

6.284 South Australian Group Enterprises had provided employment for a number of people with different types of disability, and were aware that these people had difficulties in confidence, in lack of social skills, that they could be 'fragile' and require attention, perhaps without much warning.³²⁷ However, the organisation was sceptical to some degree about taking on people with 'severe behaviour problems', not so much because of the nature of the problem but because of the likelihood of too much time being spent on addressing behaviour problems rather than on training/skills development.

We may, in fact, decide not to accept a person if we were going to spend more time in behaviour modification than we were in skill training. That is not to say that people with severe behaviour problems should not have the opportunity to learn work skills. But the decision that we made initially was that we did not want that to be the primary function that we were undertaking. We would certainly accept people with behaviour difficulties and social abnormalities, if I can use that term, but we would want that to be a sideline of the ongoing training program that we are running, rather than the mainstream function.³²⁸

6.285 The organisation described the process of identifying skills and abilities.

If a person is interested in working with us I interview him/her, and I am interested in the same sorts of issues as another employer would be interested in. What is the ability of such people? What is their capacity? What is their potential to learn? How can their ability and potential be related to work tasks that we have or could get for them? Are they interested in working? If they are not motivated in working at S.A. Group Enterprises we would encourage them but we certainly do not compel them. If they want to leave us at any time, then they are welcome to. Only one or two have done that. Most want to continue to work and, in fact, work longer hours. I would want to know what their long term interests in work are and at the end of that I would want to know some information about their disabilities with regard to what special equipment we need to design, or make, or purchase, or what particular training program we need to undertake, and then how we can best implement that.³²⁹

6.286 They considered that the greatest amount of work which they did was in skills training and the building of personal confidence.³³⁰

327. See *Transcript of Evidence*, pp. 104-5 (S.A. Group Enterprises Incorporated).

328. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 105 (S.A. Group Enterprises Incorporated).

329. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 102 (S.A. Group Enterprises Incorporated).

330. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 104 (S.A. Group Enterprises Incorporated).

6.287 The type of work which was appropriate varied, in part because of available technology, in part because of the comprehension levels of the individual.

Some have learnt computer operating skills. Heather is one of them. There are two others who, when they are at work, are full time on computers and a couple of others who are learning. One of those uses a special Headmaster set. She is a quadriplegic. She has no hands on the keyboard at all. It is all controlled by head movement and a blow switch. Others are engaged in some similar tasks undertaken in the sheltered workshop – some basic packaging. We aim to get away from those tasks if we can. We recognise that for some of those with very severe intellectual disabilities or even severe physical disabilities, that may at this stage be their limit. We are delighted that at least one can, on a fairly simple packaging task, get up to about 25 to 30 per cent of the productivity rate of a non-disabled person doing the same job. He basically had very limited skills before working with us. Others are assembling architectural hardware – door handles. We assembled all the door handles in the Hyatt Regency Hotel. We are assembling those for a number of other hotels around Australia because we are doing contract work for a business across the road which is doing that work. We have successfully trained them in assembling some computer keyboards – not actually doing the soldering or the wiring but actually putting it together, testing it, programming and testing the chips, testing and packing the cables and then packaging it ready for export.³³¹

6.288 Another organisation, which also believed that people with severe disabilities could become more the standard in workshops, had identified particular groups as requiring services.

We are very conscious that there are a number of people with psychiatric and related disabilities who find it very difficult to get either into sheltered workshops, or anywhere for that matter. That causes us some concern and we are finding an increasing demand on us for those sorts of people.³³²

6.289 While people with psychiatric disabilities will have access to special units linked with the CRS, as announced in the 1990/91 Budget (1200 per year), it is likely that sheltered workshops in transition could continue to provide a service to people with psychiatric, and indeed other disabilities, providing that suitable funding is available.

331. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 103 (S.A. Group Enterprises Incorporated).

332. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 353 (Phoenix Society Inc.).

6.290 Other groups in particular need would appear to be people with head injuries (considered to increase by up to 4,000 per year) and people with multiple sclerosis and motor neurone disease.

6.291 In no case, apart from instances where 'work' is seen as having virtually no meaning for the individual, has there been a suggestion that *some* type or amount of work-related, meaningful activity was not possible, providing that sufficient funds were available for appropriately trained staff and, presumably, that there was no pressure to try to operate a commercial service and provide proper wages.

6.292 What this would suggest is that quite substantial numbers of people with varying or unpredictable skills/abilities/capacities to work could be involved in at least part-time work³³³ in a supported employment environment if adequate funds were available. To some degree, sheltered workshops would argue that this is the service they provide already, although appropriate support is not always available and 'meaningful' work cannot be guaranteed. The main issues for both supported employment services, and for workshops, are not only the degree of funding but the extent to which a living wage can be made available to employees, a suitable environment can be provided, and the issue of 'work plus other occupation'³³⁴, can be addressed.

Recommendation

The Committee RECOMMENDS:

14. That the Department of Health, Housing and Community Services provide a summary of research that has been done on the ways in which work, study, recreation, and other meaningful activities can be combined in order to provide a full life program at an acceptable wage for people with severe disabilities and those whose disabilities make it difficult for them to obtain regular full-time employment. If research on this subject is limited, the Committee recommends that it be undertaken by the Department either directly, or through funding of an individual or organisation.

