004 school leavers could be lodged with the Community Participation Unit by telephone, or in writing to the Manager, Community Participation. The Appeals Panel comprised three members, a senior DADHC manager, a departmental officer and an independent. Appellants were notified of the outcome of their appeal in writing.
- 6.8 Initially the Appeals Process for 2004 school leavers stated that appeals on the grounds of a school leaver's assessment outcome would not be considered. However, the Department broadened the criteria to include appeals on the grounds of client assessment.
- 6.9 In December 2004, the Department approved the transfer of 58 school leaver appellants between programs: 37 school leavers were transferred to Transition to Work and 21 school leavers were transferred to Community Participation. An additional 22 school leavers who appealed their client assessment were approved in March 2005. All appeals have been successful.
- 6.10 In addition to appealing the allocation of a program, school leavers will be able to appeal their client assessment twice after they have been accepted into the program. It is proposed that this occur at three months and six months from the date they commence.¹³⁰
- 6.11 In summary, school leavers can appeal the results of their assessments in one of two areas:
- if they are assessed as ineligible for the Transition to Work program and referred to Commonwealth services or
 - they are approved for either Transition to Work or Community Participation and consider they should be eligible for a program transfer.

¹²⁹ NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC). *Community Participation and Transition to Work Appeals Process for School Leavers*, October 2004.

¹³⁰ For the school leavers participating in 2005 Programs, it is proposed that they will be able to appeal their program allocation in July 2005 and September 2005. This is in recognition that the ATLAS participants did not commence in the new programs until April 2005.

- 6.12 DADHCs *Community Participation and Transition to Work Programs' Equipment and Modifications Fund* and the *Community Participation Program Supplementary Funding to Support People with Very High Support Needs* have appeals mechanisms for service providers.¹³¹

Complaints and appeals in other jurisdictions

State/Territory mechanisms

- 6.13 Of the five major Australian states reviewed, only New South Wales and Queensland have program-specific systems for complaints and appeals in post school programs. In South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia, complaints and appeals for school leaver programs are dealt with in the context of broader departmental systems.

Table 6.1 Comparison of complaints and appeals for post school programs in major Australian states

	NSW	Queensland	South Australia	Victoria	WA
Basis for appeal	Eligibility Program allocation	Eligibility	Assessment decision		
System	Program specific Appeal panel comprised of two representatives from DADHC and an independent. Recommendations submitted to the Deputy Director- General for approval. DADHC Regional Office is advised of the outcome of the appeal and writes to the appellent.	Program specific Priority panels review applications in parallel with funding rounds. Appeals must be lodged within 21 days of receiving a letter of ineligibility.	Departmental process	Departmental process	Departmental process
Related policies and procedures	Draft Feedback and Complaint Handling: Principles and guidelines	Departmental Complaints System about any aspect of services			

Source: Departmental web sites and officer level discussions

Commonwealth mechanisms

- 6.14 Under the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, there are provisions for complaints to be lodged with the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission.

¹³¹ Two appeals systems exist for the *Equipment and Modifications Fund* and the *Supplementary Funding to Support People with Very High Support Needs*. Service providers who wish to have a decision reviewed can lodge an appeal in writing with the Manager Community Participation. For the former, the Appeals Panel will be comprised of a senior DADHC manager (Chair), a senior therapist and a person nominated by peak consumer and disability organisations. The recommendations of the Appeals Panel are submitted to the Deputy Director-General, DADHC, for consideration. The service provider is notified of the decision of the Director General in writing. For the latter, the appeals panel will be comprised of two Deputy Directors-General of DADHC and an independent. The panel will submit its recommendation to the Director-General for consideration.

- 6.15 The Commonwealth departments that provide services for people with a disability have national complaint and appeal mechanisms. The National Complaint Resolution and Referral Service¹³² is an independent and external organisation for consumers in disability employment services, both business services and open employment. The Service handles complaints from service users and service providers and is complemented by general Department of Family and Community Services complaint mechanisms. Advocacy, complaint resolution and referral processes are used to resolve complaints.
- 6.16 A review and appeals process is available for any customer appealing a decision made by Centrelink about their entitlements. Service users can appeal their client assessment for open employment or a Business Service. A complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone, and there are four stages to the process.

