

Senate Education and Employment References Committee
Questions on Notice – Friday 20 November 2015
Melbourne, VIC
Inquiry into the education of students with disabilities

Question	Page	Witness	Asked by	Answered
1	19-20	National Disability Coordination Officer Program	Chair	Yes
2	24	National Disability Coordination Officer Program	O'Neill	Yes
3	25	National Disability Coordination Officer Program	O'Neill	Yes
4	25	National Disability Coordination Officer Program	Siewert	Yes

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1. HANSARD, PAGE 19-20

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Mr Cottee: I would not have a clear answer for that. I think the submission for that part of it came from one of the other NDCOs, so I do not have a definitive answer for you on that one.

CHAIR: Do any of the other witnesses?

Mrs Anderson: I cannot elaborate on that, sorry.

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CHAIR: In relation to my first question about the paragraph at the top of page 3, you said someone else wrote that. Can you get them to explain further on notice?

Mrs Anderson: Yes.

Mrs Evans-McCall: That would be Jen Cousins

2. HANSARD, PAGE 24

Senator McKENZIE: Is there any fear that disability loading will not be implemented as planned?

Mrs Anderson: I could not answer that, sorry.

Senator O'NEILL: Would you like to take that question on notice and provide us with an answer? How many students with disability access career advice and transition plans for post-school?

3. HANSARD, PAGE 25

Senator O'NEILL: Do you know whether there is any data about the benefits and costs of helping kids make a transition and the cost of them not making it?

Mrs Evans-McCall: It would only be anecdotal; there would not be any—

Mrs Anderson: Yes, it would be anecdotal—

Senator O'NEILL: Could I ask you to take on notice the question of whether anyone in your organisation is aware of any data or statistics around that? That would be of interest.

Mrs Evans-McCall: Sure. So, you want statistics around the quality of a plan going forward?

Senator O'NEILL: Well, how many get a plan, who misses out, what difference it makes, whether there is any research around that, and the economic and social cost if students do not get this transition post-school.

4. HANSARD, PAGE 26

Senator SIEWERT: On the funding, could we get a breakdown of not only the total cost? There is obviously money allocated for each of the coordinators, but what else is the funding allocated for? If you give me a broad breakdown, that would be great.

Mrs Evans-McCall: Yes.

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National Disability Coordination Officer Programme Responses

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Examples of Systemic Improvements....

If a school wanted to create independent accessible pathways for all areas of the school this would not be covered by individualised funding and would need to come from the existing school budget which would mean that it would be competing with other capital works and is likely to take decades to complete. Additional funding may allow the school the opportunity to complete the project in a timely manner, and provide leadership to other schools.

A school may wish to develop a curriculum and environment that is based on Universal design principles but will require extensive training and planning time to develop, implement and embed into the school wide practice. These extensive costs sit outside of the individualised funding model and would place additional financial burden on the school.

A school may wish to implement school wide augmentative and assistive technology throughout all areas which potentially benefits all staff and students. This would not necessarily be in response to an individual need but based more on universal design and access.

This has been further illustrated in the changes to the initial proposal of the NDIA for a fully individualised approach, to now realising that there is a need for additional broader funding to be made available for capacity building.

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National Disability Coordination Officer Programme Responses

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Senator O'NEILL: Would you like to take that question on notice and provide us with an answer? How many students with disability access career advice and transition plans for post-school?

Given that there is a lot of uncertainty around NDIS, current significant differences in the funding models from State to State and between State and Federal, the [National Consistent Collection of Data](#) has been extended by a year to ensure sufficient data, people feel there is a lack of clarity and certainty about future funding for students with disability, rather than fear.

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Mrs Evans-McCall: Sure. So, you want statistics around the quality of a plan going forward?

Senator O'NEILL: Well, how many get a plan, who misses out, what difference it makes, whether there is any research around that, and the economic and social cost if students do not get this transition post-school.

There is limited Australian research/data about how many students with disability access career advice services, have transition plans for post-school options, and the costs/benefits of accessing or not accessing this planning and support.

There are a couple of key reports that identify a range of issues and impacts for students with disability in terms of transition and career development planning:

- *Transitions to employment of Australian Young People with Disability and the Ticket to Work Initiative.*
<http://www.tickettowork.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Transitions-to-Employment-of-Australain-Young-People-with-Disability-Full-Report.pdf>
- *Young people with disability transitioning to positive post school outcomes: assessing the contributions of the SA Better Pathways program.*
https://www.adelaide.edu.au/wiser/pubs/pdfs/wiser201307_young_people_disability_transitioning_better_pathways_program.pdf
- *Effective Career Development Services for Young People (15-24) with Disability*
<https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Career-Development-Guidelines-PWD-February-2012.pdf>
- *Quality outcomes for students with a disability: School to post-school transition*
<http://www.tickettowork.org.au/research/quality-outcomes-students-disability-school-post-school-transition-ticket-work/#sthash.5YTTVR6h.dpuf>

National Disability Coordination Officer Programme Responses

These reports all indicate that there are significant barriers in transitioning successfully from secondary school to post school education, training and subsequent employment, and recommend a range of strategies to improve transition processes.

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Mrs Evans-McCall: Yes.

The National Disability Coordination Officer Program began operation in January 2008. It is funded by the Department of Education & Training through the Higher Education support programme and sits within Equity Policy and Programmes Team, Governance, Quality and Access Branch Higher Education Group. Previously it was known as the National Network of Regional Disability Liaison Officers (RDLO) and Disability Coordination Officers (DCO).

The RDLO initiative was first established in 1994. In 2001, the Australian Government committed three additional years of funding through the Higher Education Equity Program, which provided nine full-time and two part-time RDLO positions hosted at universities across Australia.

As part of the Australian Government's Australians Working Together (2001) package, funding was provided to establish a Disability Coordination Officer (DCO) program, which built on the existing RDLO initiative. The DCO program commenced at the end of 2002, and was administered by the Vocational Education and Training Group of the then Department of Education Science and Training (DEST). The program operated under similar principles and guidelines as the RDLO initiative. Hosting arrangements were broadened, with the DCOs being able to be hosted by a range of stakeholder groups, including universities, TAFEs, employment services and community organisations.

In 2008, the two programs were rebranded as the National Disability Coordination Officers Program. Thirty-one regions were established across Australia with various host organisations. These host organisation range from Universities, TAFE, other VET providers and community organisations. The establishment of the 31 regions was based on clusters identified by Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Each geographic area represents a community that interacts together socially and economically, aligns with other Australian Government programs and is viable both operationally and financially.

National Disability Coordination Officers programme is funded \$4,385 million annually, nationally. And current tender period is from June 2013 to June 2016. Host organisations receive \$127,139 for each NDCO they host which is indexed for the term of contract. Current forward estimates has the programme funded until 2018. https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/2014-15_education_pbs_04_ed_section02_outcome3.pdf