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Employment/Day Options Interface Research Project

FINAL REPORT
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Executive summary

Background and purposes

In 2003, the National Disability Administrators released "To take part", a report on improving access to employment assistance and enhancing the interface between Commonwealth employment and jurisdictional (States and Territories) day options programs for people with a disability. In 2007, the Disability Policy and Research Working Group (DPRWG), a Sub-Committee of the Community and Disability Services Ministerial Advisory Committee, commissioned the *Employment/Day Options Research Project*. The Project related to the CSTDA Policy Priority Area 2 which addressed strengthening across government linkages. A proposal from the Centre for Research into Disability and Society in the School of Occupational Therapy at Curtin University of Technology was successful. The Project was managed by a Steering Committee set up by the DPRWG. The Steering Committee provided advice and feedback on two Interim Reports and a Draft Final Report.

The Project purposes were

> "…to advise on ways to improve the seamless delivery of services across the employment/day options interface to ensure these services better meet the needs of people with a disability. The research will assist in informing the coordination of services between and within levels of government and in enhancing the opportunity for people with a disability to move between or flexibly combine employment and day options services as circumstances require."

The Project brief required a description and analysis of reforms in Australian Government employment and States/Territories Government day options programs and their impacts on people with a disability; examination of issues in the interface between employment and day services; the identification and description of employment innovations for people with a disability who have high support needs; and the barriers and facilitators to linkages between employment and day options.

The following findings, *inter alia*, of the "To take part" report provided a valuable background resource for the *Employment/Day Options Interface Research Project.*

- Positive assumptions about the ability and potential of people with a disability to participate in employment have been major drivers in Australian disability policy and practice.

- People with a severe or profound level of disability were significantly under-represented in the workforce compared to non-disabled people.

- Commonwealth employment reforms should not disadvantage people with a disability who had high support needs.

- There was a nexus between availability of, and demand for Commonwealth employment services and jurisdictional day options services, particularly at transitional times for people with a disability such as people wishing to "retire" from employment.

- Specific interface issues were identified.

  o The need for simplified pathways for access to employment and day options.

  o The need for access to both employment and day options services including occasions when people with a disability wanted to try out in employment and needed a safety net.

  o The need for cross jurisdictional approaches to service provision and funding.

Project methodologies

The research project used three primary methodologies: direct consultations and a survey with stakeholder groups including Commonwealth and jurisdictional Government representatives from FaCSIA and DEWR, employment and day options service providers, peak bodies, and people with a disability and their families; analysis of Australian datasets on disability, and employment and day options services; and a review of literature.

A total of 45 consultations were carried out in 11 locations across Australia including rural and remote locations, and 23 survey responses were received from service providers. Consultations were structured and, where appropriate, audio recorded and transcribed. A considerable volume of narrative was analysed and key themes identified along with corresponding direct quotations from participants.

The primary data sources for analysis were the Australian Government Disability Services Census (AGDSC) and the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA) National Minimum Data Set (NMDS) which is held by the

Australian Institute on Health and Welfare (AIHW). The report deals with data that are publicly available.

The literature review and questions asked during the consultations were used to identify examples of relevant innovation.

In addition to research literature, the literature review drew from a number of key relevant reports including the following.

- *Current and future demand for specialist disability services* (AIHW, 2007), which included a chapter that addressed specifically the interface between specialist disability services and other service systems.
- *Welfare to work and demand for employment services by people with a disability* (Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Legislation Committee, 2007).
- Australian Bureau of Statistics population-based reports.
- Australian Productivity Commission reports.
- *Students with a disability in vocational education and training* (National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd, 2002).

The Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA)

The CSDTA is pivotal in understanding the difficult issues associated with the employment/day options interface. This agreement oversees the division of services that has resulted in the Commonwealth having responsibility for employment services and the states and territories having responsibility for day options. In addition, the CSTDA is a major mechanism for joint planning and development between the levels of government. A well-functioning, effective CSTDA clearly will facilitate the address of interface issues.

The 2004-05 Annual Public Report of the CSTDA reported on the establishment of joint working parties in each jurisdiction to share information on service strategies. The Report also referred to a bilateral agreement "Coordinated service planning and provision" on which two jurisdictions, South Australia and the ACT reported activities in this area. At the time of writing this report, there have been no further public annual reports from the CSTDA.

A recent Senate report from the *Standing Committee on Community Affairs Funding and Operation of the CSTDA* (2007) made key recommendations that were germane to this research project, many that related to a cross-governments approach.

A common perception of the CSTDA in its current form is that it is not effective in addressing the interface issues between Australian governments.

Australian Government employment reforms

Australian Government disability employment reforms have a relatively long history that includes policies and practices relating to people with a disability who have high support needs. This report provides a brief historical account of those changes. Since the 1986 Disability Services Act in particular, disability employment reforms in Australia have been notable for their basis on consultation with people with a disability and on their assumption of the capacities of people with a disability and their rights of access to open employment. This has been described as an *aspirational rationale*. An important aspect of the reforms has been the development of the Disability Employment Network (DEN), a possibly unique system of specialist disability services, based on such a rationale, that developed substantial technical expertise.

From around the late 1990s, the Australian Government has progressively adopted active employment policies based on the connection between income support and social and economic outcomes such as social participation and employment. The most recent manifestations of these developments were "welfare to work" and "mutual obligations" policies. Disability employment policy has been drawn into the broader policy arena of the Australian labour market. The OECD has acknowledged that Australia has been an early adopter of these disability policies and has progressed them further than other OECD countries. This is described in this report as the *economic rationale* for disability employment policy.

Associated with these policy directions, Australian Government employment programs have been noteworthy for being closely managed, strongly based on data, and continuously fine tuned.

This report identified and described a range of relevant funding reforms in Australian disability employment policy since the mid-1990s.

- The case-based funding model - designed to move from what was considered to be an inequitable, block grant funding arrangement to one that was more equitable, accessible, and flexible. The model was subject to trials and evaluation with a review released by FaCSIA in 2007 that was supportive of the model. During the consultation process in this project, sector representatives were generally supportive and positive about the model.

- Quality assurance processes in both supported and open employment services that included, *inter alia*, options for wages assessment.

- Various business services reforms aimed to enhance sustainability, including targeted support and workplace modifications, particularly given the move towards a more commercial environment in those services.

- Welfare to work measures incorporating changes in DSP eligibility work capacity criteria and the capped and uncapped streams, including the introduction of the uncapped stream to the DEN, and the introduction of work/job capacity assessments.

Since the November 2007 Federal election, the Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs have been established. In addition, a National Disability and Mental Health Employment Strategy has been initiated.

The consultation process in this research project identified a number of concerns within the disability sector about the impacts of the reforms, particularly those associated with the welfare to work reforms.

- Employment services were less driven by the aspirational rationale and more by the economic rationale and the emphasis on what some perceived as "micro-management". Associated with this concern was a shift from broader social benefit outcomes to a narrower jobs outcome.

- The profile of people within employment services was perceived to have changed with an increase in numbers of people with low support needs in a service model that was designed originally for people with high and ongoing support needs, particularly people with an intellectual disability.

- Particular barriers and disincentives to participation in open employment were identified including families steering away from open employment because of

lack of safety nets, the lack of an interface between business and open employment services, and the silo nature of the system.

- Some open employment services reportedly had moved away from solely individualised approaches and adopted more congregate services.

Analysis of the AGDSC databases in the period 1999-2000 to 2005-06 provided the following picture.