Future directions: monitoring complaints to improve services

- 6.17 The Department will continue to have a specific appeals and complaint mechanism for its post school programs. At least one independent will be represented on every panel.
- 6.18 DADHC will respond in a timely manner and also monitor the number and type of appeals and complaints it receives about its post school programs to identify key policy issues.

¹³² Funded by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services.

Chapter 7 Outcomes of post school programs

The need to improve the way in which program outcomes are measured and reported has been a consistent theme in reviews of post school programs. An improved performance management framework will be introduced for the Transition to Work and Community Participation programs.

The last decade has been characterised by a growing pressure on public sector agencies in Australia to produce performance information, a trend associated with an increase in public demand for accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of government services. In disability services, increased pressure on the service system, associated with an ageing population and other factors, have also compelled governments to explore options for enhancing the cost-effectiveness of programs. The development of performance measurement frameworks in the sector has also reflected changing attitudes to disability as well as a desire on the part of policy makers to seek input from service users and their families in the development and evaluation of programs.¹³³ Accurate and comprehensive performance information provides a basis for measuring the efficiency and quality of services and also makes funding bodies and service providers more accountable to service users and other stakeholders.

This Chapter provides an overview of the first stage in the development of the framework for measuring the performance and outcomes of the Transition to Work and Community Participation programs. It also contains a summary of frameworks and trends in other jurisdictions.

Performance measures for PSO and ATLAS programs

- 7.1 The performance management framework for the PSO and ATLAS programs reflected a traditional grants administration approach. Emphasis was placed on financial reporting and data which is required as part of the Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA). There were few program level outputs or outcomes. Most often, program guidelines did not specify the objectives against which services might be evaluated or the outputs and outcomes by which they might be measured.
- 7.2 The need to place greater emphasis on program outcomes has been identified in a number of reviews including the *PSO Program Evaluation* in 1997¹³⁴ and the *Review of Disability Day Programs* in 2002.¹³⁵
- 7.3 A report on the functional profile of 2001 school leavers assessed for the ATLAS program found that:
 - 20% were ready for work;
 - 40% required a Transition to Work program; and
 - 40% required some level of ongoing community based programs.¹³⁶

¹³³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Integrating Indicators: theory and practice in the disability services field*, AIWH cat. No. DIS 17, Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2000, p. xii.

¹³⁴ Ernst and Young, *Final Report: PSO Program Evaluation*, NSW Ageing and Disability Department, September 1997

¹³⁵ B. Elton & Associates, *Review of Disability Day Programs in New South Wales; Final Report on Day Programs Parts 1 & 2*, Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, September 2002.

¹³⁶ Eagar, Gordon and Green 2002, *ATLAS - The Functional Profile of the ATLAS Population*, p.10.

- 7.4 In recent years, there have been a number of approaches to improving the employment outcomes of transition programs. In 2002, DADHC collaborated with the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services and Commonwealth Rehabilitation Services in the Joint Participation Assessment Strategy.
- 7.5 Another approach involved funding six transition to employment pilot projects in 2003/04. A number of approaches were trialed, including paid work options and traineeships to assist school leavers to make more informed choices.

