

different levels of disability; given that the new program Paid Work Experience is directed to people 'with a high level of disability', it is likely that people with disabilities in JobTrain, JobStart and Job Search have mild to moderate disabilities. As is explained in Appendix 7¹⁰¹ it will be possible for DEET in the future to 'monitor outcomes by individual disability type' even though it is not proposed to do this regularly.

5.73 More stringent program monitoring has also been introduced. Previously, DEET's monitoring process assessed outcomes through determining whether people who had completed programs were in employment or other programs three months later. A different assessment process was introduced from the September 1991 quarter when Post Program Monitoring (PPM) reports 'moved to a final client outcome basis'. The effect of this is not to include persons utilising other DEET program assistance as being at the 'final outcome stage'; the intention is to see 'labour market self-reliance' as the end result of involvement in DEET labour market programs. Consequently:

- "employment" outcomes no longer include subsidised employment;
- "education/training" outcomes no longer include DEET program formal training assistance; and
- "positive" outcomes only include full or part-time employment, education or training which is not provided by DEET labour market programs.¹⁰²

5.74 This may well have the effect of substantially reduced outcome figures for some time, but is a more realistic manner of assessing the effect of programs, even during times of high unemployment.

5.75 The new coding system used by the three Departments (DEET, DSS and DHH&CS) most involved in the Disability Reform program will also assist in providing information on level of disability. This system is used to identify clients who have disabilities in order to widen their chances of securing employment.¹⁰³ While this system may help to identify numbers of unemployed people with disabilities and will also be important in determining approximate numbers and areas of need for specific types of assistance, it will be subject to some inconsistencies. For example:

If the CES and/or the client feels that the disability has no impact on gaining employment then the client would not be registered as a

101. Appendix 7, Paragraphs 4.20, 4.22.

102. DEET letter to Committee, February 1992, p. 1.

103. All persons with a disability who register with the CES can thereby be identified as requiring particular types of assistance. See Appendix 7, Attachment.

person with a disability and would be given the same opportunities and assistance as other clients of the CES.¹⁰⁴

The Department has also noted that:

some staff would automatically record a disability code for a person regardless of whether the impairment or medical condition affects the person's chances of gaining employment.¹⁰⁵

5.76 While the development of more sophisticated definitions of disability and assessment of service need is welcome, it should also be possible for the Department to ensure a greater consistency by staff in collecting data; it should not be dependent on the beliefs or choice of staff as to who is, or is not, in need of assistance.

5.77 The 1989 DEET submission to this Committee acknowledged that the CES registration rate for people with disabilities was 'not high and any improvement in services and programs would be likely to lead to a higher registration rate'.¹⁰⁶ At the end of June 1988, some 86,400 people with disabilities were unemployed and awaiting placement (8.7 per cent of all those unemployed and awaiting placement); 39 per cent of these had been registered with the CES for over 12 months. This reflects the difficulties people with disabilities face in obtaining jobs. In early 1992 DEET provided the Committee with updated figures relating to CES registration and placements for people with disabilities in 1990-91. These Tables indicated that:

- at 30 June 1991 144,121 people with disabilities were unemployed and awaiting placement (Table 1);
- 39,600 of these had been registered with the CES for over 12 months, and over three-quarters of this group were males. Some 27,000 of the males were in the age groups 25-44 and 45 plus. While women comprised only approximately one-quarter of the '12 months and over' group, the same concentration in the 25-44, and 45 plus age groups is also evident - 3,945 and 2,768 people respectively (Table 1);
- during 1990-91, 110,065 people with disabilities were referred to positions and 24,264 placements were made (Table 2).
- total registrations, including both unemployed persons awaiting employment and people seeking alternative or part-time employment, were 184,759 (Table 2);
- 28,150 people with disabilities commenced in DEET's labour market programs, including programs for Aborigines (Table 5). This should be looked at in the

104. DEET, letter to Committee, 21 January 1992.

105. *ibid.*

106. Submission No. 205, p.15 (Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services.

context of a total of 234,296 people commencing in those labour market programs (Table 6);

- JobStart (19.1 per cent of all commencements) was the program most utilised by people with disabilities; the take-up rate by people with disabilities of the Special Intervention element (introduced on 1 January 1991) was 31.6 per cent of all commencements.¹⁰⁷

The situation in 1990-91, of 144,121 people with disabilities being unemployed and waiting for placement may indicate an improved registration rate, but also reflected the fact that people with disabilities were obtaining considerably fewer placements than their representation on the CES register would entitle them to, with their equity ratio being 0.43.¹⁰⁸

Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) – Assistance to people with disabilities

5.78 Some CETP services work in close co-operation with their local CES offices to identify suitable job vacancies for their clients. Other CETP services prefer to use a cold canvassing approach¹⁰⁹ or to rely on local networks or repeat business.¹¹⁰ While some CETPs were appreciative of the assistance they had received from the CES, others had encountered red tape particularly in the administration of the registers of job seekers. The then Manager of EPIC Employment in Brisbane acknowledged late in 1990 the assistance of the CES:

It has to be said that a great deal of the success we have had in the last year has come from very close cooperation with the Commonwealth Employment Service, with a great deal of support from the Department of Community Services and Health.¹¹¹

5.79 However it is also clear from the comments of EPIC, and of JobMatch in Tasmania (November 1990), that the new emphasis on an active employment strategy for people with disabilities will challenge many of the community's traditional assumptions about the employment potential of people with disabilities, including those of government service providers such as the CES. In particular EPIC's submission of 18 months earlier (that is, 1989) had indicated that there were some problems in liaison with the CES and other Commonwealth service providers:

107. Special Intervention – see DEET Program Performance Statement 1991-92, p. 113. However, overall take-up was low with 600 commencements (\$0.8 million) rather than an anticipated 2,300 commencements (\$6.985 million) from January to June 1991.