- A downward trend in the proportion of younger people with a disability in open employment (20%) although there was an increase in numbers (33%).
- Supported employment had a more ageing profile than open employment.
- The profile of service users in supported employment remained relatively stable.
- In open employment, the proportion of service users with an intellectual disability fell markedly each year, although there has been an increase in actual numbers, and the proportion with psychiatric disability increased substantially in 2005-06.
- Proportions of service users with specific learning disability/ADHD increased steadily across the time period. This may have contributed to the reduced proportion of service users with an intellectual disability if there have been changes in diagnostic outcomes from intellectual disability to the LD/ADHD category.
- Increasing numbers and proportions of people with psychiatric disability have probably contributed to the complexity of needs of service users using DEN services.
- In each employment service type, there was a trend of increasing proportions of people who had high support needs in the area of Working, with the trend more marked in supported employment.
- Characteristics of employment included the following.
  - Increasing proportions of people in open employment on income support and over 90% of people in supported employment on the DSP.
  - Decreasing weekly hours of employment in both employment types.
  - Both employment types showed a trend towards increased wages for employed service users with the earnings of those in supported employment well below those in open employment.

o   There were clear shifts over time in the basis upon which people with a disability were employed towards a casualisation of employment and increased proportions working in temporary employment.

State and Territory day options reforms

Rather than reforms as such, it is more accurate to see day options in Australian jurisdictions as developing, with these developments having some common features across jurisdictions and also some diversity in the stages of development between jurisdictions.

The most pressing issue across most jurisdictions was limitations in both the availability of places in day options and the limitation of hours available in some programs. The increase in total numbers of service users in day options programs over the past three years has been minimal.

Each jurisdiction had effectively prioritised school leavers with a disability over older people with a disability, partly as a response in some jurisdictions to education departments setting age limits on school attendance, and because of the substantial cohort of school leavers with a disability who leave school each year who do not enter employment services and do seek day options.

The data do show that in recent years, proportions of younger people with a disability accessing employment services have been falling. This may reflect the impact of barriers perceived by families to entering employment. It may also reflect the numbers of school leavers accessing VET. It almost certainly does reflect the lack of clear and accessible pathways from school to employment services. In jurisdictions that have better developed transition services and in some localised initiatives that incorporate DEN involvement, pathways do exist. There is a question of the extent to which these initiatives include people with a disability who have high support needs and this would benefit from further investigation.

Day options programs generally do not have clear destinations for service users and effectively are providing lifelong support. Access to employment services is very limited. This represents a policy conundrum for jurisdictions which face an ever-increasing call on resources.

There is little evidence of strategies in jurisdictions to deal with the ageing issues in day options or supported employment, although initiatives have been taken by some business service providers as they address the needs of this group of service users.

There is considerable policy development occurring in day options services with some jurisdictions moving towards clearer outcomes requirements. Day options services in some jurisdictions are increasingly adopting pre-vocational services with employment-related outcomes. However there is limited evidence of effective multilateral strategies to build pathways between day options and employment services.

Increasingly, jurisdictions are adopting person-centred planning, individualised service provision, and individualised funding. This reflects a coherent approach where it is well-implemented, with evidence of enhanced outcomes and greater service user and family satisfaction.

Innovation at the interface between employment and day options for people with a disability

The "seamless" interface between employment and day options has been identified as a major issue in disability services in the *To take part* report and in the major focus of this research project. It refers to people with a disability being able to move easily between these service options and being able to use more than one service option, such as employment and day options for example, at the same time. "Seamlessness" is a profoundly challenging objective for a complex service system. It requires coordination between Commonwealth and jurisdictional policies and programs at both government and service provider levels, and strong trust and linkages between the major stakeholders.

There is little evidence that the situation regarding this interface has improved since *To take part* reported and in some respects, the situation may have deteriorated. There is very limited perceived and actual movement of people with a disability between day options and employment services, even within organisations that provided more than one service type.

Limited availability of places in jurisdictional day options services, limited hours of support in day services in some jurisdictions, and limited linkages and clear pathways between the services reflect substantial systemic barriers. With limited resources,

Australian jurisdictions have prioritised school leavers with a disability in their day options services. People with a disability who need to move from employment services to day options such as those in business services who wish to "retire" from employment, have limited opportunities to move to day options.

The pathways from day options to employment are not well defined or developed and there were few examples of linkages and collaboration between levels of government or service providers that were aimed to develop these.

Additional barriers reflected the caution of both people with a disability and families in response to the perceived and real risks associated with moving from a relatively secure service to one that may be less secure or offering less time in the service.

The report identified some innovations that addressed the interface, particularly in the transition from school to adult life for people with a disability. Transition from school is an area that has been addressed by the research literature over many years so that the characteristics of better practice are well established. Systemic approaches to the development of transition services and pathways are still not universal across Australian jurisdictions, but are notable in some – South Australia and NSW for example. Systemic approaches incorporated across-government collaboration, both within jurisdictions between disability and education departments, for example, and between jurisdictional and Commonwealth departments.

Most jurisdictions had established clear pathways and procedures from school to day options services. In regard to school to open employment, there were very good examples of collaborations between DEN providers and schools that provided pathways and support in the transition from school to employment. Some of these successful examples were individual initiatives and were not adopted system-wide.

The transition from work or day options to some form of "retirement" is another area where there is limited systemic development of policies and practices. Similarly to the area of transition from school, there is a substantial evidence base for good practice in this area, including examples of sound Australian research and successful pilot programs that do not appear to have impacted on policy or practice to a great extent. To a significant extent, these failures of implementation reflect the unilateral nature of auspice in some research and pilot projects.

During the consultations, there were many examples described of local initiatives that focused on network development aimed at collaboration, partnerships, and coordination of services. These initiatives included local area coordinators, case managers, or service coordinators in various jurisdictions whose role it was to support and guide people with a disability and their families through complex service systems. In addition, some of these workers had community development roles that meant they developed innovative options at the grass roots level, often overcoming systemic barriers through intentional collaboration.

Throughout this report we have drawn attention to various issues regarding the quality of available disability data in Australia, both from reports and from data limitations that are often specified by the data sources. There is agreement by key stakeholders that the issue of consistent and transparent data should be addressed.

Future considerations

1. **The aspirational rationale**

   Policy makers, funders, and service providers should continue to ensure the aspirational rationale is acknowledged and take seriously the need to respond if the rational is perceived to be at risk. This provides a fundamental safeguard to positive outcomes for people with a disability.

2. **Linkages**

   More effective multilateral and bilateral agreements to promote coordination of policies and services and strengthening of accountability through CSTDA requirements to report on outcomes would be beneficial.

3. **Pathways and barriers**

   Acknowledgement of, and agreement about, the nature of barriers and the need for effective pathways between day options, supported employment, and open employment and the development of specific policies to address these are necessary.

4. **Transition**

   Particular consideration in policy and planning should be given to people with a disability who are in transition including transition from school to adult life, people whose needs are changing, and older people who wish to "retire" from employment.

5. **The DEN**

   Consideration should be given to multilateral support to build on existing DEN initiatives in school to work transition and to develop new initiatives.

6. **Quality of employment outcomes**

   Quality of employment outcomes should be an acknowledged factor in evaluation of employment programs and quality measurement should include consultation with people who use services.

7. **Specific stakeholder groups**

   Greater priority should be given to the employment participation of ATSI and CaLD groups and to the employment of ATSI and CaLD workers in disability services.

8. **Research dissemination and implementation**

   Government auspicing bodies should build into their protocols clear strategies and mechanisms that consider dissemination, implementation, and systematisation of the evidence base and research findings that indicate better practice in key areas associated with day options and employment.

9. **Longitudinal studies**

   Longitudinal studies should be commissioned to examine outcomes and impacts of policies in order to complement cross sectional studies and data.