Performance management: 2005 post school programs

- 7.6 The introduction of an improved performance management framework is an important element of the Transition to Work and Community Participation programs. New performance measures are being developed for both programs to measure the outcomes for school leavers and the performance of service providers.
- 7.7 Transition to Work services will achieve either or both of the following outcomes for school leavers over a two year period: each school leaver will have acquired pre-vocational and work readiness skills, and/or will have moved to employment or vocational education training or higher education.
- 7.8 Community Participation outcomes will be measured against individual service plans. Throughout their involvement in the program, participants will continue to develop life skills and increase their independence and community participation. They will undertake activities in three main areas: involvement in community life, skills development and assistance with transitions. They will participate in similar activities to those of other community members of a similar age and cultural background. Service providers will also provide a service that is coordinated with other support services participants may receive, such as accommodation or respite services.
- 7.9 As Transition to Work and Community Participation are new funding programs, performance indicators will be introduced in two stages. Preliminary indicators will be used for the first reporting period, covering the two first two quarters of the program (February to March 2005 and April to June 2005) with a combined return due in July 2005. Preliminary indicators for both programs are presented in Table 7.1.
- 7.10 More comprehensive indicators will be developed by July 2005 for implementation in the October to December 2005 quarter and will include specific performance targets. Service providers and regional advocacy bodies will be given opportunities to comment on the comprehensive framework before it is finalised will be given opportunities to comment on the comprehensive framework before it is finalised.

Table 7.1: Preliminary performance indicators for Transition to Work and Community Participation

Reporting period	Transition to Work	Community Participation
Quarterly	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of people receiving a Transition to Work service; 2. Average number of contracted¹³⁷ hours of service provided each week to each person; 3. Percentage of people who received their contracted hours of service; & 4. Percentage of people who have Transition Plans established within the first three months of starting at the Transition to Work Service. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of people receiving a Community Participation service; 2. Average number of contracted hours of service provided each week to each person; 3. Percentage of people who receive their contracted hours of service; & 4. Percentage of people who have Individual Plans established within the first three months of starting with the Community Participation service.
Yearly	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unit cost per person in the service (direct, indirect and total costs); 2. Percentage of individual plans reviewed in the last 12 months; 3. Percentage of goals achieved by each young person in the last 12 months and at the end of the program; 4. Number and percentage of people who acquired prevocational skills and were work ready; 5. Number and percentage of people who moved to employment (open or supported);¹³⁸ 6. Number and percentage of people who moved to vocational education and training; 7. Number and percentage of people who moved to a Commonwealth employment program; 8. Number and percentage of people approved to move to a Community Participation service; 9. Number of people who utilised the safety net provisions of the Program that allow a person to leave the Program and return under specified conditions; and 10. Client, family, carer or advocate satisfaction. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unit cost per person in the service (direct, indirect and total costs); 2. Percentage of Individual Plans reviewed in the last 12 months; 3. Percentage of goals achieved by each person over a 12 month period; 4. Number of people who moved to a Transition to Work service; 5. Number of people who utilised the safety net provisions of the Program that allow a person to leave the Program and return under specified conditions; and 6. Client, family, carer or advocate satisfaction.

Source: DADHC

Performance frameworks in other jurisdictions

7.11 Given the under-representation of people with disabilities in the vocational education and training and higher education sectors, and the particular obstacles facing young job seekers with disabilities, transition services and day programs are an important element of the community access service system in most States and Territories in Australia. State and Territory programs complement and support Commonwealth programs to support people with disabilities, including Centrelink services, Disability Employment Assistance (open employment) and Business Services (supported employment).

¹³⁷ 'Contracted hours' refers to the number of hours the service provider has agreed with the person and/or their family/carer.

¹³⁸ It is recognised that the achievement of these outcomes may be impacted on by the availability of places in Commonwealth programs.

- 7.12 While program evaluation frameworks vary across jurisdictions, performance and outcome measures for post-school services administered by State/Territory governments generally reflect the requirements of prevailing disability services legislation and service standards derived from such legislation. Most jurisdictions undertake regular program evaluations to determine the need for policy reform and service restructuring to address changes in demand and other factors.
- 7.13 The introduction of performance indicators has been an important trend in the ageing and disability services sector. As the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has observed, there has been a trend across the public sector generally towards:
- funding departments against outcomes and outputs articulated at a whole-of-government level, with departments required to report to Treasury and/or the Office of the Auditor-General against these outcomes or outputs. Inevitably, these high-level funding and reporting arrangements influence the way departments responsible for disability services conduct their business.¹³⁹
- 7.14 Table 7.2 provides an overview of key performance indicators used for a number of for employment, post-school and adult day programs across Australian jurisdictions. Outputs are generally measured in terms of the quantity, quality, timeliness and cost of services provided.