6.293 Support for the traditional workshop is limited among both service providers and consumers and consumer advocates.³³⁵ Much evidence presented to the Committee was emphatic about the faults of the old workshops. However, this is not to say that there has not been support for the continuation of improved workshops by both consumers/consumer advocates and providers, both as an interim measure and as a permanent form of employment – possibly as a version of supported employment services. This is so especially because of the uncertainty about the

333. See below Paragraphs 6.333-6.348.

334. See above Paragraphs 5.47-5.58, and below 6.344-6.348.

335. Brotherhood of St Laurence representatives suggested that workshops could be 'a mid-point stop in the process of transition from special school or from adolescence into adulthood and into employment opportunity' (*Transcript of Evidence*, p. 5709).

numbers of people requiring a service and the relatively slow development of alternative employment services, as well as the need for proper evaluation of the effectiveness of these. In fact, apart from organisations which have not demonstrated a willingness to accept the principles of the *Disability Services Act* through undertaking to implement minimum outcome standards, it is expected that most sheltered workshops will be in a long transition phase, attempting to move towards a more viable economic base in an unwelcoming economy. This was suggested by the Minister in his 5 July 1991 speech.

Those services which have met minimum outcomes requirements, and have committed themselves to undergo the rest of the change process, need have no fears for their future . . . Nor will any services which are needed by people with disabilities close down.³³⁶

6.294 It has been reiterated in the Minister's speech of 14 November 1991 which also emphasises the need for organisations to accept minimum standards and commit themselves to change.

Amendments to the Act will permanently lay to rest the anxiety about services closing after June 1992. The government has agreed to remove from the Act the June 1992 deadline for transition. It has done so on the understanding that individual services will be asked to negotiate their own transition timeframes and strategies with the department, generally within a three year extension period.³³⁷

6.295 The proposed amendment to legislation which will introduce a new category of services called 'transition services'³³⁸ is a welcome measure, which acknowledges the efforts of some Section 13 services. This move acknowledges the difficulties involved in transition and should provide encouragement for the consideration of other, possibly less expensive, new service types over the next few years.

6.296 An administrative target date of 30 June 1995 will be established for services to generally complete their transition. Individual services will be able to negotiate their own transition timeframes around this date. The new group of services ('transition services') will be those which have taken 'significant steps along the transition path', and will be funded under a new section 14A of the DSA. It is expected that all services will be at this stage by 30 June 1994.

6.297 It is also intended, through amendments to the DSA, to ensure that sanctions are available to deal with non-compliant organisations. Such sanctions may include public notification, withholding of indexation, suspension of funding, reclassification

336. Speech by the Hon. Brian Howe, Minister for Health, Housing and Community Services at the official launch of NTAU, 5 July 1991, p. 12.

337. *Australia and Disability – Where to Now?*, p. 7.

338. *ibid.*

of services, re-auspicing of services and, as a last resort, setting up alternative support services and defunding of the service.

Conclusions – future directions

6.298 It is a truism to say that in a period of high unemployment, and also in a time of workplace reform, the likelihood of many people with disabilities obtaining meaningful employment is minimal. If this *is* the case, then the Government's commitment to addressing the needs of all citizens must be reflected in a more proactive attitude. This does not necessarily mean the establishment of a quota system, although specific anti-discrimination legislation may be useful as a means of establishing community standards.³³⁹ What it does mean is that there is a need for much more intensive assessment of the precise needs of people with different types and levels of disability, the development of programs to meet such needs, and the provision of jobs (with appropriate support) for those people with a more severe level of disability. Beyond this, however, there is also a need to consider mixtures of work, study and recreation which could help to bring people with severe disabilities into the mainstream and make available to them the *benefits* of employment, if not necessarily full employment itself.

6.299 The Committee's study of both labour market programs and employment programs suggests that it is easier to provide services to people with relatively mild disabilities and that departments have concentrated more on the needs of such people to the possible detriment of those with severe disabilities.³⁴⁰

6.300 A number of witnesses suggested that it was essential to provide mainstream employment (including labour market training) programs through mainstream employment departments. One of the benefits of this would be to consider the needs of people with disabilities as a part of the needs of society as a whole, thus avoiding the 'special needs' categorisation of some members of society, and enabling people with disabilities to move away from the 'sickness' label they felt was placed on them by having services provided through health departments.³⁴¹

6.301 For some people with disabilities, this may be a desirable and achievable result, available in the short term. However, it is likely that some labour market factors will make this result more likely for people with relatively mild intellectual and physical disabilities. Even then, there is a likelihood that unless some of these programs and their use by DHH&CS funded services are guided much more by specific targets and performance indicators, they will not be able to provide the best training for getting and maintaining employment in a rapidly changing workforce. For people with severe disabilities, most generic employment programs appear to offer very little.

339. See above, Recommendations 1-3 of Chapter 3.

340. See, for example, Paragraphs 5.101, 5.123, 5.132, 5.216, 5.218.

341. See Paragraph 2.64.

6.302 This must necessarily affect the likelihood of a generic employment department being able to identify and meet the needs of a wide range of persons interested in obtaining employment. While it is both desirable and possible that people with mild to moderate disabilities will be able to move into the open workforce with some assistance, it is apparent that most generic training and employment programs, including those for people in the broad 'disadvantaged' category, cannot currently meet the needs of people with severe levels of disability.