10. **Data**

    A multilateral group including representation from the disability sector should recommend on the development of an enhanced, transparent database that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data.

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1   Introduction and background

Following the election of a new Australian Government in December 2007, there was a rearrangement of some Commonwealth Departments. The Departments of Employment and Workforce Relations (DEWR) and Education, Science, and Training (DEST) were combined into the Department of Education, Employment and Workforce Relations (DEEWR). The Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) gained Housing to become the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). Because this research project was largely transacted prior to these changes, we have retained the names and acronyms that were in use at that time, i.e., DEWR, DEST, and FaCSIA.

1.1   Introduction

The Employment/Day Options Research Project is a national research project to explore day options services and employment services that support people with a disability in all Australian States and Territories. It was commissioned by the Disability Policy and Research Working Group (DPRWG) which is a Sub-Committee of the Community and Disability Services Ministerial Advisory Committee (CDSMAC). The Project was managed by a Steering Committee set up by the DPRWG.

The purposes of the Project as stated in the "Contractors Obligations and Work to be Performed" was

> "…to advise on ways to improve the seamless delivery of services across the employment/day options interface to ensure these services better meet the needs of people with a disability. The research will assist in informing the coordination of services between and within levels of government and in enhancing the opportunity for people with a disability to move between or flexibly combine employment and day options services as circumstances require."

The Project brief had two major parts. The first (Part A) required a description and analysis of the impact of Australian Government employment and State and Territory disability day service reforms for *people with a disability* and to examine issues in the interface between employment and day services. The second (Part B) required identification and description of employment innovations for *people with a disability who have high support needs*, including consideration of the characteristics of

successful models and the barriers and facilitators to innovation and linkages between the employment/day options interface. It is important to note that Part A referred to people with a disability and Part B to people with a disability and high support needs. Part A also required analysis of the impact of reforms without limiting this to the interface between employment and day options.

The Final Report was preceded by two Interim Reports, the first of which comprised a review of relevant literature, and the second, a description and analysis of a consultation process with key stakeholders and also of specific data sets that are relevant to the research purposes. Feedback was given by the Project Steering Committee on each Interim Report. Throughout this report, we have incorporated much of that feedback and we have acknowledged verbatim feedback received from DEWR, since some of that feedback was detailed. Verbatim quotations are prefaced by "DEWR reported (Steering Committee)".

This Final Report of the Employment/Day Options Research Project has the following purposes

- Describe, analyse, and report on the impact of the Australian Government disability employment reforms for people with a disability.
- Describe, analyse, and report on the impact of State and Territory disability day service reforms for people with a disability.
- Examine issues associated with the interface between employment and day options for people with a disability, including access and funding arrangements, and transition from school to work.
- Identify issues regarding the interface between employment and day options for people with a disability from rural and remote areas, and from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) groups.
- Report on the nature of innovation and better practice in enhancing the community participation of people with a disability who have high support needs and the interface between employment and day options.

To address these purposes, this report has nine chapters.
1. The introduction and background to the Project.
2. Description and analysis of Australian Government employment reforms.
3. Description and analysis of State and Territory day service reforms.

4. Impacts of reforms on specific stakeholder groups.

5. The interface between employment and day options for people with a disability.

6. Description of examples of successful programs that enhance community participation and the employment/day options interface.

7. Discussion and findings.

8. References.

9. Appendixes.

The Background section below addresses six areas.

1. The "To take part" report (National Disability Administrators, 2003).

2. Definitions of support needs.

3. The Commonwealth, States and Territories Disability Agreement (CSTDA).

4. Relevant background reports.

5. Project Methodology – Consultations and Survey.

6. Project Methodology – Analysis of Datasets.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 "To take part"

In the tender brief for this project, reference was made to the "To take part report" (2003).

> "This research project relates specifically to policy priority area 2 (CSTDA, 2003), strengthening across government linkages. It will build on the report from the previous research undertaken by the NDA (National Disability Administrators) in 2003:
>
> *'To take part: Economic and social participation for Australians with high support needs: Towards improving access to employment assistance and interface between Commonwealth employment and State/Territory day option programs.'"* (National Disability Administrators, 2003)

The timeframe for the previous research project was 1998-2001.

a) "Access" and "interface"

The "To take part" report defined "access" and "interface" in the context of people with a disability who have high support needs.

> "Access to employment assistance: The extent to which people with high support needs are currently being supported to participate in the workforce

through access to employment assistance, and the means by which access to employment assistance for this group may be enhanced." (p. 8)

"Interface between Commonwealth and State/Territory programs: The extent to which Commonwealth employment and State and Territory community access programs are coordinated in their efforts towards supporting the participation of people with high support needs both in the workforce and in the life of their community and how a greater level of cooperation and coordination can be achieved." (p. 8)

The definition of "interface" is germane to this research project. Here, it was defined in terms of "cooperation and coordination" between Commonwealth and State and Territory programs. The concept requires further elaboration and we have addressed this in Chapter 5. In exploring the concept of interface, we sought comment on, and examples of, cooperation, coordination, and collaboration between levels of government from all jurisdictions and the disability sector throughout the consultation processes.

b)   Policy and practice driven by assumptions about the potential of people with a disability

The report made a number of explicit references that acknowledged the ability and potential of people with a disability to participate in employment. Particular mention was made of people with high support needs. The references made it very clear that this assumption was intended to be a major driver in Australian disability policy and practice. These references included

- Statements in the *Overview of Key Findings* of the report acknowledging studies indicating that people with a disability placed a high priority on employment participation and that "…the project is premised on the fact that, wherever possible, participation in the workforce is the preferred option for Australians with high support needs, consistent with the economic and social participation objectives." (p. 2)

- Statements in the report *Preamble* that Australian Governments were committed to ensuring that these groups were afforded "the same rights and opportunities to economic and social participation as those that are available to other Australian citizens." (p. 8)

- A recommendation that the "presumption of ability and potential to work should underpin program development and assessment systems. (Rather than defining eligibility criteria that screen people out.)" (p. 6)

- Support to the view of the consumer and service provider representatives on the project's Reference Group that "…particularly sought to highlight the importance of maintaining a policy focus on the potential of people with high support needs to work and the extent to which this potential was being realised through participation in the workforce." (p. 33)

A related assumption of the "To take part" report and of this research project, is that the interface between Commonwealth, State, and Territory policy and programs is a major source of opportunities, impediments, and barriers to the access and participation of people with a disability, not only to employment, but more broadly, to the community. It is also assumed that participation is especially influenced by the extent to which people with a disability can access more than one service option and can move "seamlessly" between service options. The term "seamless" often occurs in policy contexts and infers that there are no impediments or barriers between service options. It represents a particularly challenging, and possibly inaccessible, objective in a complex system. The concept of interface was further elaborated by highlighting access to multiple service options and "seamless" movement between service options.

c) How the assumption of potential has influenced disability policy and practice

The positive assumptions of the "To take part" report also have an important broader, historical context. The material to follow provides a context for many of the responses during the consultation processes that reflected on the importance of high expectations (aspirations) for people with a disability.

Low expectations for people with a disability held within a community results in according them low social value and in their social exclusion from the mainstream of society. Prior to World War Two, the predominant service model for people with a disability and high support needs was large institutions in which languished thousands of Australians. These were depriving and punishing environments that were provided by Australian State and Territory Governments and reflected the prevailing societal view of disability. It was widely believed to be virtually

inconceivable that a person with a significant disability could engage in productive or gainful activity and surely not in open or competitive employment.

