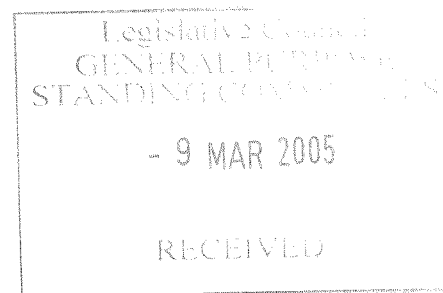


From: "louise parsons"
To: <gpscno2@parliament.nsw.gov.au>
Date: Mon, Mar 7, 2005 9:16 pm
Subject: Post School Disability Programs Inquiry



Has this submission been received? It is important to us.

I wish to advise you that I am a signatory to the following submission. Could you please send acknowledgement that you have received this email transmission.
Thank you.
Louise Parsons

Committee members,

This submission is from Louise and Kevin Parsons. We are parents of a severely disabled young adult who is a participant in the current Post School Options program, and community members who are concerned about the broader social impacts of changes to programs targeted to people with disabilities.

We understand the importance and value of programs that target greater degrees of economic participation and are therefore concerned about reductions in funding for these programs. We are also cognisant of the fact that there is a significant risk that the importance and value of greater degrees of social participation will be lost in the drive to get a higher focus on economic participation.

Therefore there are 4 specific issues that we would like to be factored into the inquiry as follows:

1. What examples of best practice were drawn upon to determine that the reduced levels of funding proposed will deliver the results desired? In other words where can the service provider cohort look to for support in changing their approach to deliver higher entry into employment within the levels of funding proposed. We would be surprised to find that this is supported by substantive data and achievable broadly across different demographics, geography and labour markets with an effective 30% plus reduction in funding.
2. The proposal sets aside existing participants and leaves them at a higher level of funding. Will this in effect be eroded by the fact that new entrants will be funded at lower levels. The answer for us at present is absolutely yes in the absence of best practice examples referred to in issue 1. above, particularly given the block funding approach to allocations to individual service providers,
3. There is an apparent disincentive for current participants to take employment entry opportunities as a subsequent failure of that opportunity will mean a return to the program at a lower funding rate. We understand that it also an incentive to make the employment opportunity work but this is not always possible and within the control of the participant or the provider. There should be a period of grace to allow a return to the program at existing funding levels. In other disability programs this period of grace ranges from 3 months to two years. We support a 12 month time period for this purpose.

4. What assessment has been made of the impact of the new arrangements on other support programs for people with disabilities? In particular has the potential impact for greater supported housing programs requirements that may arise from carers being unable to cope with the additional requirements of them in the context of reduced program activity resulting from reduced funding.

We look forward to your positive consideration of these issues and the outcome of your inquiry.

Regards
Kevin and Louise Parsons

Newcastle
Mobile