6.303 In addition, it is also important to note that a range of other factors may have a limiting effect on the capacity of people with less severe disabilities to adjust to full-time open employment. A number of services have suggested that there are factors which contribute substantially to the capacity of the individual to benefit from new services, including positive support from family or other significant persons and the quality of service staff. Both age and gender may also be a factor, in that a number of CETP services appear to place workers only up to the age of 40; older women in particular are less likely to be using open employment services such as CETPs. A capacity to work full-time also appears to be important. In such circumstances, particularly taking into account the stress experienced by many workers, it is more than likely that some people with mild/moderate disabilities are disadvantaged in gaining access to open employment depending on their personality, background and previous experience. The placement success rate of CETPs in particular may depend on their capacity not only to take people with low apparent levels of disability but with no serious other disadvantaging factor. If so, then access to new services (already limited by funding) will be further limited by other factors beyond the individual's control.

6.304 In the absence of any systematic study and presumably the absence of detailed 'before' information, it may be difficult to utilise existing services data fully to identify gaps in an individual's background/experience and thereby develop strategies for overcoming these. Nonetheless, this should be a priority in program development if access is to be as wide as possible, even within the limits of a non-entitlement program.

6.305 The extent to which people with disabilities have access to a range of employment options or to a living wage is less obvious, and the degree to which the developments suggested under the wages working party of the Disability Task Force will also be applicable to such people is also a matter of concern.³⁴² With respect to the access issue, however, the opportunities of people of whatever level of disability to move through the system still needs to be demonstrated.

6.306 The major problem identified by witnesses, and which will need to be addressed by service providers such as CES, as well as by programs, will be the recognition of the individuality of the person with a disability, and the capacity to provide a service which addresses individual needs. There is no value in detailed individual assessment if officers do not have the capacity to put together a workable

342. See below Chapter 7.

package of services from existing programs, or if there is no recognition that a number of existing programs do not meet certain needs.

Labour market programs

6.307 As was stated above, 'the current array of [labour-market] programs lacks an overall strategy and rationale and this may have the effect of limiting access to training programs for people with disabilities'.³⁴³

6.308 The past evaluation by DEET of the success of training programs was somewhat tenuous. Firstly, data on 'disadvantaged' groups could not be broken down sufficiently to indicate the level or type of disability, and this was a serious data deficiency which is being addressed by recent developments in data collection and program monitoring.³⁴⁴ Secondly, the snapshot evaluation method ('three months after') does not indicate the problems experienced, the level of job satisfaction, the capacity for improvement, the appropriateness of the job, or the long-term security of the position. Again, the new emphasis on final outcomes, which excludes individuals still involved in DEET programs³⁴⁵, is a move in the right direction.

6.309 Both training and employment programs must accept the varied learning capacities of people with disabilities, resulting from the physical, intellectual or other disability and other disadvantaging factors. JobTrain can be extended for people with disabilities who cannot complete the course successfully within the usual time limits, and the provision of a fares subsidy, and employer access to leased equipment is commendable.³⁴⁶ However, the formal nature of JobTrain courses³⁴⁷ must necessarily preclude the participation of people with more severe disabilities, or those whose formal education has not provided them with the required level of skill or whose learning capacities have been affected by their disability.

6.310 JobStart can also address the specific needs of people with disabilities to the extent that the subsidy is payable for part-time work³⁴⁸ and it would appear that a number of people with disabilities in this program are working part-time. The participation rate of people with disabilities in JobStart³⁴⁹ again indicates that its benefits may be for people with relatively mild disabilities; those with more severe disabilities may be, at best, among those in part-time employment although possibly

343. See Paragraph 5.63.

344. See above, Paragraphs 5.72-5.75, and see also Appendix 7.

345. See above, Paragraph 5.73.

346. See Paragraph 5.99.

347. See Paragraph 5.101.

348. See Paragraph 5.103.

349. See Paragraphs 5.104-5.105.

greater availability of information about this and other programs could increase participation. The availability of leased equipment is important but the need to be virtually work-ready may adversely affect individuals with different types and levels of disability.

6.311 It is not possible to extrapolate further information from the available data; what would be of importance to know, however, is the extent to which not only relatively mild/moderate disabilities, but a reasonable education, absence of other disadvantaging factors and availability of any required support (for example, transport) are also distinguishing characteristics of successful JobStart participants. It is also important to be able to determine if participants moved from one job to another, and the reasons for this.

6.312 The further development of the Post Placement Support scheme³⁵⁰, and the subsidised work experience scheme³⁵¹ reflects an awareness of the inability of the mainstream programs abovementioned to meet specific needs, and reinforces the belief that service packages or units such as the Disability Access Support Units may be required to meet the needs of people with more than minimal disabilities. These services, plus others outlined above, suggest that the major 'generic' programs for disadvantaged groups have a reasonable success rate for people with mild disabilities, but cannot meet the needs of people with more serious levels of disability, unless disadvantage-specific components are added.

6.313 Previously existing specialist projects, such as those provided under SkillShare, were encouraged to provide integration opportunities, with other services being given the opportunity to continue as specialist projects under the *Disability Services Act*. While this may have been an administrative convenience, it indicates that a 'generic' department chose to avoid further involvement in specialist services, even though there is no necessary correlation between specialist services and lack of integration into the community. The second point is that, if it was intended to develop specialist services under the *Disability Services Act* and to determine if separate support was essential to integration in the open workforce, very detailed standardised information should have been required from the beginning.

6.314 The concern of a number of organisations³⁵² and the results of the review of SkillShare, suggest that generic programs often fail to meet the needs of people with disabilities, even those with mild disabilities. This does not suggest that DEET should not be involved in the provision of services, but rather that it should undertake not only the specialist services referred to above, but a detailed investigation of the multiple factors influencing successful outcomes. Such factors

350. See Paragraphs 5.68, 5.112.

351. See Paragraph 5.113.

352. See, for example, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 4421 (Queensland Association for Mental Health).

may include level of disability, education, socio-economic background, availability of transport and level of family or other, support.³⁵³

6.315 Specialised services are a welcome development insofar as they recognise that treating people with disabilities as a homogeneous group cannot lead to beneficial outcomes for a number of individuals. They also suggest that a generic 'employment' department *can* develop services which are outside the mainstream in themselves, but which may assist people with severe disabilities to access mainstream employment *in time*.