As community attitudes, expectations, and aspirations became more positive about people with a disability, efforts to provide day services, education, and employment for people with a disability gained pace from the early 1950s in Australia and many other places in the world. Access to day options and employment for people with a disability who have high support needs has been an issue of long standing in Australia and has generated many policy and service initiatives.

Day activity centres for children with high support needs who were excluded from education were established throughout Australia in the 1950s by the emerging parent-inspired disability non-government sector. The development of this sector varied across jurisdictions. In some jurisdictions such as Western Australia and Queensland, large non-government organisations (NGOs) emerged that for decades were the major providers of services for people with a disability, providing essential alternatives to the dominant government service provision within large institutions. In other jurisdictions such as Victoria, small, localised day services developed in most large- to mid-sized towns and local government constituencies in rural and metropolitan areas. Accommodation services grew out of many of these NGOs.

It was also a feature of many small day centres that as the children grew into adults, employment services (sheltered workshops) and separate adult day centres were developed. These organisations often took a whole-of-life approach to the development of services and attracted the support of families for that reason. It is the case that although this "whole of life" approach draws criticism as reflecting an institutional model, many families support the concept and remain apprehensive about the more focused, segmented, and dispersed service models that have developed since the 1970s.

In 1974, the Handicapped Persons Assistance Act enabled Commonwealth funding to be directed to sheltered workshops and to a new service type, "activity therapy centres" (ATCs). ATCs were located within sheltered workshops and engaged people who either could not gain access to, or were considered to be relatively unproductive in, sheltered workshops.

Adult day centres that were separate from sheltered workshops provided services modelled on segregated special schools and continued to provide for many adults with high support needs who were unable to access sheltered workshops. Often, a single agency would provide adult day centres, ATCs, and sheltered workshops. It should be noted that during this period, the vast majority of people with severe and profound levels of impairment remained in institutions or in nursing homes where they received physical, custodial care with limited developmental opportunities.

In the 1970s, disability reform gathered pace at the States and Territories levels as governments began the process of deinstitutionalisation and the development of community-based services.

In 1986, the Commonwealth Disability Services Act (DSA) enabled Commonwealth funding to be directed towards a relatively new and innovative approach to employment, competitive employment, training, and placement (CETAP) which reflected an emphasis on competitive, open employment. The legislation distinguished between competitive employment and supported employment, primarily around issues of location (i.e., the open versus the sheltered workplace), congregation (i.e., individualised versus congregated support), and payment (award wages versus low wages, or redistributed disability pension income, or nothing). Whereas competitive employment worked on the basis of place, train, and support individuals with a disability on the job, supported employment included a range of congregate service initiatives such as work crews, contract work, enclaves, and small businesses that were increasingly taken up by sheltered workshops.

Service models in competitive or open employment had been adopted in Australia from the early 1980s, based upon research and practice in the USA. They represented a move away from the pre-vocational or work preparation programs, directly into the workplace. These models developed a range of effective employment-related technologies including those based on learning theory, such as task analysis, and also on analysing the employment effort into discrete tasks such as job search, job matching, and job support. In 1984, PE Personnel (now EDGE Employment Solutions) in Western Australia was the first such agency established in Australia and subsequently supported the establishment of similar agencies in other Australian jurisdictions.

In the light of many responses throughout consultations in this project, it is relevant to note that the early development of the open employment model focused on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and on people with high support needs. They were considered to be the primary clientele of the programs. It was also a characteristic of this model that "follow-along" or ongoing support was provided once a person achieved employment.

These approaches promised a much greater take-up of open employment by people with a disability, even if the disability was severe. The early proselytisers of the associated technologies showed that people who may have been institutionalised for most of their lives and had severe impairments could be taught and supported to be productive.

The 1986 DSA, through the policy commitment to consumer consultation and outcomes rather than a primary focus on programs or agencies, and also through the funding of competitive employment services, was the essential stimulus for the development of what became known as the Disability Employment Network (DEN). The DSA also encouraged the development of sister legislation in other Australian jurisdictions, each of which incorporated sets of service standards that reflected consumer focus and outcomes.

At the same time as disability-centred reform was developing, broader influences increasingly drew disability employment policy into the mainstream of Australian labour market policies and practices and into a broader social policy environment. The most recent example is the evolution of "active" employment policies into "welfare to work" and "mutual obligation" policies.

Active employment policies (Cass, 1988; OECD, 2001; McClure, 2000) established a connection between income support and social and economic outcomes such as social participation and employment. The economic issue that accelerated implementation of active employment policies was the growing cost of income support and the desire of governments to reduce these outlays. Australia is acknowledged as having adopted these policies earlier, and having progressed them further, than other OECD countries (OECD, 2003, 2007).

This historical account identified the two key rationales that continue to drive disability employment policy and practice, both of which can be considered to be "aspirational" in nature.

1. *Developmental aspirations* that reflected commitment to positive developmental and participatory outcomes for individuals with a disability.

2. *Economic aspirations* that aimed to reduce outlays on income support and to engage people with a disability in the productive workforce.

The more recent reforms in Australian Government disability employment policy over the past five years that largely reflect the economic rationale provide one of the main focuses of this research project.

d) Overview of key findings and issues from "To take part"

The issues identified and the key findings of the 2003 "To take part" report contributed to the purposes of this research project. Revisiting them also contributed to the framing of questions in considering the outcomes of the Project's consultations and data analysis. A brief account of key findings and issues from the 2003 report follows.

1. There were a number of findings based on the profile of people with a disability in employment and day options.

   - At the broadest measure of employment participation, the report found that people with a profound or severe disability were significantly under-represented in the workforce relative to non-disabled people based on the 1998 Australian Bureau of Statistics survey of disability, ageing, and carers (ABS, 1998).

   - The report drew attention to the need for a policy focus on the gap between the potential of people with high support needs to participate in employment and their actual participation rate.

   - More day options than employment assistance participants had frequent or continual support needs.

   - Employment assistance participants were more likely to require frequent or continual support for work activity, learning, and self direction.

   - There was an increase in the number of consumers with high support need or continual need for work activities between 1998-99 and 2000-2001.

- The number of consumers aged 24 years or younger increased by a third between 1998-99 and 2000-2001.

2. Data inconsistency in definitions, timeframes, and snapshot compared to whole-of-year data made it difficult to monitor trends.

3. There were marked differences in program participation and funding in the different jurisdictions.

4. Most States and Territories reported an adverse impact on employment participation for people with high support needs following the Commonwealth employment reforms in 1998. However, available Commonwealth data did not support this. The report emphasised the need to ensure Commonwealth employment reforms did not disadvantage people with high support needs.

5. The nexus between the availability of Commonwealth employment opportunities and the availability of State/Territory day options was acknowledged. Less availability of employment for people with high support needs was seen to impact on demand for day options. Less availability of day options for people wishing to "retire" from employment was seen to impact on the availability of new employment places.

6. Interface issues created barriers to participation in employment.
   - The report drew attention to the need to simplify pathways to make it easier for people with high support needs to access Commonwealth and State/Territory funded services.
   - An individual's willingness to try an employment option is affected by whether he/she can access both a day option and employment, or whether he/she can re-enter a day option should employment be unsuccessful.
   - The report drew attention to the need for cross-jurisdictional approaches to service provision and funding to enable people with high support needs to access mixed options without security of service risks.

1.2.2 Definitions of support needs

An important issue to address in this research project was to determine how "high support needs" should be defined. There is a range of potential definitions of support need.