108. Equity ratio – see Glossary. See also DEET Program Performance Statement 1991-92, p. 149.

109. Cold canvassing – see Glossary.

110. *Transcript of Evidence*, pp. 530-31 (Jobsupport Inc.).

111. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 4192 (Epic Employment Service, M.O.R.E. Inc.).

As CETAP agencies are funded by the Federal Government, there needs to be greater liaison between direct and indirect government service providers. Many Commonwealth Employment Service and Social Security staff are still not aware of CETAP services though great effort has been put into public relations work, the sending out of literature and personal contact with all agencies. . . . It is very discouraging for us when a client returns to us with such comments as:

“Commonwealth Employment Service said I could not register as I am on an Invalid pension.”

“Commonwealth Employment Service said they would register me but that I would never get a job”.¹¹²

5.80 While it was clear that liaison had improved significantly during the intervening period, the level of staff turnover in Commonwealth agencies and the impact of this on corporate knowledge remained a significant factor 18 months later:

We go to all of these offices regularly but in a space of three months you can go back to the same office and find that there has been a 80 per cent staff turnover there . . . We will not, obviously, tolerate a situation where one of our consumers is denied the right to register with the CES because he or she might be the recipient of an invalid pension; it is just not on. We will remind them of the fact that they have to accept that registration. As we said earlier, by and large our liaison with the other departments has always been very good.¹¹³

Recommendations

The Committee RECOMMENDS:

4. That CES officers be adequately trained so that they are completely conversant with all policy requirements and, in particular, that they are fully up-to-date with all changes to policy.
5. That Australian Public Service staff who are responsible for assisting people with disabilities be strongly encouraged to commit themselves to remaining in their position for at least 12 months.

5.81 JobMatch had been liaising with local CES managers regarding the failure of some job seekers with intellectual disabilities to respond to the regular CES recall system which monitored their continuing interest in finding work. As a consequence of not responding to such recalls clients were being removed from the active registers at their CES offices. JobMatch and the CES had resolved the problem by

112. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 4188 (Epic Employment Service, M.O.R.E. Inc.).

113. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 4211 (Epic Employment Service, M.O.R.E. Inc.).

agreeing to substitute JobMatch's address for the job seeker's on the registration details thus enabling follow-up in person by JobMatch to monitor the job seeker's motivation.¹¹⁴ Clearly the changes announced by the Government in the Disability Reform package which began on 12 November 1991 will enhance this type of liaison and should, over time, lead to a greater understanding of the special needs of people with disabilities.

5.82 From November 1991, the capacity of the CES to respond to the needs of people with disabilities has been enhanced by the recruitment of specialist staff – Disability Jobseeker Advisers (DJAs) – who will participate in the panel assessments of applicants for Disability Support Pension (DSP).¹¹⁵ The Disability Panel will be responsible for obtaining the necessary detail from a client on his or her disability. The panel will contain representatives from the Departments of Social Security (DSS); Health, Housing and Community Services (DHH&CS); and DEET. The panel will have a range of information to access on the client's behalf such as a treating doctor's report, work capacity assessment, Commonwealth Medical Officer's report, etc.¹¹⁶

5.83 Advisers will also provide administrative case management when DSP recipients participate in DEET programs, and act as a resource for other CES staff who need advice on disability issues as well as providing skilled advice, assessment and assistance to job seekers with a disability.¹¹⁷ Half a million dollars will be provided in 1991-92 to enable the CES to obtain specialist assessments of each client's training and employment potential. It will also enable referrals for assessments of impairment by the Australian Government Health Service (AGHS) to be made when CES officers encounter clients who may require assessment in order to receive the DSP.

There may be some doubt or some cause for concern about whether referral to a particular job might aggravate the condition. Another example could be that of a person who is known to have a disability; there might be a concern about whether the employment of that person could aggravate the disability. In the past the client has had to pay for those specialist assessments. This provision will allow the CES to obtain the specialist advice it needs to give the client good service, and also to pay for it.¹¹⁸

114. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 5348 (JobMatch).

115. The Disability Support Pension is discussed in detail in Chapter 7. See *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 4792 (DEET); DEET letter to Committee, 21 January 1992, pp. 5-6.

116. DEET, letter to Committee, 21 January 1992, p. 6.

117. Supplementary Submission No 205 Paragraphs 4-5 (Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services). See also DEET Program Performance Statement 1991-92, p. 151.

118. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 4786 (DEET).

5.84 Special Service Centres (SSCs) within the CES Network will be responsible for obtaining enough detailed information from clients who come through the CES only, to ensure that they offer appropriate assistance to a client. Specialist officers in SSCs have been trained to ensure that a client with a disability receives this quality of service.¹¹⁹

Training and Labour Market Programs

Skills Formation

5.85 The role of TAFE colleges has already been identified in Chapter 4 in providing training for employment and further education. Many TAFE colleges have adopted policies on the provision of training services to people with disabilities and have staff experienced in the development and delivery of programs. There is the potential, with appropriate funding, for further expansion of TAFE services to fill real gaps in the provision of training to people with disabilities. A national TAFE policy on access and opportunities for people with disabilities similar to the policy on access for women at TAFE¹²⁰ would enhance service provision to people with disabilities.

5.86 DEET's Australian Traineeship System (ATS) enhances the career prospects of young people (particularly those aged 16-19) through the provision of broadly-based, structured entry-level training in non-trades employment. Traineeships normally run for 12 months and combine on-the-job training with a minimum of 13 weeks formal vocational off-the-job training, generally at TAFE colleges. Trainees are paid a negotiated wage based on the relevant award. By 30 June 1990 44,500 young people had begun a traineeship since its commencement in 1985.¹²¹ However, participation rates for people with disabilities had dropped from 2 per cent in 1987-88 to 1 per cent in 1989-90. DEET in its Annual Report for 1989-90 notes that several surveys of ATS participants had shown that trainees in the disadvantaged groups (which includes people with disabilities) had a high employment rate (79 per cent) 3 months after completion of their traineeship. This is only slightly below the overall retention rate of 87 per cent in employment three months after completion of training.