6.316 The extent to which pressure from groups representing people with disabilities, including mild disabilities, has led to a belief that generic services can meet all needs would be difficult to measure. It is likely that additional influence in this direction has come from the need to provide a good success rate which is often achieved by taking into programs those people most likely to succeed. That such people may have already benefitted through greater access to education and to other services, and through greater recent emphasis on the needs of people with intellectual disabilities are also factors which need to be considered in assessing the meaning of 'appropriate' services.

DHH&CS employment services

6.317 The development of employment services under the *Disability Services Act* was a major, if controversial, step. The benefits of these services have been extolled by a number of witnesses; adverse criticism has been directed at them by others, including on the grounds of financial cost per individual and lack of availability to the majority of people with disabilities. The social benefits, however, must also be recognised, as has been indicated above. Quality of life factors are important as well as financial costs.³⁵⁴

6.318 A major difficulty with the new service types, is that they have been established in an evaluative vacuum. Given the considerable opposition to sheltered workshops, and their relative lack of accountability, it is astonishing that a Department committed to positive results for individuals and intent to avoid past mistakes failed to set up a systematic data collection *in the Department*, failed to establish guidelines to services³⁵⁵, developed no proper financing strategy which took a range of funding needs into account, provided no manuals, and undertook no systematic evaluations of new services. A total of \$51,252,930 has been allocated to new service types between 1988/89-1991/92, in the absence of any systematic quantifiable or quantitative evidence readily available to the Department from service providers to justify continued funding.

353. See, for example, Recommendation 1 of Chapter 2. See also Paragraphs 2.70-2.71.

354. See in particular, Paragraphs 3.131-3.133, 5.191, 5.222.

355. See above Paragraphs 5.171-5.172, 5.219, *passim*. The Committee acknowledges that the Department wished to introduce flexible systems, but notes that it is possible to have flexible service models *and* clear guidelines, including evaluation/monitoring of outcomes, for services.

6.319 The reaction against specific ‘inputs’ which were considered to result, at best, in a calculated measurement of services to people without giving them choice or allowing them to become more independent, has been important in the development of a range of user-oriented services in the community services area – notably, in the aged care area. A similar model appears to have been developed in respect of services for people with disabilities; however, whether through intention or otherwise, this model has lacked some of the specific parameters of other services which have been guided by strict financial strategies at the very least, and based on much more precise information about the target population.

6.320 The Department has argued that flexibility in developing and funding services has been more important³⁵⁶ than setting firm parameters to service types – an argument, which, as noted above, has been supported to some extent by service providers.³⁵⁷ However, the provision of ‘key’ documents – such as the outline of service types and of a ‘flexible’ financing strategy – while understandable in the context of moving away from the seemingly monolithic workshop employment system, have not been an adequate replacement for more concrete information. In addition, the limited experience of Departmental staff in the planning, establishment and operation of viable commercial concerns must necessarily limit their own capacity to understand and evaluate the likely viability of a range of new service types. This limits their ability to predict the extent of need for developing variations to these and allowing for variable costs, service development and increasing ‘professionalisation’ of ‘new service’ staff.³⁵⁸

6.321 What this has meant for the development of disability services is that a belief in flexibility and in pilot schemes has dominated at the expense of careful assessment of financial costs versus benefits. The problems of existing services, that is, sheltered workshops, have been stated, but have not been addressed systematically in the past; the benefits of anything new seem to have been deemed automatically to be self-evident and as not requiring detailed consideration. While the Committee does not deny the importance of less tangible benefits of new services, it believes that it still remains essential for any department to undertake required and adequate training for its staff in order for them to be aware of the multiple costs of ‘new’ services and of the vital importance of establishing and maintaining effective data collection. This would at least enable staff to be aware of the benefits and the problems of services, so as to profit from the former and deal with the latter as they occur.

6.322 In its consideration of new services, the Committee has paid particular attention to the extent to which a wide range of needs can be met by these services. These needs include both the tangible and the less obvious – the latter being greater independence, capacity to function within the open community, freedom of

356. See above 5.165-5.168, 5.171-5.172.

357. See Paragraph 5.173.

358. See Paragraph 5.193, 5.212-5.245.

expression and action, having a choice, and being treated as an individual. The former needs include employment which is meaningful to the individual, appropriate to their capacities or abilities, provides reasonable security and advancement opportunities and an income which allows a reasonable standard of living. Within this broad range of needs, attention was also directed to the extent to which new services meet specific needs, including those of people with severe disabilities and those of people experiencing other disadvantaging factors.

Access

6.323 Some evidence given to the Committee suggested that access to services would continue to be a problem, especially given both the current non-entitlement basis of service provision and the uncertainty about the actual size and need of the target population.

6.324 Access to new services will depend on availability of places. This has been a fact stressed continually by people with disabilities and/or their families, by consumer groups and service providers in arguing against what was seen as the closing down of sheltered workshops with no alternatives being available. Hopefully, greater awareness of the longer transition time available will reduce some of these concerns. Nonetheless, people who require services to move into open employment or to a non-sheltered workshop environment will have their access to such services limited by the amount of funding available and by the rate at which others move through existing and future services such as CETPs and Supported Employment. The issue of funding and the equitable distribution of resources is discussed further below.³⁵⁹ The rate of movement through services is discussed in the following paragraphs.