The World Health Organisation (2001) developed a classification of disability, the International Classification of Functioning (ICF) that is intended to serve a range of purposes including research, communication, comparisons across jurisdictions, and coding. In describing functioning and disability, the ICF defined "Activities and participation" under nine "domains". The ICF also included "Body functions and structures" and "Environmental factors" within the classification framework. There has been limited work to date on the latter component. Each of these components can be assigned levels ranking from "no problem" through to "complete problem" and levels are assigned within a range of percentages that reflects assessment of the domain. The ICF is a useful framework for conceptualisation and description but needs considerable further development to be a valid approach for administrative purposes.

For survey purposes, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2006a, 2006b) used the term "severity of disability", defined as the number of people in a survey population who have a disability and a need for assistance with the core activities of mobility, self care, and communication. The degree to which the disability or need limits the person's ability to perform those activities for themselves is determined within four levels.

- Profound or severe core activity limitation – always needing help with any of the tasks.

- Moderate core activity limitation – if a person ever has difficulty with any of the tasks.

- Mild core activity limitation – if a person uses aids to assist with the tasks.

The key variable in this approach is the level of restriction the person experiences. In addition, the ABS survey asks whether people under age 65 years experience difficulties regarding education and employment. The ABS survey protocol requires that age over 65 years be reported as a "filter" for the questions relating to education and employment limitations on the debatable premise that these two activities are not relevant once a person has achieved that age.

The CSTDA National Minimum Data Set (NMDS) defined support needs in terms of how often a person needs help or supervision in nine specified life areas. This approach is based on the ICF classification system. Classification depends upon the level of personal help or supervision required. This ranges from "unable to do or always needs help or supervision in this life area", through "sometimes needs

help/supervision", to "does not need help/supervision" with aids and also without aids. These classifications of support need were implemented for the 2001/02 data collection to make the CSTDA NMDS classifications more consistent with the measures of severity of disability used in the ABS survey.

Jurisdictions use measures of support need to determine the level of funding that CSTDA services require to support individual people with a disability. These tend to vary according to the context in which support need is defined, who completes the assessment, on what information the assessment is based, the level of transparency in the assessment process, and the responsiveness to changing support needs. For example the Commonwealth allocates funding to disability employment services using the Disability Pre-Employment Instrument (DPI) and the Disability Maintenance Instrument (DMI). Using these funding classification tools individuals are allocated to one of four funding levels according to the level of support provided to them by the disability employment service across several functional domains in order to find a job and reach a 26 week employment outcome and to maintain employment. Support is defined in relation to both the frequency and duration of support provided. A review of the Alternatives to Employment (ATE) Program in WA (KPMG, 2006) described the "matrix" of four categories used to determine funding allocations for the WA ATE program. Some capacity exists for these assessments to be updated as an individual's support needs change due to either a change in context or a change in the individual's disability. Some jurisdictions use the Vermont Consulting Support Needs Assessment (Vermont Consulting, undated) which assesses support levels within five areas of support need.

As the CSTDA NMDS was a primary data source for this project, and as it was the only data source that collected information on support need across both community access and employment services, this research project defined high support need in relation to the categories of support included in the CSTDA NMDS. On the advice of the AIHW, those people with a disability who were identified as "unable to do/always need help" should be identified as having high support needs. This equates to those people that the ABS survey would identify as having a "profound" disability. Support needs are defined as being related to the activities of daily living (ADL) and the activities of working on the basis that these are the relevant core activities for both community access and employment.

1.2.3 The Commonwealth, State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA)

a) Description

The CSTDA is the national framework for the funding and provision of disability services. The CSTDA includes a multilateral agreement, a mutual agreement between all Australian Government jurisdictions which identifies strategic priorities, and establishes individual bilateral agreements. The current and third CSTDA was signed in 2002 and expired at 30 June 2007. It featured five strategic policy priorities which included strengthening across government linkages, as well as fourteen priority issues, including the employment/day options interface and Indigenous Australians with disabilities. Negotiation on a fourth CSTDA continues into 2008.

The third CSTDA required that governments report annually on their progress against the agreed priorities through the CSTDA Annual Public Report. The 2004–05 report (Australian Healthcare Associates, 2006) indicated that in 2004, Disability Ministers agreed to monitor the effects of both Commonwealth and State/Territory government reforms to employment and day options respectively, and such a project was added to the National Disability Administrators (NDA) Implementation Work Plan, culminating in the commission of this current research project.

The 2004-05 CSTDA Annual Public Report noted that joint working parties had been established in each jurisdiction to "share information on service strategies and demand trends, participate in forums and briefings on developments" related to bilateral agreements. (p. 48) A bilateral agreement that is relevant to this project is "Coordinated service planning and provision". Only two jurisdictions reported activities in this area. South Australia co-hosted a Continuous Improvement Forum for agencies receiving CSTDA funding. The ACT established three bilateral working groups to address data collection, post school transition, and aged care and advocacy.

The 2004-05 Annual Public Report is the last annual report that has been made publicly available.

In February 2007, the Senate released a report from the Standing Committee on Community Affairs *Funding and operation of the Commonwealth State/Territory*

Disability Agreement. Many recommendations are relevant to the purposes of this research project, particularly

- Emphasise a whole of government, whole of life approach to services for people with a disability.
- Incorporate a nationally consistent assessment process to determine support and care needs and also eligibility for services.
- Put in place arrangements to allow cost-sharing or matched funding between the Commonwealth and particular State/Territory governments.
- Improve CSTDA NMDS data collection.
- Increase the number of places in the Disability Employment Network (DEN) for people on the DSP who do not have mutual obligation requirements.
- Create funding and eligibility requirements that allow aged care services to be available to people with disabilities who are ageing to enable ageing in place.

Of these six recommendations, we are only aware of activity in relation to the increase in the number of places in the DEN.

b)   Profile of CSTDA Service User Population

Following is an overview of the CSTDA service user population for all CSTDA services in 2005-06. Data is drawn from reports by the Australian Institute on Health and Welfare (AIHW) and the Australian Government Disability Services Census (AGDSC). Data tables are contained in Appendix C. Unlike the AIHW data which controls for service users accessing more than one service, employment data from the AGDSC contains some double counting and thus their data count for employment services is slightly higher than the AIHW data.

- In 2005-06 a total of over 217,143 people accessed CSTDA services and their distribution across the States and Territories was, "in general", consistent with the distribution of the total population. This is an increase from 2004-05 when a total of 200,493 people were assisted. (AIHW, 2006, 2007)
- Employment services were the second most commonly used services with 73,157 (33.7%) of all CSTDA services users accessing employment services during 2005-06 (32% in 2004-05) (AIHW, 2006, 2007).
- About 24% of all service users accessed open employment and 9% accessed supported employment (AIHW, 2007).
- AGDSC reports showed that the total number of people accessing employment services had increased from 49,036 in 1999-00 to 75,329 in

2005-06, an increase of 53.6%. The number of people accessing open employment services had increased from 32,384 in 1999-00 to 54,080 in 2005-06 (67%). The number of people accessing supported employment services had increased from 16,652 in 1999-00 to 21,249 in 2005/06 (27.6%).

- AIHW full year reports indicated that a total of 44,370 service users used community access services in 2003-04, increasing by 7.5% to 47,738 in 2005/06 (AIHW, 2007, p. 11). The AIHW data uses the term "community access" which corresponds with "day options" and these terms will be used interchangeably throughout this report.

- Using a "potential population" estimate (see section 1.2.6c below) of the rate of service users per 1,000 people with a disability who have a severe or profound core activity limitation derived from the ABS disability, ageing, and carers survey (2003), employment services were found to be the most accessible. An estimate of 210.7 (193.8 in 2004-05) service users per 1,000 potential population accessed employment services compared with 67.6 (63.4 in 2004-05) service users per 1,000 potential population in community access (AIHW, 2007, p. 13).