5.87 There was a significant reduction of ATS expenditure and intake in 1990-91. Estimated expenditure was \$44.9 million, actual expenditure was \$39.775 million. The number of new trainees was 9,400 against an anticipated intake of 16,000.

119. *ibid.*, and DEET Annual Report 1990-91, p. 105.

120. Entitled NOW (New Opportunities for Women) in the ACT, the policy is known under different titles in other States.

121. DEET Annual Report 1989-90, p.60.

5.88 DEET considers that three factors were responsible for the limited intake:

- the general economic downturn;
- reluctance of key industries involved in award restructuring to undertake new responsibilities before restructuring agreements were achieved; and
- increased retention rates for young people in school.¹²²

5.89 These factors may also have caused the decrease in 1989-90 intake of 'disadvantaged' persons. In 1990-91 the 'disadvantaged' participation rate was 11.3 per cent (1,025 people). In 1991-92, it is expected that the 'disadvantaged' category will comprise about 15 per cent of the intake of 10,000 people.

5.90 Additional assistance is available for trainees who have been assessed as disadvantaged, including people with disabilities. Employers who take on a trainee who has been assessed as disadvantaged in the labour market receive an additional grant; and profoundly deaf trainees receive funding for tutorial assistance during the off-the-job component of their training. ACROD argued in their submission that other young people with disabilities would also benefit from specific assistance to maximise the effectiveness of off-the-job training and that the need for tutorial assistance should be determined on a case-by-case basis.¹²³

Recommendation

The Committee RECOMMENDS:

6. That additional funding should be allocated to increase the provision of tutorial assistance for people with disabilities in labour market training programs.

5.91 Special assistance is available to employers who indenture apprentices with disabilities¹²⁴ under the Disabled Apprentice Wage Subsidy (DAWS). DAWS provides assistance to people with disabilities who are job-ready and who wish to gain an apprenticeship and subsequently undertake a basic trade course as part of their training. Under DAWS employers receive a wage rebate for the duration of the apprenticeship to encourage them to take on people with disabilities referred to them by the CES, and this rebate, in some circumstances, can be offered in relation to sheltered workshop clients. Employers can also receive reimbursement for appropriate workplace modifications. Apprentices undertaking the basic trade component of their training are eligible for tutorial assistance and profoundly deaf apprentices receive note-taking/interpreter assistance and access to appropriate

122. DEET, Program Performance Statement 1991-92, p. 86.

123. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 4898 (ACROD Limited).

124. This refers to physical or 'mental' (that is, intellectual) disabilities.

technology. As part of the Disability Reform package introduced in November 1991, tutorial assistance under DAWS will be extended to people with disabilities undertaking pre-apprenticeship training. Approvals for DAWS (135) were lower than expected in 1989-90.¹²⁵

5.92 In 1990-91 DAWS helped 127 people with disabilities begin an apprenticeship – a decrease over the preceding year. A survey undertaken early in 1990 indicated that 70 per cent of apprentices were still employed by their original employer.¹²⁶ At 30 June 1991 there were 393 apprentices with disabilities, at an average unit cost of \$5,403.¹²⁷ Presumably the same factors which have affected the intake of people under the ATS¹²⁸ have resulted in the regular fall in numbers for the DAWS program. Employers who take on apprentices with disabilities who were not initially referred by the CES may qualify for other assistance. Under the Apprentice Training Incentive (ATI) which is part of the Commonwealth Rebate for Apprentice Full-Time Training (CRAFT)¹²⁹ scheme employers 'may receive an additional grant for taking on a disadvantaged person (including people with disabilities) as an apprentice', even though that person may not have been referred initially by the CES. However, the individual must be assessed subsequently by the CES as disadvantaged.¹³⁰ DEET indicated that most employers choose DAWS-eligible apprentices.

Recommendation

The Committee RECOMMENDS:

7. That funding be increased to ensure additional access to apprenticeships under DAWS for people with disabilities. Such funding should include a component for tutorial and other required assistance.

125. DEET Annual Report 1989-90, p. 59.

126. DEET Annual Report 1990-91, p. 65.

127. DEET Program Performance Statement 1991-92, p. 88.

128. ATS – Australian Traineeship System. See above, Paragraphs 5.86-5.88 and DEET Annual Report 1990-91, p. 64.

129. DEET Supplementary Submission No. 205, Attachment B.

130. Supplementary Submission No. 205, Attachment B (Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services). A review of employers and apprentices assisted under DAWS (DEET, Program Performance Statement 1991-92, p. 88) may identify the need for different strategies to increase access.

Special Employment, Education and Income Support Programs – Employment and Training Assistance¹³¹

5.93 Two major areas in this program which are of particular relevance, given the terms of reference of this inquiry, are the Employment Access and Community Based Strategies sub-programs.

Employment access

5.94 The objective of the Employment Access (EAP) sub-program is:

To assist jobseekers who are disadvantaged in the labour market to gain access to and secure long term employment through the provision of measures such as diagnostic assessments and remedial training, wage subsidies to employers, training in job search techniques, vocational training and mobility assistance.¹³²

Such assistance is delivered via four integrated components:

- JobTrain – training assistance;
- JobStart – employment assistance;
- Job Search Assistance (JSA) – job-seeking skills; and
- Special Intervention – access assistance.¹³³

5.95 These components are coordinated and/or administered by local CES offices. Assistance under these sub-programs is targeted to priority groups within the disadvantaged jobseeker population including those unemployed for more than 12 months and sole supporting parents (in line with the objectives of the Newstart and Jobs, Education and Training (JET) programs). As part of the ongoing reform of income support for unemployed people several changes and enhancements will be made to the program between 1990-1992 to improve access to, and retention in, employment. In addition, initiatives announced by the Prime Minister in the Economic Statements March 1991, and in February 1992 included improved opportunities for skill acquisition and will lead to an expansion in the number of

131. Material from Submission No. 205 (Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services) has been updated with reference to the 1989-0 and 1990-1 Annual Reports of the Department, the Explanatory Notes for 1990-91, the Program Performance Statement 1991-92, and the supplementary submission, and the additional material provided by the Department in January and February 1992.