¹³⁹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Integrating Indicators*, p. xii.

Table 7.2: Overview of key performance indicators measures for employment and post school programs

Jurisdiction	Program	Key Performance Indicators (Annual Reporting)
ACT	Post School Program Community Access (aCe)	Program achievements are described broadly in relation to disability housing and community services outputs.
Northern Territory	Post School Options	Quantity. Total clients accessing support services and the number of occasions clients access support services. ¹⁴⁰
Queensland	Post School Services – Adult Lifestyle Support Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Quantity – number of people receiving support. Quality – Percentage of customers satisfied with service. (Consumer Satisfaction Surveys were conducted in relation to the development of Disability Services Queensland's Quality Framework.)¹⁴¹ Timeliness – percentage of funding initiatives implemented by time. Location – percentage of funding provided at regional / local level under an agreed needs based formula / approach. Cost – average cost per person receiving support.¹⁴²
Victoria	Futures for Young Adults Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Quantity – number of clients with day activities; number of FFYA clients (including individuals in transition from the program.) Timeliness – percentage of day activity clients program plans reviewed within 60 days of the end of each 12 month service period. Total output cost - \$ million.¹⁴³
Western Australia	Alternatives to Employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Quantity - number of service users. Quality - percentage of clients satisfied with service. Timeliness - Response time. The average time taken for client to be offered their first appointment with Individual and Family Support. Efficiency - \$ per service user. The overall cost per service user for individual and family support services. Total cost.¹⁴⁴
Australian Government	Disability Employment Assistance Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness – early intervention. Effectiveness – targeting. Percentage of customers from CALD backgrounds. Quality – assurance. Number of disability employment services certified under the post-30 June 2002 Disability Service Standards; Number of disability employment services meeting the pre 1 July 2002 Disability Service standards. Quantity – Number of customers receiving assistance from funded employment services; percentage increase in the number of customers assisted (both block grant and case based funding). Effectiveness – capacity. Percentage of all customers who have achieved a sustainable employment outcome (13 weeks work) percentage of job seekers who have achieved a sustainable employment outcome (13 weeks work) under block grant funding. Effectiveness – capacity. Number of job seekers who have achieved a sustainable employment outcome (26 weeks) as a proportion of all jobseekers under case based funding since November 1999; Percentage of new jobseekers who have achieved a sustainable employment outcome (26 weeks work) under case based funding. Quantity – number of carers of young people with severe or profound disabilities assisted by Australian government-funded respite care centres; Number of customers assisted under the employer incentives strategy programs of wage subsidy, supported wage system and workplace modifications.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ Department of Health and Community Services, *Annual Report 2003 –2004*, NT Government, p. 126.

¹⁴¹ Disability Services Queensland, *Disability Sector Quality System* - www.disability.qld.gov.au

¹⁴² Disability Services Queensland, *Ministerial Portfolio Statement 2004- 2005* - www.disability.qld.gov.au

¹⁴³ Department of Human Services, *Annual Report 2003-2004*, Victorian Government, 2003, p. 55

¹⁴⁴ Disability Services Commission (WA), *Annual Report 2003 – 2004* – www.dsc.wa.gov.au

¹⁴⁵ Department of Family and Community Services, *Annual Report 2003-2004*, Australian Government - Part 1: Performance reporting.