- 39% of all CSTDA service users in 2005-06 (35% in 2004-05) indicated intellectual disability as their primary disability group followed by 21% with a physical disability (13% in 2004-05), and 18% with a psychiatric disability (8% in 2004-05). Intellectual disability was the most common primary disability type across all ages (AIHW, 2007, p. 21).

- CSTDA service users tended to have high support needs with 30-45% of all service users indicating that they always need help in specific life areas (AIHW 2007, p 45). Across the three support needs groups reported on, 33.4% always needed help in activities of work, education and community living, 27.6% in the activities of independent living, and 23% in the activities of daily living.

- The median age for all service users was 31.4 years (30.9 years in 2004-05). In employment the median age was 34 years (33.5 years in 2004-05) and in community access services the median age was 37.9 years (37.5 years in 2004-05). Of all CSTDA service users, 19.1% (18.9% in 2004-05) were aged 15-24 years, 31.7% (same proportion as 2004-05) aged 25-44 years, 22.1% (21.2% in 2004-05) aged 45-64 years, and only 6.4% (6.5% in 2004-05) aged over 65 (AIHW, 2007, p. 19).

- Of the total of 158,187 service users of working age (15-64 years), 32% were employed, 25% were unemployed, and 33% were not in the labour market (AIHW, 2007, p. 1).

- For 56% of service users aged 16 years and over, the Disability Support Pension was the main income source (AIHW, 2007, p. 1).

- 3.3% of service users were of indigenous status, little changed over the past three years (AIHW, 2007, p. 22).

- 79% of service users were born in Australia with little change over the past three years in the proportion of service users from non-English speaking backgrounds (AIHW, 2007, p. 27).

1.2.4 Relevant background reports

a) Current and future demand for specialist disability services (AIHW, 2007)

Commissioned by the Disability Policy and Research Working Group (DPRWG), the AIHW produced the fourth in a series of reports since 1996 investigating current and future demand for disability support services provided under the CSTDA (AIHW, 2007). Issues addressed by the AIHW report that are particularly relevant to this research project included the following.

Information on registers and waiting lists used by jurisdictions and Commonwealth agencies for day options and employment

The AIHW report included information on how demand was managed by DEWR, FaCSIA, and five Australian jurisdictions, with limited information provided by the sixth.

Methods for managing demand differed substantially between jurisdictions, particularly in the extent to which they were centralised and thus provided a jurisdiction-wide picture. It was concluded that on the basis of information provided to AIHW, there appeared to be little change in the way demand was managed across the jurisdictions since the 2002 AIHW unmet needs report.

DEWR did not have a centralised waiting list for open employment services, although individual service providers may keep them. Because job seekers could be registered with more than one provider, individual open employment waiting lists are of limited value in assessing the overall picture. DEWR (Project Steering Group) reported that

"The uncapped DEN stream is demand driven, so, by definition, a place is guaranteed for all eligible job seekers and there is no waiting list."

Some broad indication of demand may have been associated with the fact that in October, 2006

- 2,000 people who had been, or were in the process of being, assessed had not yet commenced a service.
- About 1,000 places in the DEN were unfilled.
- The DEN was at 97% capacity.

As an update to the AIHW report, DEWR (Steering Committee) reported that "at the end of July 2007, about 94% of available DEN places were full and there were about 2,400 places vacant in the capped stream. These figures have been stable since early 2007 and the number of vacant places is slightly more than was reported in the AIHW Survey in October 2006. An extra 200 places were released on 1 July 2007 with a further 987 (Budget) places due for release soon." The additional places were subsequently released.

FaCSIA did not manage a centralised waiting list for supported employment services. In October, 2006, 94.1% of places allocated by FaCSIA to supported employment services were filled. By October, 2006, 77% of additional places allocated to service providers whose entire allocation was filled had been taken up.

AIHW concluded that "High quality, consistent and comparable data regarding people waiting for services cannot be provided by jurisdictions under the current systems. This limits the degree to which it is possible to gain an understanding of the extent and nature of unmet demand, within individual jurisdictions and nationally." .AIHW, 2007, p. 55). The lack of such data is a limitation to policy and planning and would need "a substantial investment of resources" to improve data sufficiently to benefit policy and planning. In section 3.5 of this report, a case study is provided of the WA system of managing unmet demand for three specific CSTDA-funded services which illustrates a number of important issues in day options provision across the Australian jurisdictions. This system is transparent and its value is obvious in assessing unmet need.

Unmet demand for employment services

The report used estimates of unmet demand derived from population-based disability survey data (ABS, 2003) adjusted for increases in service supply based on the CSTDA NMDS (AIHW, 2007, p. 81). Based on ABS disability survey data, the report concluded that there was a decrease of 21,200 employed or unemployed (i.e., in the labour market) people aged 15-64 years with a severe or profound core activity limitation who were in the labour force between 1998 and 2003 (AIHW, 2007, p. 81). Most of the decrease in the 17,600 people who were employed was in the age groups 50 years and over (p. 80).

A net gain in employment services of 554 people with a severe or profound core activity limitation occurred between 2003-04 and 2004-05, as a result of an increase of 789 in open employment and a decrease of 487 people who were either in supported employment or a mixed employment option.

DEWR (Steering Committee) reported that they anticipate "that some of these new clients streamed to DEN uncapped services would formerly have received assistance from DEN capped providers. Hence, those capped places will be freed up for clients with longer-term support needs or lower capacity for work. Further, with the move to full case-based funding for DEN from 1 July 2005, larger numbers of clients have come into DEN capped services, achieved employment outcomes and been exited where they have been able to work independently or no longer require assistance." DEWR reported there was "currently no apparent significant unmet need in either the capped or uncapped Disability Employment Network streams", but noted that further experience of the two streams operating in tandem is needed (AIHW, 2006, p. 81).

The report estimated unmet need for employment services of 1,700 people, a decrease of nearly 70% from 5,400 in 2001. There were strong limitations associated with these data that reduce the validity of conclusions that can be drawn from the data.

- The decline in estimates partly reflected the decreased number of people with a severe or profound core activity limitation who were in the labour force (21,200) who actually may have needed disability employment services but could not access them.
- Other factors such as recent employment policy changes may have impacted on unmet *demand*.

- People who reported being unemployed were excluded if they attended a day activity.

- There may be unmet demand for assistance to enable people to maintain their employment.

- The survey estimate "is subject to a very high relative standard error (55%) and is considered too unreliable for general use." (p. 80)

Unmet demand for day options services

The report concluded that in 2005 there were an estimated 3,700 people with unmet demand for community access services. The estimated demand in 2001 was 4,500. The decrease in demand occurred "despite an increase between 1998 and 2003 of 25,300 people aged 15-64 years with severe or profound core activity limitations who were not in the labour force." (p. 119) However, this estimate of unmet demand should be viewed as conservative because

- Between 2003-04 and 2004-05, recreation and holiday programs, which are largely of a short term nature, were excluded – their inclusion would have increased the estimate of unmet need by over 150% to 9,400.

- The estimate excluded people who attended any kind of day activity for any frequency of attendance and thus excluded "under-met demand". (pp. 67, 119)

The report identified two possible influences on future demand for community access services. First, as a result of changes in disability employment policy and programs, if more people with a disability are employed, demand may be reduced. It may be reasonable also to assume that if fewer people with a disability are employed, demand for community access services may increase. Second, as a result of the substantial decrease in the number of people aged over 50 years with severe or profound core activity limitations who are employed, demand for day activity programs may increase.