132. DEET Program Performance Statement 1991-92, p. 107.

133. Special Intervention – see above, Paragraph 5.77. This program is of particular assistance to people of NESB; see DEET Annual Report 1990-91, p. 105, and below, Paragraph 5.111.

available places. As is noted below, JobStart expenditure was well under allocation in 1990-91 and JobTrain expenditure well above.¹³⁴

Costs and placements¹³⁵

	JobStart	
	1990-91	1991-92
Allocation	\$72m	\$62m
Expenditure	\$40.784m	-
Placements	30,588*	29,100 (est.)
Average Unit Cost	\$1,650	-

* 49 per cent of the total intake were in the 'especially disadvantaged' category (15,110).

	JobTrain	
	1990-91	1991-92
Allocation	\$120.927m	\$163m
Expenditure	\$142.76m	-
Placements	71,463	59,000 (est.)

JobTrain

5.96 People with disabilities have immediate access to assistance under JobTrain, which provides the long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged job seekers with opportunities to receive formal vocational training. Under JobTrain, short-term vocational courses are developed at the local level to meet the needs of individual participants. JobTrain also has an emphasis on assisting jobseekers to find positions.

5.97 Participants' needs, their suitability for training and the skill requirements of the local labour market, are taken into account in the development of such courses. Courses are provided locally through TAFE or other training providers on behalf of the CES. Courses can be up to 12 months in duration although the average

134. See Paragraph 5.105.

135. Source: DEET Program Performance Statement 1991-92, pp. 114-115, 117-118. There are some differences between statistics provided in the DEET Program Performance Statement and the Annual Report 1990-91, and those in the Tables at Appendix 15:2 (February 1992). The later figures (that is, those in Appendix 15:2) are considered more reliable.

duration was 7.3 weeks in 1989-90. From March 1991 the average unit cost of courses was increased to \$3,500 (from \$2,500). Course length increased from 6½ to 9½ weeks to accommodate the need. JobTrain may be extended for people with disabilities who are unable to complete a particular course successfully within the normal time limits.

5.98 Participants in the JobTrain component may receive the Formal Training Allowance (FTA)¹³⁶ plus ancillary allowances. Participants over 21 years of age also receive a training component of \$30 per week, as do sole parents aged under 21. However, 16-20 year olds are not eligible for a training component. Persons living at home whether under 18 or aged 18-20 receive a lower rate of allowance. Limits to other earnings are the same for those living at home or not, with the maximum amount able to be earned without losing any allowance being \$60 per fortnight.

5.99 Fares assistance is payable to job seekers with disabilities who require special transport to and from the training institution because their disability precludes use of public transport. From late 1991 a special supplement (a maximum of \$5000 per individual) has been available for training providers funded under JobTrain for lease of special equipment and hire of specialist services to assist participants with disabilities.¹³⁷

5.100 In 1989-90 10 per cent (4,631) of JobTrain commencements were identified as disabled, and this represented 19 per cent of all those JobTrain commencements designated as especially disadvantaged.¹³⁸ There were 10,720 people with disabilities in 'Jobtrain Preparation' and 'Jobtrain Other' categories for 1990-91 commencements. 17.2 per cent of the total 'Jobtrain Preparation' commencements of 13,504 persons were people with disabilities; 15.9 per cent of 'Jobtrain Other' commencements (totalling 52,714 persons) were people with disabilities.¹³⁹

5.101 Given that JobTrain provides formal courses it appears that the program would be of the greatest benefit to those people who have physical disabilities only, or those with intellectual or psychiatric disabilities who meet the required standards of literacy and numeracy, and would be able to start work within a short period of time.

136. General income support is considered in Chapter 7. Payments such as Formal Training Allowance (FTA) are discussed as appropriate throughout this chapter. The FTA is equivalent to the Jobsearch Allowance unemployment benefits. FTA eligibility is assessed by DEET, but the allowance itself is paid through DSS.

137. *New Opportunities for People with Disabilities*, p. 9.

138. Unless otherwise indicated, the participation rates used in this discussion exclude any people with disabilities who participated on basis of their unemployment duration.

139. DEET 1990-91 figures, Appendix 15:2, Tables 5, 6 and 7.

JobStart

5.102 JobStart is a general wage subsidy scheme that emphasises equal access to employment for long-term unemployed people and other disadvantaged groups. Wage subsidies are available to employers in the private sector who employ and improve the employment prospects of job seekers. To qualify, employers must be prepared to pay at least the award or appropriate wage for the job and fulfil other award conditions. A subsidy is paid for up to 26 weeks, with the rates dependent on the age and relative disadvantage of the job seeker.¹⁴⁰

For people with disabilities, it is worth noting that we will pay a wage subsidy in respect of part-time work where physical or personal circumstances prevent the job seeker from working full time. That component is used almost universally by people with disabilities. . . . In the case of a person with disabilities, it [the subsidy] would be \$75 per week for a maximum of 20 weeks. If the person is working part time, that would be paid pro-rata.¹⁴¹

5.103 Subsidies are available for part-time work by people with disabilities in excess of 20 hours per week. Employers could be reimbursed, up to a maximum of \$2000, for the purchase, lease or hire of essential equipment or workplace modifications for people with disabilities whom they have engaged under JobStart. From 1 November 1991 the maximum amount increased to \$5,000.