Implications of performance management for post school programs

- 7.15 The performance management framework for the PSO and ATLAS programs reflected a traditional grants administration approach. A more rigorous performance management system is being introduced for the Transition to Work and Community Participation programs.
- 7.16 A literature scan for NSW and other jurisdictions suggests that there are few established performance benchmarks for post school programs in Australia. Some of the challenges of implementing the new system will be:
- the need to develop approaches to measuring client satisfaction which are appropriate for people in the programs;
 - measuring Community Participation outcomes as these will be largely qualitative; and
 - measuring the effectiveness of linkages with other State and Commonwealth Programs.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Post school programs: policy and program frameworks

1.1 Post school and day programs in other jurisdictions

School Leavers Program		Day Program
Queensland: Disability Services Queensland		
Program	<i>The Post School Services Program (Adult Lifestyle Program).</i>	<i>Adult Lifestyle Program.</i>
Objectives	<i>To enable a young person to experience a range of options and opportunities as they work toward the transition to adulthood.</i>	
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 18 years of age by 31 January in the year they enter. ▪ Exiting or have exited special school or special education programs. ▪ Have a high level of disability that results in high and complex support needs. ▪ Eligible for assistance under the <i>Disability Services Act 1992</i>. ▪ Not have access to tertiary education, vocational training or employment options. ▪ Exceptional circumstances criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 18-65 years of age. ▪ Eligible for assistance under the <i>Disability Services Act 1992</i>. ▪ Have a high level of disability that results in high and complex support needs.
Service delivery	Young people and their families are assisted by Support Facilitators, (Disability Services Queensland), to develop an Individual Support Plan (reviewed at the end of 2 yrs).	Funding is individualised and recurrent and goes to the service provider of the person's choice.
Victoria: Disability Services Division, Department of Human Services		
Program	<i>Futures for Young Adults (FFYA).</i>	<i>Day Activities.</i>
Objectives	<p><i>To support young adults with disabilities in their transition from school to post-school.</i></p> <p><i>To support young adults to move into employment, study, further training, community activities or day programs.</i></p> <p><i>To support young adults for 3 years after school.</i></p>	<i>To provide people with high quality programs that address individual needs and enhance independence, abilities, community participation and quality of life.</i>
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 18 years of age before 31 December in their final year of school ▪ Permanent resident of Victoria ▪ Currently receiving support through the Department of Education and Training's Program for Students with Disabilities and Impairments or equivalent in the Catholic and Independent sector ▪ Students can also apply within 2 years of leaving school (eg they might have entered work and not been successful and now need assistance) ▪ Students that have completed a formal VCE or VCAL program and are 18-21. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adults with an intellectual disability who are eligible for services under the <i>Intellectually Disabled Persons' Services Act 1986</i> or ▪ Adults with an intellectual, physical or sensory disability or an acquired brain injury who are eligible for services under the <i>Disability Services Act 1991</i> ▪ Priority access will be given to: carer's declining ability to provide care; carer at risk of injury due to challenging behaviours; age and health of carer; other family stress factors; death of carer; severe or multiple disabilities; geographic and/or social isolation; lack of support.
Service delivery		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ small group settings ▪ community access eg banking, shopping ▪ independent living training ▪ pre-employment training ▪ cooking and health/nutrition ▪ communication skills development ▪ fitness, sport, recreation, art and craft ▪ literacy and numeracy ▪ person and social skills development.