Issues identified by the disability sector through a consultation process carried out by AIHW regarding unmet demand/need

The report concluded that "anecdotal material plays an important role in informing an overall picture of unmet demand, and providing a basis for further investigation of particular issues." (p. 117) Views were canvassed from the field regarding the level and nature of unmet need for CSTDA services. There was a strong view from the

sector that there was a substantial unmet need for disability services that had cumulative adverse impacts for individuals and families. CSTDA services were seen to operate on a costly, crisis-management basis in which service rationing resulted in thinly-provided, minimal services (AIHW, 2007, p. 115).

Some of the issues raised in discussions with disability peak organisations and a review of submissions to the Senate Community Affairs Committee inquiry into the funding and operation of the CSTDA (The Senate, 2007) regarding employment and community access included the following.

- There was "widespread concern in the field about the potential negative impacts of recent policy and program changes". (p. 116) Concern was focused on the expectation of additional demands on carers and other specialist disability services, and some people being referred to generic employment services which were not equipped to deal with specialised disability needs.

- There was a perception of substantial unmet need for employment services with particular adverse impacts on young people who were transitioning from school.

- Concern was expressed about the interfaces between open and supported employment and between employment and other CSTDA services, particularly in the transitions between employment and day programs. This was seen to be related to different government departments administering the programs and the barriers created by the perception of cost-shifting between levels of government.

- There was a perception of barriers for people with a disability who were ageing in regard to accessing aged care services due to lack of disability expertise in those services.

The interface between specialist disability services and other service systems
Chapter 7 of the AIHW report addressed interface issues between CSTDA services, and between CSTDA and generic services that potentially may influence demand, many of which were relevant to this research project in the areas of employment and day options.

Disability peak organisations reported barriers at the point of assessment and in the allocation of residential and community-based services. In practice, the access of

younger people with a disability to both CSTDA services and the Home and Community Care (HACC) program varied between regions.

The report referenced the Aged Care Innovative Pool Disability Aged Care Interface Pilot that commenced in 2003 and was evaluated by AIHW (Hales, Ross, & Ryan, 2006). This was an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (DHA) and provided individually tailored supports to people living in disability supported accommodation who were at risk of admission to residential aged care. One area of unmet need identified by the Pilot was provision of community access services following retirement from work. Although the evaluation of outcomes was positive and the Pilot received strong support from peaks and some jurisdictions, it did not appear to have impacted on policy or service development (p. 99). It does appear that the Pilot was a unilateral initiative on the part of the DHA and the involvement of other Australian Government and jurisdictional agencies is not clear. The pilot is described in a little more detail in Chapter Seven of this report as an example both of innovation in addressing the needs of older persons with a disability and also as an example of the limitations of some pilot programs in the disability sector that seem to lead to little sustainable activity, and influence on, or change in, policy and practice.

The report (AIHW, 2007) identified the nexus between unmet demand for employment services and the potential to increase demand for other services, including community access. Access to employment services for young people with a disability as they leave school was noted as being particularly important.

Although estimates of unmet need for employment mentioned above suggested a reduction in unmet demand since 1991, the report identified views amongst jurisdictions and disability peaks that there was unmet demand for employment services. Specific examples of unmet need included

- Disability employment services that were operating at near-full capacity, thus limiting new referrals. This had an adverse impact on groups including school leavers and people with intellectual disabilities.
- Reforms of the late 1990s that reduced access to employment services for people with high support needs through requirements for business services to achieve commercial outcomes.

On the other hand, "the Australian Government claims that supported employment services are sometimes used inappropriately to cover shortfalls in day programs for clients who express a preference for non-vocational activities." (p. 101)

Concerns were expressed about barriers to movement between service types and to access to mixed options. It was also noted that many community access programs were only available to people with no work capacity, making development of mixed packages difficult.

Specific issues were raised about the potential impacts of more recent changes to disability employment policy.

- Lack of disability expertise in generic employment services.
- Greater pressure on carers because of open employment demands.
- Ineligibility for DSP if people with a disability are assessed as able to work at least 15 hours a week when employment support may not be available, although this group is eligible for demand driven programs provided by the DEN, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, or the Job Network.
- Greater financial pressures on people who were previously DSP recipients but now were unable to meet eligibility criteria.

The report noted that data that would enable these claims and concerns to be assessed are not currently available.

The report identified issues around mainstream education being unable to meet the specialised needs of students with disabilities, possibly resulting in students with a disability being ejected from school, or being unable to attend school on a full-time basis, and the resultant pressures on families. The report did not explore specific issues of transition from school to adult life.

b)   **Welfare to Work and demand for employment services by people with a disability (Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Legislation Committee, 2007)**

Recent data provided through the Senates Estimates process indicated a decrease in demand by people with a disability for employment services. Since Welfare to Work commenced on 1 July 2006 through to 31 March 2007, a total of 29,017 people had been referred to the DEN by JCAs. Of this number 22,253 people were referred

to the capped stream and 7,664 people were referred to the uncapped stream. This indicated that there was a greater level of demand for capped places than for uncapped places.

Table A shows that since December 2006 the number of DSP recipients commencing in employment programs had decreased. This has been attributed to an update in program procedures in December 2006 that required DSP recipients who do not have a current work capacity assessment to undertake a JCA before they can be referred to an employment service. It is claimed that this has had a deterrent effect on DSP recipients volunteering for work (NDS, 2007).

Table A: Number of DSP recipients who have commenced in employment programs

Month	Job Network Services	Personal Support Programme	Disability Employment Network	Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Jul-06	1,463	450	698	703
Aug-06	1524	383	1172	372
Sep-06	1206	196	1089	372
Oct-06	1524	170	1211	327
Nov-06	1686	143	1061	316
Dec-06	862	93	705	160
Jan-07	978	110	783	125
Feb-07	976	90	738	59
Total	**10219**	**1635**	**7457**	**2434**

Table A also shows that more DSP recipients have commenced with Job Network services since 1 July 2006 than have commenced with DEN services. This has been attributed to a lack of places in the DEN capped stream (NDS, 2007).

DEWR (Steering Committee) provided the following more recent information. "Updated data on referrals and commencements in Disability Employment Network for the 2006-07 financial year are now available. (These show) that in the period August-November 2006, there was a spike in the figures for all DSP JCA referrals; JCA DSP referrals to DEN and DSP commencements in DEN capped places. DEWR believes that this reflects an element of 'catching up' on the part of the JCAs and the impact of Welfare to Work publicity. From December 2006 the figures generally declined and remained stable until May 2007 when there was again a seasonal increase.

The DSP capped commencement figures largely reflected the trends in JCA DSP referrals. DSP commencements in DEN capped places increased from 652 in July 2006 to a high of 1166 in October 2006 before returning to an average of around 782 for the months December 2006-April 2007.

Overall, commencements in DEN continued to be significantly higher under full case based funding than under the previous block grant funding. This payment model has been successful in encouraging providers to fill vacant places quickly when they become available. In each of 2005-06 and 2006-07, there were more than 20,000 new entrants to capped DEN services compared with around 14,000 in 2004-05, the last year of block grant funding.

It must also be noted that not all job seekers on DSP require ongoing assistance to maintain employment and that an alternative program such as Job Network or Vocational Rehabilitation Services is the best assistance for many."

1.2.5 Project methodology – consultations and survey

One of the major project methodologies was a consultation process consisting of interviews, focus groups, and a survey with stakeholders in disability day options and employment services. The methodologies were qualitative. The data consisted of views, opinions, and experiences of respondents. In following chapters we have reported the issues as they were raised during the consultations. Because many comments were critical, the reporting of views may appear unduly negative. Following a suggestion from the Steering Committee, we have provided some information and comments following some of the issues raised during the consultation. Some issues also receive analysis in later chapters.