5.104 In 1989-90 18.2 per cent (6,300) of JobStart participants were identified as people with disabilities, which represented 35 per cent of 'especially disadvantaged' JobStart commencements. In 1990-91 there was a total of 27,796 commencements¹⁴², with an expenditure of \$40.79 million. There were 5,332 people with disabilities (19.1 per cent), a percentage increase over the previous year. Some 13.9 per cent of the especially disadvantaged placements were people with disabilities.¹⁴³

5.105 In 1989-90, 1.5 per cent of JobStart placements were on a part-time basis (almost all were people with disabilities who were unable to work on a full-time basis); however the proportion in this group had dropped from 3 per cent in 1988-89. In 1990-91, 2.5 per cent of placements were part-time workers, mainly people with disabilities, an increase over the previous year. While there is a noticeable drop in commencement numbers in JobStart of people with disabilities,

140. For example, a jobseeker aged 15-17 years and unemployed for 12 of the preceding 15 months, or especially disadvantaged, attracted a subsidy of \$105 p.w., while those over 18 years attracted a subsidy of \$200 p.w., *DEET Economic Statement*, 12 March 1991, p. 10.

141. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 4794 (DEET). Note that data refer to 1990 figures.

142. See Paragraph 5.95 'Costs and Placements'. Jobstart placements for 1990-91 are given as totalling 30,588 in the Annual Report.

143. See Appendix 15:2 Tables 5, 6 and 7.

it should be remembered that this program's intake was substantially reduced overall. It is also worth noting that 61.7 per cent of people with disabilities who began the course were in employment or in further education or training three months after the course ended.¹⁴⁴

5.106 JobStart assumes clients are ready to start work and also that employers need an incentive to take on disadvantaged people. As noted earlier CETP and SE services have utilised the subsidy in placing many of their clients.¹⁴⁵ JobMatch had found the subsidy to be of benefit as an incentive to secure a placement:

We tend not to use JobStart as a main selling point when we target employers. It is a really good scheme to use if the employer is taken with the concept and eager to give it a try . . . some are really not quite sure what they are in for.¹⁴⁶

5.107 While acknowledging the potential for abuse of the subsidy by some employers, JobMatch believed that, even in such cases, the end result was of positive benefit for the person concerned.

. . . at the very least the person has gained six months employment and has obtained six months wages. If that person understands that he was put off not because of anything he did, but because it was a financial consideration, then he can come out a lot better off and it is easier for him to get into the next job.¹⁴⁷

Job Search Assistance

5.108 Job Search Assistance aims to address the needs of disadvantaged jobseekers by providing them with intensive instruction in job search techniques. There are two components to the program: Job Search Training Courses which provides 22 hours of formal instruction over 5 days in job search techniques and skills; and Job Clubs which provide three weeks of intensive supervised training and resources for job-hunting. Job Search Training Courses 'cater for clients who have less need for intensive help' (relative to those using the Job Clubs).¹⁴⁸ In 1990-91 an additional 15 Job Clubs were established (from 1 January 1991) to assist people in low employment opportunity areas and especially disadvantaged people. Continuous Entry Job Search Training Courses were also set up (from 1 January 1991) in

144. DEET Annual Report 1990-91, pp. 74-5. For changes in DEET's monitoring process, see above Paragraph 5.73.

145. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 530 where JobSupport noted that they made frequent use of the subsidy in placing clients.

146. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 5381 (Jobmatch).

147. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 5382 (Jobmatch Inc.).

148. DEET Annual Report 1990-91, p. 72.

selected locations. These provide 30 hours training with job hunting being carried out during the course.¹⁴⁹ While Job Search is targeted to people who are ready to start work it can be used to assist the disadvantaged in tandem with JobTrain or JobStart. While people with disabilities are eligible to participate, no special provisions are made for them under this component.

5.109 In 1990-91, the participation of people with disabilities in Job Search Assistance was 13.8 per cent (1,183 persons) of Job Search commencements, and 11.9 per cent (1,854 persons) of Job Club commencements. Actual expenditure on the whole program in 1990-91 was \$10.262 million, with estimated expenditure having been \$8.908 million. Estimated expenditure for 1991-92 is \$13.2 million.

5.110 Although Job Search Training and Job Clubs could form a useful support structure for unemployed people with a disability seeking employment, the time periods may be too limited to take into account the needs of some people with disabilities. CETP and SE services may be more appropriately placed to provide this type of assistance to people with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual disabilities. While additional funding has been proposed for Job Clubs to be established under the Disability Reform package (\$1.236 million)¹⁵⁰, consideration should be given to providing a funding component for this purpose to CETP and SE organisations once evaluation of their overall service has been completed.

Recommendation

The Committee RECOMMENDS:

8. That funding be provided by DEET/DHH&CS to fully evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of Job Search Assistance programs for people with disabilities, especially for people with intellectual disabilities. Particular attention is to be given to the time periods that support is available for in these programs, and to ascertain whether a specialised service is needed for people with disabilities.

5.111 The Special Intervention component of the Employment Access program was introduced at the beginning of 1991 as part of the new package to assist the unemployed. This intervention assists transition to work or vocational training by providing diagnosis of, and remedial training to overcome, specific, individual employment barriers faced by job seekers (for example, assistance with literacy, numeracy or ESL problems). However, no special provisions are made for people with disabilities although they may well participate in the program because of other disadvantaging factors. Special Intervention enables the CES to buy in expertise not routinely available. Special Intervention had a relatively slow uptake from January 1991, with about 26 per cent of the total allocation for January to June 1991 being

149. DEET Program Performance Statement 1991-92, pp. 113-14; DEET Annual Report 1990-91, p. 72.

150. DEET Program Performance Statement 1991-92, pp. 116-117.

utilised. It is expected that \$21 million will be spent in 1991-92, to assist 8,500 people.¹⁵¹

New initiatives

5.112 From November 1991 DEET has had in place two initiatives which recognise the specific needs of people with disabilities and therefore complement the range of mainstream training provision.¹⁵² The first measure expands the Post Placement Support (PPS) component of the EAP by 1000 places to provide people with high levels of disability with individual support and assistance, while in training or initial employment, with workplace familiarisation, supervision on new equipment, travel to work/training arrangements, meals and work break arrangements and regular contacts for advice and encouragement. This scheme commenced with \$0.4 million funding for 1991-92 rising to \$0.7 million in the following two years, against a total of \$4.3 million for 4,300 people. Support will be provided by contracted external agencies.