School Leavers Program		Day Program
South Australia: Disability Services Office, Department of Families and Communities		
Program	<i>Moving On</i>	<i>Day Options</i>
Objectives	To provide community recreation, social activities, volunteering or pre-employment skills.	To improve confidence, self-reliance, community participation and contribution, security, choice and self-image skills. To teach the individual new social or practical skills, or skill improvement.
Eligibility	Students with intellectual disability who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are completing their schooling, and will clearly require ongoing and intensive support in order to access a range of day options, or require further development to access work options. <p>Consideration is given to people whose pathway is unclear and/or may wish to have a combination of a part-time day option and part-time work.</p> <p>Young people who are eligible for IDSC services.¹⁴⁶</p>	People 18 years and above with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an intellectual disability support needs that preclude them from other options, including supported or open employment <p>The service providers (mostly IDSC) do an assessment using the Vermont Tool. People assessed as low level are unlikely to receive funding. Vermont Tool also determines their funding allocation.</p>
Service delivery		Service providers offer a wide range of activities and skill development programs and there are small recreation and social programs offered at community venues. Clients attend annual Lifestyle Options Expo and/or information forums in their region. Some recreational and social activities cost between \$5-\$10 per session. Transport costs between \$5-\$10 per day. Clients can use a variety of service providers and package a program to suit their needs. There is also the option of purchasing a more individualised program of activities through a self-employed contractor.
Western Australia: Disability Services Commission		
Program	<i>Alternatives to Employment (Post School Options Program)</i>	<i>Alternatives to Employment (Adult Program)</i>
Objectives		To assist people with disabilities make positive and constructive use of their time to help them achieve their full potential and maximise their social independence.
Eligibility	Provides support to school leavers with disabilities with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> high support needs, no option of returning to school, who cannot realistically pursue full-time employment (i.e. 20+ hours per week), who apply for funds within 2 years of leaving school, and who are not undertaking full-time study or full-time training. 	Provides support to adults with significant disabilities and high support needs who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot realistically pursue full-time employment (i.e. 20+ hours per week), are not in full-time study or training, whose carer(s) will benefit from the respite aspect of service provision, and who have not been able to access the Post School Options program due to age or late onset of a disability.
Service delivery		Community-based setting. Participation in clubs; short courses such as TAFE; skills development; voluntary work; recreation or hobbies; various activities including visiting community facilities and friends/peers. Provided from a few to 20-25 hours per week.

¹⁴⁶ www.idsc.sa.gov/about/structure/community/dayoptions.shtml

School Leavers Program	Day Program
Tasmania: Disability Services Office, Department of Families and Communities	
Program	<p><i>Supporting Individuals Pathways Program</i> (formerly Post School Options Program).</p> <p><i>Day Options Placements.</i></p>
Objectives	<p>To assist young people with a disability to make a successful transition into adulthood and maximise their potential through further education, training and pre-vocational options.</p>
Eligibility	<p>Young people with disabilities who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ have completed Year 12 at school ▪ are living in rural / remote areas ▪ have high support needs ▪ are up to age 25 (people will be considered at age 25+ in exceptional circumstances) ▪ have a transition or pathway plan which is consistent with the support . <p>Funding is only for up to 2 years.</p>
Service delivery	<p>The Department assesses a person's eligibility and services are purchased through individualised funding packages.</p> <p>A range of activities based on identified individual client needs and may include leisure, recreation, education, skills development and community access.</p> <p>Low (\$5,000) to high support (\$20,000)</p> <p>Programs are usually 5 days a week, 9-3pm</p> <p>Programs are offered in a mix of community and centre based settings.</p>

1.2 International practice: transition programs for young people

- A.1.2.1 Selected reports on transition and day programs for young people with a disability in Europe and North America were reviewed to identify emerging policy trends which may have application in NSW.

United Kingdom

- A.1.2.2 Prior to the 1980s, students leaving school were usually offered a place in a traditional day centre. Since the 1980s, transition programs in the UK have focused on providing a greater number of options for people with a disability leaving school. School leavers are now offered education, employment or day program activities.
- A.1.2.3 In May 2000, the Scottish Executive published "*The same as you?*" a review of services for people with learning disabilities in Scotland.¹⁴⁷ The report was critical of the services provided by large institutional day centres. The subsequent reforms that have been implemented by the Scottish Executive, have included '*partnership in practice*' agreements for learning disability services in local authority areas, the modernisation of day programs that move away from traditional day centres by including people more in the community, a shared assessment tool and direct payments where a person can choose to directly purchase services.
- A.1.2.4 In 2001, A White Paper, *Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century*, sets out the Blair Government's commitment to improving the life chances of people with a disability.¹⁴⁸ Emphasis was placed on the particular problems confronted by young people with disabilities in moving into adulthood:

Young disabled people at the point of transition to adult life often leave school without a clear route towards fulfilling and productive adult life ... day services frequently fail to provide sufficiently flexible and individual support ... Some large day centres offer little more than warehousing and do not help people with learning disabilities undertake a wider range of tailored activities.¹⁴⁹

The second objective of the Strategy related to the transition to adult life:

As young people with learning disabilities move into adulthood, to ensure continuity of care and support for the young person and their family and to provide equality of opportunity in order to enable as many disabled young people as possible to participate in education, training or employment.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Scottish Executive, 2000, *The Same as You? A review of services for people with learning disabilities*.