6.325 There is an assumption that there will be a gradual transition through a support system such as CETPs leaving a continual series of places for others.³⁶⁰ This may be true for people with mild disabilities, especially considering the fact that a substantial number of people with disabilities are in the open workforce without having been through the system at all. Nonetheless, in the absence of information about the factors which may contribute to the success of people moving into open employment through CETPs, this transition rate may vary. Some people will require very high support levels³⁶¹ which, quite apart from the question of whether they really need a CETP or Supported Employment service, indicates that levels of support will vary widely depending on the individual's emotional needs as opposed to their skills and abilities.

6.326 One of the key features of success in employment was considered to be the availability of a high level of support. For many services, this support was a mixture

359. See Paragraphs 6.349-6.357.

360. Noted above, for example, at Paragraphs 5.177, 5.179.

361. See above, Paragraphs 5.9-5.11, 5.181-5.183, 6.1-6-4.

of family/carer and the service providing organisation³⁶², with some services not taking on clients who did not receive family support. In itself, this factor could lead to a discrimination against people because of established family circumstances; and, while these might be overcome through the individual's leaving home, such a step might only be possible for a person with milder disabilities and then only if other support were forthcoming. Certainly, no *general* conclusions can be drawn relating to socio-economic background, ethnicity, gender or age in such considerations of availability of support; but these are factors that do need to be considered when evaluating the reasons for the success of some clients as opposed to simply suggesting reasons for the limited opportunities of those who are either not accepted by services or are more difficult to maintain because of their need for higher levels or more extended periods of support.³⁶³ More detailed information both on numbers and on background, on level and type of disability is essential in order to determine the real success of CETP services and therefore the validity of the claim that funding can be continually directed to new clients.³⁶⁴

6.327 Insofar as support is often required at work³⁶⁵ it would also be important to determine the factors which may influence the availability of this, for example the level or type of disability, the individual's previous work experience, their experience in dealing with others, their expectations of paid employment.

6.328 By definition, supported employment requires ongoing support at different levels and is targeted at people who are unlikely to work in competitive employment.³⁶⁶ DHH&CS stated that the service was for people with more severe disabilities than the current client group of sheltered workshops.³⁶⁷ However, many sheltered workshop clients are people with severe disabilities and some supported employment services represent a transition from sheltered workshops and hence include in their clientele people with severe disabilities (even though it is true that a substantial proportion of people in sheltered workshops had a mild or moderate disability).³⁶⁸

6.329 The major characteristic of supported employment is the continuing nature of support; however, variations may occur in the amount of support required, and it is this which may allow for some additional clients to be placed with a service.

362. *ibid.*

363. See Recommendation 1, Chapter 2.

364. See Recommendations 4 and 5, Chapter 1.

365. See, for example, Paragraphs 5.182, 5.199-5.200, 6.1-6.4. See also Chapter 7, Paragraphs 7.181-7.186.

366. People with quite high levels of disability, including intellectual, are catered for in supported employment. Need may also relate to emotional support, as well as actual disability.

367. See Paragraph 6.4. However, see also Paragraphs 6.256, 6.281-6.283.

368. See *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 1500 (DHH&CS), and Paragraphs 6.256, 6.281-6.283.

Unlike CETPs, however, it is difficult to see considerable numbers of new clients coming through a service, and growth will presumably depend on the relatively high level of funding required becoming available. Again, lack of knowledge of the target population, and limited information available about specific service users, makes it difficult to determine the success factors in projects. While it is apparent that supported employment clients have a higher level of disability, in some cases it is also possible that unevenness in funding guidelines (such as they are) may result in people with low disability levels but high emotional/support needs also receiving supported employment funding. Assumptions about level of 'obvious' disability therefore cannot be made easily.

6.330 Data on the client population (both in the community as a whole and specific clients currently receiving services) is essential. Until further information of this type is available, it is difficult to see the 'success' factors and to determine if some clients might continue to receive support they do not need, simply because the nature of the service is to provide a continuing level of 'care'. The same information should be collected for supported employment clients as for CETP clients, as outlined above.³⁶⁹

6.331 While the quality and amount of support available to people in sheltered workshops obviously varied, the reasons for this are numerous. Workshop representatives have stated that the issue was one of a lack of funds (affecting training, capital expenditure, etc.) rather than a lack of interest or concern, and that with the same resources as are available to new services, they would be able to provide the same results.³⁷⁰ In some cases this appears to be so, given that some sheltered workshops in transition are running supported employment services. Nonetheless, size, attitude and changes in the 'traditional' operation patterns of sheltered workshops would also be essential components of a 'transition' service.

6.332 The issue of whether sufficient support is or was available in sheltered workshops is difficult to determine, and, insofar as workshops must undergo substantial change (if needed) in a range of areas³⁷¹, support levels remain relevant only if the same funding for support is not available for transition service as for new supported employment services.

Flexibility of employment

6.333 A further indication of both the current job market and the nature of CETP services is the fact that most CETP places theoretically are for people able to undertake full-time work. This fact in itself suggests that this type of service cannot easily meet the needs of people with severe disabilities, and this is supported by the fact that most CETP jobs are in 'regular businesses . . . which primarily employ

369. See Recommendations 12 and 13 in Chapter 5, and Paragraph 5.193.

370. See for example, Paragraphs 6.96, 6.203-6.205.

371. As outlined in the Minimum Outcome Standards book.

non-disabled people'.³⁷² Unless the specific workplace needs of people with severe disabilities, including technology, workplace restructure and personal care (quite apart from transport needs) can be addressed by CETP services, they must continue to meet the needs of a clearly defined group only – those who are relatively easy to place.