5.113 The second initiative is the establishment of a program of subsidised work experience in the private sector to assist in preparing job seekers with a disability for the real work environment, reinforcing their skills training and building up their speed and accuracy.¹⁵³ These places will be fully subsidised (to a maximum of \$3,600 per person) and will be made available to those persons with a high level of disability whose disability makes them uncompetitive for placement in a wage subsidy program. Three hundred such places will be provided for a maximum period of 12 weeks, or equivalent part-time.

Community Based Strategies – SkillShare

5.114 SkillShare commenced operation on 1 January 1989 combining three pre-existing community based programs – the Community Youth Support Scheme (CYSS), Community Training Program (CTP) and Community Volunteer Program (CVP).¹⁵⁴ The Community Training Program enjoyed a relatively high level of participation by people with disabilities as a result of the dedication of 14 projects

151. DEET Program Performance Statement 1991-92, p. 115.

152. DEET Annual Report 1990-91, p. 81.

153. See above, Paragraph 5.69.

154. CTP had been established in 1986 as an amalgamation of the Work Preparation Program, a specific programs established in 1981-82 to assist people with disabilities and a youth specific program. A number of submissions were received from organisations and individuals associated with the Work Preparation Programs which highlighted their high success rate and advocated their re-establishment, or retention as separate programs.

The 1988-89 data in Tables 5-11 of Appendix 15:1 reflect the level of participation in training programs by people with disabilities in the period immediately before the introduction of SkillShare.

specifically to the needs of people with disabilities.¹⁵⁵ The then DCSH noted in their submission of March 1989 that consultations with the existing service providers prior to the introduction of SkillShare had 'highlighted a desire on the part of people with disabilities to participate in mainstream program activities leading to employment in the open labour market'.¹⁵⁶ While recognising that some participants would continue to require special assistance, the then DCSH and DEET appear to have been concerned to minimise the extent of overlap between SkillShare projects and DSA services in the delivery of services to people with disabilities. One result of this was that it was agreed by the two Departments that no new specialist projects would be approved under SkillShare and that existing specialist projects would be encouraged to provide integration opportunities, or if they wished to continue as specialist projects to consider transfer to DSA.¹⁵⁷ As will be discussed below, there have been some criticisms of this approach.¹⁵⁸

5.115 SkillShare is a community based labour market program, targeted at the most disadvantaged in the labour market. It operates as an Australia-wide network of almost 400 projects including Information Technology Centres (ITECs) and Disability Access Support Units (DASUs)¹⁵⁹ managed by non-profit community organisations or local government authorities (usually called sponsors) with the skills and experience to assist unemployed people gain work or proceed to further education or training. The sponsors are funded to provide a range of practical services responsive to the needs of the target group and opportunities in the local labour market. Such services can include the provision of skills training, employment related assistance (including personal support and referral) and enterprise activities.¹⁶⁰

5.116 The target group for SkillShare is long-term unemployed people and 'other most disadvantaged unemployed people' (including, among other groups, people with disabilities) who are likely to benefit from a community based approach to labour market assistance, and do not have ready access to other employment, further education and training opportunities. As Skillshare is intended to assist the most disadvantaged and act as a link for them to other employment and training opportunities, participants in SkillShare retain eligibility for subsequent assistance in the Commonwealth labour market programs discussed above. Participants in full-time approved courses receive the FTA; other participants retain their benefit or pension eligibility.

155. Submission No. 205, p. 5 (Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services).

156. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 1501 (DHH&CS).

157. *ibid.*, pp.1501-2.

158. See Paragraphs 5.121-5.126, 5.132-5.136.

159. See DEET Program Performance Statement 1991-92, p. 120. See also Paragraphs 5.137-5.138.

160. Supplementary Submission No. 205, p.15 (Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services). See also DEET Program Performance Statement 1991-92, p. 119.

5.117 The objective of the SkillShare program is to enable long-term unemployed or disadvantaged unemployed people to obtain and retain employment or to proceed to further education. The structured skills training projects offer off-the-job training in employment related skills. The Open Access projects offer a range of services including job search and support activities.¹⁶¹ Enterprise projects offer training and development support for self employment. Outreach services began in 1991 to encourage a number of groups, including people with disabilities to use the service.

5.118 In 1989 SkillShare assisted 7,492 people with disabilities¹⁶², 9.8 per cent of a total of 76,681 participants. In 1990 a 22 per cent increase in the number of participants in SkillShare (92,105) meant that although the proportion of people with disabilities assisted fell slightly to 8.9 per cent (9063) an additional 1500 people with disabilities were assisted under the program.¹⁶³ In 1991 Skillshare sponsors contracted to provide services to almost 90,000 people.¹⁶⁴ In 1990, 43.7 per cent of people with disabilities were in further education or training or in full-time employment 3 months after the course. The overall retention rate (3 months after completion of the course) was 48 per cent. The 11 specific 'disability projects' had 1266 people with disabilities commencing, an increase of 5.41 per cent on 1989. By 1991 the percentage of people with disabilities attending SkillShare projects as a proportion of total SkillShare participants had risen to 8.4 per cent, a year ahead of the target set in the draft Disability Strategy. The target is 13 per cent by the end of 1994, which will mean that people with disabilities will be participating at the same level as their representation among the population of unemployed people.¹⁶⁵

5.119 In 1991 there were seven levels of core funding ranging from \$95,000 to \$310,000, depending on level of need. In 1992 the seven levels of funding will range from \$100,000 to \$265,000. In 1990-91 the total allocation for Skillshare (including FTA for participants) was \$97.2 million; in 1991-92 the allocation is \$120.9 million.¹⁶⁶

161. DEET Annual Report 1990-91, p. 76.

162. A person with a disability was defined in the SkillShare database as a person who because of a physical and/or mental impairment resulting in a loss or reduction of functioning capacity is likely to encounter difficulties in obtaining or maintaining work. However, see Appendix 6, and Appendix 7, Paragraph 4.20. Skillshare will also be using a scale of disability measurement.