¹⁴⁸ UK Department for Work and Pensions, January 2004, *Working Lives: The role of day centres in supporting people with learning disabilities into employment*.

¹⁴⁹ UK Department of Health, March 2001, *Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century*, Paper raised many critical issues which included references to transition and day programs: 'Young disabled people at the point of transition to adult life often leave school without a clear route towards a fulfilling and productive adult life and day services frequently fail to provide sufficiently flexible and individual support. Some large day centres offer little more than warehousing and do not help people with learning disabilities undertake a wide range of individually tailored activities'.

¹⁴⁹ UK Department of Health, March 2001, p. 19.

¹⁵⁰ UK Department of Health, March 2001, p. 26.

- A.1.2.5 Some of the reforms which were introduced included the 'Connexions Service', where 'Connexion Advisers' work with people with learning disabilities aged between 13-25 years to help them plan their futures and provide continued support for those who have progressed to employment.¹⁵¹ Personal advisors identify people with a learning disability who have Special Education Needs plans and assist in the preparation of a coordinated transition plan when young people are in their 19th year. Person-centred plans were to have been introduced for all young people moving from children's to adult services by 2003.¹⁵² There are also 'transition champions' on the Learning and Disability Partnership Boards who advocate on behalf of people with a learning disability who are transitioning. A recent English research project, which reviewed the outcomes of these reforms based on the experiences of selected young people with learning disabilities and their families at transition, identified five elements in good transition practice.¹⁵³
- A.1.2.6 The other major initiative arising out of the White Paper was a five-year program to modernise day services by 2006.¹⁵⁴ Elements of this initiative included strengthening links with local supported employment schemes and further and community education and training, and the introduction of person-centred plans.¹⁵⁵ Another report on day centres found there was confusion about the role of day centres in supporting people move to employment. A significant finding was that the links between day centres and employment services are variable and sometimes ineffective.¹⁵⁶
- A.1.2.7 In 2002, a Scottish study reviewed the situation for young people with disabilities in transition.¹⁵⁷ At age 14 students have a Future Needs Assessment (FNA) meeting, followed by annual reviews. However, the success of their FNA depended on many factors including receiving accessible information; getting information about further education and training options; the involvement of all parties; and the degree to which the young person was involved.

¹⁵¹ www.connexions.gov.uk/partnerships/ The performance target is that the participation and achievement of young people with disabilities should converge with the those in the population in the same age group.

¹⁵² UK Department of Health, March 2001, p 42.

¹⁵³ The elements identified in a good transition experience were: communication, coordination (effective interagency and joint assessment), comprehensiveness (effective transition plan), continuity (of key workers through out the transition process), and choice (a range of post school alternatives). P. Heslop, R. Mallet, K Simons, and L Ward. *Bridging the divide at transition: what happens for young people with learning disabilities and their families?* www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/NorahFry.

¹⁵⁴ The progress in modernising day programs was seen to be too slow. The barriers were identified as:

- difficulties in releasing resources tied up in buildings and staff;
- slow development of links with other services (including supported employment) and support in the wider community;
- tension between providing respite for families and fulfilling opportunities for the person; and
- slow progress in introducing person centred approaches to planning'. UK Department of Health, March 2001, p. 77.

¹⁵⁵ UK Department of Health, March 2001, pp 76 - 78.

¹⁵⁶ The report found that in terms of employment the day centres in England fell into three types: unfocused on employment, employment focused but not outcomes focused (eg work skills training and prevocational training but this did not lead to job placements work preparation) and employment outcome focused. UK Department for Work and Pensions, 2004 *Working Lives: The role of day centres in supporting people with learning disabilities into employment*. www.dwp.gov.uk.