6.334 The types of jobs which are available to CETP clients vary, but are primarily of a fairly basic nature.³⁷³ Some types of jobs suggest that an able-bodied person is required, and hence may be catering for people with a mild intellectual disability. Others require a higher or average intellectual capacity, although they may be able to accommodate some physical disability.³⁷⁴

6.335 Opportunities for training and promotion may vary depending on the type of position and whether a career structure is generally available or desired by workers with disabilities.³⁷⁵ While noting the importance of people with disabilities integrating into the community and thereby accepting its and their own limitations, it is also essential to ensure that people with disabilities (especially those with intellectual disabilities), are not permanently placed in repetitive or 'menial' work if their abilities enable them to undertake more interesting tasks.³⁷⁶ Otherwise, a major objective of new services cannot be met.

6.336 Information about full or part-time work for people in supported employment was derived indirectly from examining the types of work done. In many cases it appears that employment was full-time, in terms of hours/days worked, and that workers were regularly employed (that is, on a continual basis) unless the job was a time-limited contract. However, full-time work did not mean full productivity, and hence full award wages were not paid in a number of instances.³⁷⁷

6.337 There is a certain amount of variety in hours of employment³⁷⁸, and this may result from the nature of the work available and/or appropriate for the individual. Because of this, supported employment does offer scope to people either with severe disabilities or to those whose needs for different types of employment patterns or for extensive support may effectively preclude them from full-time open employment.³⁷⁹

372. See Paragraphs 5.198-5.199.

373. See Paragraphs 5.252-5.256.

374. See Paragraphs 5.255-5.256.

375. See Paragraphs 5.251-5.252, 5.257.

376. See above Paragraph 3.67.

377. For example, see Paragraphs 6.23, 6.31, 6.33, 6.44.

378. See Paragraphs 6.31, 6.33.

379. See Paragraph 6.38.

6.338 Variety is also obvious in the types of employment that have been developed, ranging from computer work, gardening, catering, arts/crafts to garment manufacture and electronics assembly. For people with severe physical disabilities, the opportunity exists for increasing skills and hence income, as well as moving into similar work in other companies, *if required support is available*. For people with intellectual disabilities, some variety and movement is obviously possible although this will no doubt vary according to opportunity, abilities and availability of required support.

6.339 Sheltered workshops did offer some flexibility in terms of hours/days worked, in that clients could work three rather than five days. To this extent they did provide a choice, although this choice may have been utilised because the level of wages was so low that full-time employment was not considered worthwhile. The number of people who worked fewer hours because of physical or other limitations is not known, but could have been considerable depending on the level of disability.

6.340 If sheltered workshops 'in transition' are able to offer the same choice of days or hours worked, as a form of supported employment, this could be an important means of providing employment options for those with more severe disabilities, or those whose needs for irregular work may make them difficult to fit into the ordinary workplace. This factor was recognised by one organisation which noted the difficulty of providing employment for people with very severe disabilities but with an interest in, and a need for, the involvement which 'employment' provided.³⁸⁰

6.341 The range of work available in sheltered workshops varies, and much of it offers opportunities to develop work skills and increase earning capacity. This capacity to provide a valued and appropriate service to people with disabilities, particularly those with severe disabilities, in an integrated environment, should be maintained.

6.342 The financial operation of sheltered workshops in transition will be the subject of considerable discussion. The Committee has noted the difficulties under which workshops operated in the past and emphasises the new difficulties which will exist if sheltered workshop employees are likely to be in the higher disability group. There is a need to match the variable productivity rates of people with severe disabilities to both a mixture of staffing and an appropriate funding level, if serious inequity is not to be maintained between forms of supported employment.

6.343 While there is a certain amount of flexibility in the various services currently available, sufficiently detailed information is not available to indicate clearly whether all or some service types can adequately meet the needs both of the numbers of people with severe disabilities, and of those people who do not easily fit into standard work patterns.

380. *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 381 (Spastic Society of New South Wales).

6.344 For some people with severe disabilities, particularly physical disabilities, technological assistance³⁸¹, a modified workplace, and transport and personal care assistance may make 'open' employment of particular types possible. For the same reasons, supported employment may also meet a number of such needs.

6.345 Supported employment also appears to be appropriate for some people with more severe disabilities, including people who cannot work full-time or who need a period of time before they are able to work at closer to standard rates. Yet, without more detailed information, it is not easy to see if supported employment can provide a service for people with more severe psychiatric disabilities, people with head injuries, those whose motor skills may decrease over time, or people with 'behaviour' problems.

6.346 Given the numbers of people in these categories (insofar as it has been possible to estimate such numbers) it is important that appropriate services be developed in order to meet such specialised needs. To a point, ATCs and Independent Living services do address the needs of some people in these groups, but these are not necessarily the best services for all people with such disabilities. Sheltered workshops also have provided services to people with these disabilities, and there is no reason to suppose that they might not continue to do so insofar as employment is meaningful and indeed essential to some people with these disabilities.

6.347 In the 'transition' period of sheltered workshops it should be possible, as part of the development of these services to more modern, more effective service provision, to undertake a study of the particular 'work' and other needs of people in these high need groups and relate these needs to a more effective use of existing resources. This is not to suggest that the 'traditional' workshops be renewed, but rather that where it is possible to develop real work programs for those with non-standard needs the extent to which these can be met in a fully integrated work setting should be carefully assessed.