163. Supplementary Submission No. 205, p.15 (Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services).

164. See Appendix 15:2, Tables 5, 6 and 7. For 1990-91 the number of people with disabilities who commenced in Skillshare is given as 8,249, the total commencements as 94,284, the percentage as 8.7 per cent. See above, Footnote 135.

165. DEET Program Performance Statement 1991-92, pp. 119-122; DEET letter to Committee, 21 January 1992, pp. 2-3.

166. DEET Program Performance Statement, p. 131.

5.120 SkillShare provides services to people with disabilities who have low to moderate levels of need. Those people with disabilities who have high levels of need and who cannot be accommodated by a particular project without substantial modification of equipment or activities were generally referred to other agencies for assistance.¹⁶⁷ However, the development of a Disability Strategy for the program and the introduction of DASUs may provide greater assistance for people with more severe disabilities during 1992. The (draft) SkillShare Strategy for people with disabilities, developed in 1991, recommends encouraging 'generic' SkillShare projects to adapt their services to meet the needs of people with disabilities; this is an approach which continues the emphasis on generic rather than specialist services.¹⁶⁸

5.121 Evidence to the Committee during 1989 and 1990 from a range of disability groups expressed serious concerns about the capacity of SkillShare to respond to the needs of people with disabilities. A review of SkillShare commissioned by DEET identified some shortcomings in the delivery of services to people with disabilities¹⁶⁹ and these were addressed by initiatives announced in the 1990-91 Budget as part of the Disability Reform package. However, this is not to deny that SkillShare has successfully assisted a significant number of people with disabilities. For instance, Employment 2000, a SkillShare program sponsored by the Salvation Army in Melbourne, reported in February 1991 that people with disabilities represented 20 per cent of their current intake of trainees. Employment 2000, in conjunction with Direction 2000 (also run by the Salvation Army and targeted to people of NESB), trains close to 400 people a year in a range of skills including welding, food preparation, word-processing, stores/stock control, office skills and book-keeping.¹⁷⁰

5.122 Concerns expressed by witnesses to this inquiry (which also were discussed in the review of Skillshare) focussed on the needs of people with intellectual or severe disabilities, the fate of specialist disability training services under SkillShare and its ability to meet the specific needs of people with disabilities in terms of access and specialist resources. It should be noted that witnesses to the Committee were divided on the respective merits and appropriateness of integrated and segregated training programs.

5.123 In addition to problems with physical access to SkillShare projects, the Disability Employment Action Centre (DEAC) in Melbourne had found that people with disabilities were passively discriminated against in mainstream projects as a

167. Supplementary Submission No. 205, p. 19 (Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services).

168. See below, Paragraph 5.126.

169. A report by the Pathfinders Consultancy *An Investigation of Issues Associated with the Participation of People with Disabilities in SkillShare* formed part of the review process.

170. ACOSS *Impact* February 1991, p.16.

result of the assessment processes and performance standards which led to a 'creaming' process:

attempts by our organisation and our employment counsellors to place people within SkillShare programs have been unsuccessful on a number of occasions, and the reasons given have been that an assessment is made that the person whom we have referred has a lesser chance of getting employment at the end of the training than another person who might apply. The SkillShare program may well acknowledge, and has acknowledged, that training would be extremely useful for that person. Without that training such a person's employment prospects are nil, but what they are saying is, 'We can't take that person on because our performance is assessed by how many placements into employment people make after graduating from our SkillShare program'.¹⁷¹

5.124 The Committee accepts that such practices were not Departmental policy but that they can occur when an organisation chooses participants who are easier to train or who will have more positive outcomes in a shorter time period. The Committee acknowledges the changes which have been introduced into Skillshare and which may enhance access for people with disabilities.

Recommendation

The Committee RECOMMENDS:

9. That further study on Skillshare access problems, and strategies to overcome these, be carried out as a part of the Disability Reform package. The study should clearly define type and level of disability (in accordance with Recommendations in Chapter 1 of this report) and consider a range of access issues, including physical, support services required (e.g. interpreters, technology requirements), and content and length of courses.

5.125 It is clear from DEAC's evidence that the organisation perceives integrated SkillShare programs as preferable to the continuation of the specialist, segregated training programs for people with disabilities under SkillShare.¹⁷² In contrast, ACROD believed that there was real concern amongst those organisations which had started off as Work Preparation Programs¹⁷³ in the early 1980's (and were

171. *Transcript of Evidence*, pp. 5603-5 (DEAC (Disability Employment Action Centre). See also *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 173 (Vocational Resource Agency Incorporated) where the Vocational Resource Agency in SA, a CETP service, expressed similar concerns about the focus on outcomes excluding people with disabilities from participation in SkillShare programs.

172. *DEAC News* October 1990, p.5. Additional material supplied to the Committee by DEAC following hearing 21/11/90.