¹⁵⁷ Rowntree Foundation, 2002, *Young disabled people moving into adulthood in Scotland*.

- A.1.2.8 From this report the suggestions on how transition planning could be improved included starting earlier than age 14; ensuring people with high support needs and/or communication difficulties were consulted; arranging for young people to visit colleges and workplaces; and using a range of media to promote participation.
- A.1.2.9 A recent 2005 UK report identified transition into adulthood as one of four key areas for action for the UK Government.¹⁵⁸ Some of the key factors identified for a successful Transition to Work for young people with a disability included:
- recognising that employment is a realistic option;
 - developing training packages to support the individual;
 - identifying employment goals early on; and
 - providing flexible and supported work experience placements, with ongoing support for the individual and employer.¹⁵⁹

Europe

- A.1.2.10 In 1999, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) published a paper on employment and training policies for youths with disabilities in four European countries: Denmark, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom. It evaluated their policies and practices for preparing young persons with disabilities for work.¹⁶⁰ As an example, in Denmark 'curators' work with young people with disabilities from age 13 and are responsible for their transition from school to training or supported employment.
- A.1.2.11 In 2002 the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education released a report on transition from school to employment in 16 European countries.¹⁶¹ Some of the key findings about transition programs in Europe were the need for young people to experience real job situations; the need to combine classroom-based training with practical training in work places; and the need for formal cooperation between education and employment services. Poorly coordinated transfer between schools and post school programs was seen to impede a good transition and it was noted that transition planning needs to start as early as possible whilst a person is still at school and cannot be started at the end of compulsory education.

¹⁵⁸ UK Cabinet Office, 2005, *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*, A joint report with Department of Work and Pensions, Department of Health, Department for Education and Skills and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

¹⁵⁹ UK Cabinet Office, 2005, p. 129.

¹⁶⁰ International Labour Organisation, *Education, Employment and training policies and programs for youth with disabilities in four European countries*.

¹⁶¹ European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, October 2002, *Transition from School to Employment: Main Problems, issues and options faced by students with special education needs in 16 European Countries*. www.european-agency.org.

North America

- A.1.2.12 The Canadian governments outlined three reform areas for disability services as outlined in *'In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues'*: disability supports, employment and income.¹⁶² It also emphasized flexible funding initiatives that allowed people to purchase supports based on their individual needs.
- A.1.2.13 In contrast to the separation of administrative responsibility between employment and community access programs that occurs in Australia, Human Resources Development Canada suggest that the employment outcomes for people with a disability are improved if program policies are flexible and people are not categorised as "employable" or "non employable".¹⁶³
- A.1.2.14 In the USA 'transition' refers to activities meant to prepare students with disabilities for adult life. This can include developing post-secondary education and career goals, getting work experience while still in school, and setting up linkages with adult service providers such as the vocational rehabilitation agency. Identification of 'transition services needs' begins at age 14. Identification of 'needed transition services' commences at age 16. Representatives from transition service agencies must be invited to participate and they commit the resources needed to provide or pay for transition services.

Summary

- A.1.2.15 Transition programs in Europe, North America and the United Kingdom that plan how the student will leave school generally start at age 14 (with the exception of Denmark where it commences at age 13). Students are either streamed into day services, further education, or supported or open employment. The extent to which countries are succeeding in assisting young people with a disability transition varies considerably, with the UK and North America providing some good examples.
- A.1.2.16 All countries emphasise the importance of communities working together, across departmental and voluntary sectors, to ensure that people with disabilities are receiving the best possible access to services, either day programs or transition programs. Initiatives that have been more successful have employed joint resourcing models and effective coordination teams. Despite this, improvements to services have been slow and the numbers of people with a disability entering employment have remained low.

¹⁶² Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services (Canada) *A Vision Paper In Unison, A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues*, 1998

¹⁶³ Human Resources Development Canada, 1997, *Disability Policies and Programs*. at www.11.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/pls/edd/edd_brief.document, p. 3.

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