6.348 Viable employment options in the area of part-time work or irregular employment, or work which can be provided for people whose skills are decreasing, are required. What is needed in this area is a funded commitment to identify appropriate jobs and job arrangements and give priority to those people whose needs are high.

381. See for example *Data Bases of Accommodative Aids for Computer Users with Disabilities*, *Human Factors* 32:4, 1990, pp. 407-22, and *Computer Accessibility for Federal Workers with Disabilities: It's the Law*, *Social Aspects of Computing*, 32:8, 1989, pp. 952-6.

Recommendation

The Committee RECOMMENDS:

15. That the Department of Health, Housing and Community Services provide a summary of research that has been done on the identification of suitable types of employment for people who are unable to work full-time, or whose skills will decrease rather than increase. If such research is limited, or the results are not easily applicable to Australian society, the Committee recommends that the Department of Health, Housing and Community Services, in conjunction with the Departments of Industrial Relations and of Employment, Education and Training, undertake such research, including the development of a strategy to assist departments and other employers to restructure existing employment options to meet these needs.

Funding

6.349 Criticism of the financing strategy applicable to both old and new services was widespread. Two issues arise out of this. The first is the extent to which specialist services (especially supported employment) will use extensive resources thus limiting the quality of services available to others. The second is the implication that inadequate funding has for the successful operation of services.

6.350 The cost of supported employment, in dollar terms, is high. Subsidies can be provided for staff salaries, rent and purchase/repair of equipment/machinery, but not all services will be able to run a viable business in the sense of being able to take over these costs, as well as pay wages. If this is the case, it is essential that this fact be acknowledged and a decision be made as to the costs versus the other benefits of such services; this is especially the case if the nature of the service or the client group is such that there will be no transition, or very little transition, through the service, thereby creating places for others.

6.351 As far as the second point is concerned – the appropriateness of the level of funding – there are a number of different views. While many of the traditional services felt that funding for new services was excessive, the new services themselves believed that funding was unrealistically low.³⁸² The Department was seen not to have taken into account a wide range of factors, such as travelling and report writing, or to be aware of basic differences between rural and urban areas in terms of varying costs.

6.352 Both traditional and new services are saying much the same thing; in fact they are both making statements about the cost of providing a quality service and the components that cannot be provided (and have not in the past) if there is not sufficient funding.

382. See Paragraphs 5.202-5.218.

6.353 The funding process and the amount of money that will be available for transition still requires greater clarification. In 1991-92, an estimated \$47,351,818 will be spent on 267 sheltered workshops and, during 1990-91, transition funding alone totalled \$12.3 million. This in itself may support the theory that extremely inefficient business practices and out of date equipment³⁸³ (as well as the economic situation) have held back sheltered workshops to the point where the move towards new service types can only be achieved at a very high cost. It does suggest, also, that very high levels of funding will be required to effect the transition to the standard of new services expected. It would be appropriate for a clear statement to be made on the amount of money that will be available for transition.

6.354 Similarly, it is unlikely that existing and future supported employment services will all become viable business operations. It is necessary, therefore, to determine the amount of money that will need to be expended in order to maintain these, and the number of people they will be able to provide meaningful employment for (including those people currently employed in sheltered workshops).

6.355 The extent of past neglect and the results of this in terms of poor management practices, poor administration, and uneconomic work practices have been conceded in the setting up of the National Technical Assistance Unit. It is essential for the Department of Health, Housing and Community Services to consider the philosophy behind the approach to funding of new services and to determine the damage that may be caused by the somewhat random funding of services, operated in some instances by people who do not have the requisite skills, or who cannot get funds to attract highly qualified staff.

6.356 This somewhat *laissez-faire* approach to new service development is also evident in the non-funding of training to service providers, especially in CETPs. There are at least two inferences that could be drawn from this – that people with (mild) disabilities do not really require specialised services, and that transition to open employment is considered easier if ‘specialist’ staff work with limited contact with other similar service providers.

6.357 Such approaches neither value clients nor staff. In reality, witnesses stated, highly trained staff were required and this needed to be recognised. While witnesses did not specifically link the seemingly casual approach to qualifications with the belief that transition itself should be seen as ‘natural’, it is possible that this correlation is one which influenced Departmental attitudes. Yet a Department which had condemned sheltered workshops for failing to establish viable commercial operations despite reasonable funding levels, and for not treating clients in an appropriate fashion, should have been concerned that proper financial systems were in place and properly trained staff were both available and appropriately funded for on-going training, to ensure the success of the new services.

383. See above, Paragraphs 6.152-6.175.

Recommendation

The Committee has made related recommendations at Chapter 5, Recommendations 12 and 13 on the need for evaluation of 'new' services and need for staff training.

The Committee RECOMMENDS:

16. That funding be provided to all service types to ensure that staff have access to required training. Services are to ensure that funding is used appropriately, and in particular that training is undertaken to ensure that services are based on sound business principles and that staff have requisite expertise, particularly in managerial and administrative procedures and personnel development.

Accountability

6.358 That the Department has not made sufficient provision for responsible accounting by new services is apparent in a number of ways, including the limits of reporting and monitoring requirements, data collection, and individual costs reports. Again this suggests that the same mistakes have been made in respect of new services as were made regarding the accountability of workshops. Accountability is a two-way process, with services reporting to the Department and the Department having the responsibility of reporting to the Minister and Parliament, to the taxpayer and to people with disabilities, on the effectiveness of its programs.