173. See Footnote 154 above.

subsequently subsumed into the CTP in the mid-1980's) that the absorption of these programs into SkillShare would not allow them to provide:

. . . viable programs for people with disabilities as the emphasis moves to providing generic, centre based training for unemployed people. These Work Preparation Programs have had a record of high success rates in long-term placement of clients in employment.¹⁷⁴

5.126 ACROD was concerned that these specialised services would be dismantled before SkillShare had the capacity to provide the same sort of training for people with disabilities.¹⁷⁵ The NADOW Training Program in NSW¹⁷⁶ which provides clerical and computing training for people with physical disabilities was also concerned about the impact on their program of its transfer to SkillShare funding. Traditionally their program had involved up to 26 weeks of on-the-job training, but SkillShare guidelines limited the on-the-job training component to a maximum of two weeks. While NADOW had been granted a partial exemption from this condition during their transition to SkillShare funding, they were concerned that the on-the-job component in their clerical training program would ultimately be reduced to a maximum of two weeks.

We think that this is a very important area for us because we have found that most of the people getting jobs have got them through the fact that they were able to go out and prove that they could do the job. Our view is that private employers especially are very reluctant to take on somebody just out of school or just out of a training course who have fairly severe disabilities and put them on unless they feel fairly sure they are able to do the job.¹⁷⁷

5.127 It should be noted that some concern was expressed by members of the Committee that trainees placed with private employers for the on-the-job component of NADOW training were not paid, especially for such a long period.

5.128 However, there is sufficient flexibility in the SkillShare Program Guidelines to allow a longer period of work experience 'should this be required by a person with a disability'.¹⁷⁸ While this may preclude NADOW systematically claiming such long work experience periods for all clients, it would enable application to be made for consideration of particular cases.

174. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 1377 (ACROD Limited).

175. *Transcript of Evidence*, pp. 1461-62 (ACROD Limited).

176. NADOW – National Association for Training the Disabled in Office Work.

177. *Transcript of Evidence*, pp. 4062-3 (NADOW Training Program).

178. DEET letter to Committee, 21 January 1992, p. 3.

5.129 The Committee notes that Skillshare may allow for periods of longer than 10 working days for work experience.

Recommendation

The Committee RECOMMENDS:

10. That, where essential, work experience periods of up to two months be allowed under SkillShare, and that any work experience over this period be suitably recompensed.

5.130 NADOW (Qld) had much the same concerns as their New South Wales branch about their funding under SkillShare:

Equal opportunity has to be created by others for those who are disabled. Competing for trainer time, and for special training equipment and assistance, and for assistance in job placement, is not equal opportunity . . . it perpetuates UNEQUAL opportunity.¹⁷⁹

NADOW (Qld) however, believed that unpaid job experience in real-life office situations was of value to participants because of the opportunity to 'establish and enhance employability'.¹⁸⁰

5.131 CETP services such as PE Personnel in Perth and VRA in Adelaide were also concerned that SkillShare and the overall DEET orientation of 'one program for all disadvantaged job seekers' did not appear to recognise the specific needs of people with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual disabilities, and that those programs which had previously offered specialist assistance were being encouraged to include other disadvantaged job seekers in their programs.¹⁸¹

The preference of DEET is for preparation courses, even though there is overwhelming evidence that a place, train and follow-up approach is the most effective way to assist many people with disabilities enter employment.¹⁸²

179. Supplementary Submission No. 208, July 1990, p. 2 (NADOW (Qld)). However, note that NADOW (Qld) appear to assist all people with disabilities with an aptitude for open employment in an office environment and not just those with physical disabilities.

180. *ibid.*, p. 1.

181. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 5159 (Project Employment Inc.).

182. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 5160 (Project Employment Inc.). Note that PE Personnel were subsequently transferred to DSA funding as opposed to funding from DEET.

Generic services have consistently demonstrated a lack of understanding of the needs of people with disabilities and generally lack the resources to address such needs.¹⁸³

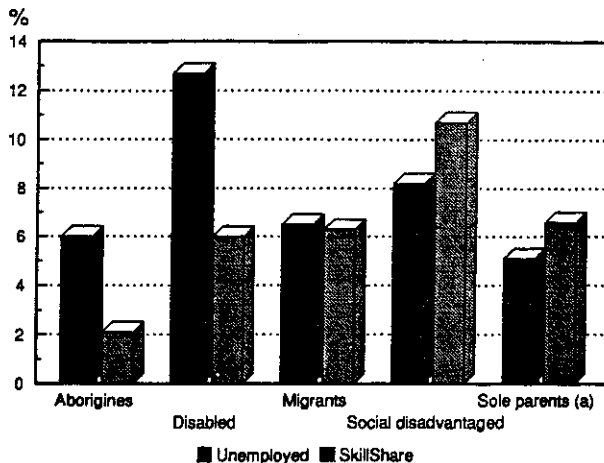
5.132 While most agencies advocating the retention of such services were aware of the benefits to be gained from integrated programs, much weight was placed on the level of expertise developed by staff who continually deal with people with disabilities – this was perceived as one of the major benefits of the specialist programs. Another criticism of the SkillShare model was that these programs were generally time-limited and thus of limited value to those people with disabilities who needed more time than other disadvantaged job-seekers to develop particular skills.

5.133 The review of the first year of the SkillShare program found that:

Although the introduction of SkillShare has resulted in significant improvements in the delivery of employment-related services for many disadvantage job seekers, there is considerable scope to improve targeting of services to people with disabilities, Aborigines and migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds.¹⁸⁴

5.134 The Review concluded that while SkillShare had greatly increased the potential level of labour market assistance available to people with disabilities, their representation in the program was still significantly less than their representation amongst the unemployed. (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Unemployed and SkillShare Participants 1989 Target Group



Source: Reproduced by DEET, in *SkillShare: It's working*, 1990 (Figure 9).

183. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 173 (Vocational Resource Agency Incorporated).

184. *SkillShare: It's Working. A Summary of Findings From the First Year Review of SkillShare*, AGPS Canberra 1990, p. 6.