Recommendation

The Committee has made related recommendations at Chapter 5, Recommendations 12 and 14, and Chapter 6, Recommendations 1, 6, 10, and 11.

The Committee RECOMMENDS:

17. That appropriate evaluation and monitoring processes be established for program funding and program outcomes, and that reports on the operation of all services be produced in 1992 and at regular intervals thereafter. These reports are not expected to cover each individual service, but should be sufficiently representative to provide a realistic assessment of benefits, costs and problems, and strategies for any required change.

'Employment'

6.359 The Committee's terms of reference concern only current employment programs and the extent to which these meet current needs and can be expected to meet future needs. They do not allow for detailed study of options in employment which embrace wider ideas of productivity, or activities which are valued by the community and for which people with disabilities, and others, could be paid a living wage.

6.360 Nonetheless, as was indicated at the beginning of these two chapters on employment³⁸⁴, there is a need to look outside of the usual concepts of employment if the needs of people with disabilities, especially people with severe disabilities, are to be met in the future. This is so for a number of reasons. The work/employment needs of some people with high levels of disability may be met by workplace reform, by a systematic policy of training and employment, by employers spending money on equipment, or equipment grants being made available to meet individual needs. Yet, because the needs of people vary so widely it is unlikely that the needs of all those with high levels of disability can be met within the ordinary workplace. It is possible that alternative employment models (for example, home-based work) can be established and linked into mainstream employment which will offer additional options that overcome some of the greatest work-related problems such as transport and personal care³⁸⁵, of people with disabilities who have or can obtain skills which can be used in these settings. These options need to be considered as a matter of priority.

6.361 Up to a point, the development of new employment options will be facilitated through inter-departmental projects. These include workplace reforms, DIR participation in management of the DHH&CS program 'Employer and Union Education Strategies', and joint departmental involvement in production of publications/promotional material, and co-operation in projects of mutual interest.

6.362 The greater involvement of key departments such as Industrial Relations in the work of reform of disability services is essential. In 1991 the Department of Industrial Relations was particularly involved in the Wages Sub-Committee of the Disability Task Force, including a consultancy on assessment, and its Workplace Equity Unit (WEU) in the Development Division (IRDD) was beginning to develop a number of ideas relating to work options for people with more severe disabilities.

6.363 Progress in areas such as these, especially in conjunction with pilot programs such as the two-year job placement program for people with disabilities conducted by the Labor Council of New South Wales³⁸⁶, will give greater meaning to the moves for DHH&CS to become more closely involved in the general business and union world.

6.364 This point was emphasised by the Minister for Health, Housing and Community Services in launching the National Technical Assistance Unit in July 1991. The unit, he said:

also signals that disability issues in general, and especially employment opportunities for people with disabilities, are no longer the narrow preserve of the "welfare" sector and the consumer movement, but

384. See especially Paragraphs 5.13-5.58.

385. See below, Chapter 7, Paragraphs 7.140, 7.147-7.150, 7.156-7.160, 7.181-7.186.

386. This project resulted from a recommendation of the *Ronalds Report*.

demand and receive the best input that mainstream business and the trade union movement has to offer.³⁸⁷

Recommendation

The Committee RECOMMENDS:

18. That an integrated interdepartmental approach to the development of employment options be continued, particularly where the skills and experience of different departments can provide assistance in the development of cost-effective and viable businesses.

6.365 People with severe intellectual disabilities, and those with multiple severe disabilities, may require an entirely different service or series of services from those currently available. At present it is expected that the 'employment' needs of some people will be met under the *Disability Services Act* by supported employment (although a number will utilise other services rather than employment ones). This expectation appears to be based on the belief that everyone can contribute to society in employment if enough resources are devoted to them. Hence, there has been the development of intensive supported employment services such as Vitec Assembly in Perth which are intended to demonstrate that severely intellectually disabled people can be involved in 'mainstream' employment, albeit in a separate workplace. However, it would be necessary to examine the basis of such services carefully in order to determine whether this form of employment is one which, while it may financially benefit service providers and some people in Government departments committed to a particular ideology, in fact has little appreciable benefit, *through its work component*, for participants.

6.366 The productivity level of Vitec is minimal and the business, in a highly competitive market, especially during a recession, is non-viable without substantial subsidy. In itself, this is sufficient cause for concern. The real concern however, is that there is no program evaluation established which could demonstrate that the work involved (as distinct from the contact with others and the individual attention necessary from staff) is productive of any benefit to the participants *which could not be achieved through other means*. To evaluate the individual benefits would be difficult (especially because of the communication problem of some participants). To relate these to an objective assessment of the factors which enhance individual participation in society would also be difficult but essential, if any result is to be demonstrated. Without this research as a basis, there is a serious likelihood that 'employment' programs of this type could be established and continually funded which would do what sheltered workshops have been accused of doing – exploiting some of the most vulnerable members of society. Such exploitation could occur if there is no awareness of, or appreciation by, the individual participant of the value or meaning of 'work' in its usual sense.

387. Speech by the Hon. Brian Howe, Minister for Health, Housing and Community Services at the official launch of NTAU, 5 July 1991, p. 4.

6.367 If there is a possibility of such exploitation it becomes increasingly important to develop a much more integrated series of services for people with severe disabilities which can build on available services but not be confined to these. To do this it is necessary to expand the concept of employment to include all meaningful activities which lead to individual development.

6.368 The Committee has made recommendations on this concern – see Chapter 6, Recommendations 5 and 14, and Chapter 5, Recommendations 1 and 2.