A total of 45 consultations were carried out with disability stakeholder groups during the period April to July 2007, in 11 locations across all Australian jurisdictions by Professor Errol Cocks, Ms Taryn Harvey, and Associate Professor Sandra Thompson. Professor Cocks carried out consultations in South Australia, Victoria, and Tasmania. Ms Harvey carried out consultations in NSW, Queensland, and the NT with rural and remote and indigenous groups together with Associate Professor Thompson (who has expertise with these groups). Ms Harvey carried out additional consultations in NSW and the ACT. Professor Cocks and Ms Harvey carried out consultations together in Western Australia. Appendix B provides details of the

locations and stakeholder groups that were involved in both the consultations and the survey.

In March 2007, information on the research project was distributed nationally through networks including National Disability Services (NDS), jurisdictional government disability agencies, and advocacy groups. This process elicited responses from interested individuals and organisations across Australia.

Professor Cocks and Ms Harvey arranged consultations through agencies including NDS, jurisdictional government disability services, through direct contact with local networks of service providers and consumer groups, and by responding to requests from some respondents to the initial information distribution.

Prior to each consultation, those participants who were known to be attending were provided with an information sheet that described the project, a number of broad questions that would be discussed, and a consent form (see Appendix A). A consent form was necessary as part of the ethics requirements of Curtin University of Technology for research projects. The form confirmed confidentiality requirements guaranteeing that individual participants would not be identified. If these documents had not been received prior to the consultation, participants were given them at the commencement of the consultation. At the beginning of the interview/focus group a verbal outline of the project was given by the interviewer.

The methodology for extracting issues was as follows.
- Forty two consultations were audio taped. Three consultations were not audio taped at the request of the participants. In that case, written notes were taken during the consultation or as soon as possible following.
- Thirty two audio taped consultations were transcribed.
- Transcriptions and surveys were allocated to each of the three team members who carried out the consultations. They were assigned the initial task of identifying issues, and specific dialogue that exemplified the specific issue or theme.
- A colleague who was not involved in the consultation process but is knowledgeable about disability policy and services, participated with the three team members in meetings to clarify issues that were subsequently written into this report.

An audit trail was created for each issue by noting the code allocated to consultations and survey responses in which the issue was raised. Each issue is illustrated by selected quotations from the transcripts. Each quotation can be tracked using the consultation code and the page/s from which the quotation was taken.

1.2.6 Project methodology – analysis of datasets

a) Introduction

This report presents findings from the analysis of datasets, a second major project methodology. The primary data sources for this analysis were the AGDSC and the CSTDA NMDS as the mechanisms by which the Commonwealth, States and Territories report on services provided under the CSTDA. This report largely deals with data that is publicly available. We are grateful to Steering Committee members who provided updated information that was not publicly available.

In the analysis, the terminology and definitions are consistent with those used in these data sources. Data on disability employment services were sourced from the annual reports on the AGDSC and data on day options services were sourced from the CSTDA through direct request to the AIHW. References are made to additional data sources, in particular the Productivity Commission and the National Council for Vocational and Educational Research. This is followed by a brief discussion on some issues of data quality.

Table B lists the key terms and definitions used in this analysis.

Table B: Key Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
Service group	The CSTDA NMDS classifies services according to 'service type'. Service types are grouped into seven distinct categories known as 'service groups'. These include employment support and community access.
Service type	The particular support activity that an individual outlet provides under the CSTDA.
Employment Support	Employment assistance for people with a disability.
Open Employment	Assistance in obtaining and/or retaining paid employment in the open labour market.
Supported Employment	Employment opportunities and assistance in specialised and supported work environments, i.e., service is employer as well

	as support provider.
*Dual open/supported	Services providing both open employment and supported employment. Not available after 1 December 2004.
Community Access	Service to support people to gain and utilise abilities for social independence.
Learning and life skills development	Service to increase access to and participation in community based activities with a focus on life skills, independence, enjoyment, leisure and social interaction. Most often referred to as day programs.
Recreation/holiday programs	Facilitating integration and participation in recreation and leisure in the general community.
Other community access	

Source: AIHW, 2006.

*While the term 'dual open/supported' services ceased from 1 December, 2004, both open and supported employment services continued to operate under separate contracts with each funding body.

The focus of this analysis is on the employment support and community access service groups. Open employment and supported employment service types and all community access service types are included. Dual open/supported employment type was not included as it was impossible to identify whether individuals in these outlets were working in an open or supported employment setting. Further analysis could be done to examine which service types previous users of dual open/support employment are now accessing. The decision to include all three community access types was based on the fact that each type could potentially be defined as a day option. In addition, identification of different services within community access is made difficult by the fact that nearly a third of all community access users are recorded against "other community access" which is not defined. It is recognised that other disability services as well as mainstream services also impact on this interface. The AGDSC and the CSTDA NMDS both report on 'whole of year' data and 'snapshot' data. 'Whole of year' data refers to the total number of service users who accessed a CSTDA service within the reference year and is also referred to as 'All Consumers'. 'Snapshot' data refers to the number of service users who accessed a CSTDA service on the individual census day and is also referred to as consumers 'on the books'.

b)   Purposes of the data analysis

The purposes of the data analysis are to draw on key data sets and reports to identify patterns and trends in employment and community access services funded under the

CSTDA between 1999 and 2006, and to make observations about accessibility and equity. Data is also examined on aspects of the interface between employment and community access services. The analyses aim to identify trends and patterns in the following areas.

- The profile of service users by demographic factors including age, disability type, high support need, and main income source.

- The profile of specific sub-groups of people with a disability who access these services, including people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) groups, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) groups, and people living in rural and remote areas.

- Employment characteristics in both open and supported employment including weekly hours worked, weekly wages, wage types and basis of employment.

- The relationship between direct and indirect support hours in employment and community access services.

- Patterns of service use by people with a disability between service groups and types.

c)   How the data is presented and examined

There are three different data perspectives provided in this report, each of which leads to different forms of data presentation and to different conclusions that may be drawn from the data analysis.

The first form of data is raw data that describes, for example, the number of service users who access a particular service such as employment in a specified time period and includes data categorised according to various service user variables such as age or disability type. In addition, raw data can be used to describe changes in access over different time periods, e.g., increases or decreases in numbers in particular data categories. It will also reflect changes in the quantum of services that is available.

The second form of data expresses the raw data in the form of proportions or percentages of service users who access services. This form of data can provide additional comparative information that more closely reflects the notion of a *profile of service access and participation*. It can also be seen as an expression of "market share". In the example given above, depiction of proportions of service users

accessing employment can indicate how the profile has changed in terms of, for example, levels of support need or disability type. It may then be possible to examine how changes in policy and practice may be impacting on service profiles. Changes in proportions may reflect reduced market share for one category of service users. It may also reflect enhanced market share or access for another group.

In this report, we present proportional data in the main body of the report. We contend that these data provide a clearer picture of the profiles of service access and changes of access to services by various service user groups than do raw data. Where appropriate, comment on raw data is also provided in the narrative following some charts. Raw data tables from which the charts are drawn are included in the Appendix C.

The third form of data draws on population data in order to provide a measure of the extent to which service take-up reflects the proportions of *potential service users*. In feedback, a member of the Project Steering Committee used the term "service reach" which has the same meaning. Both the CSTDA NMDS unmet demand report (AIHW, 2007) and the reports of the Australian Productivity Commission (Productivity Commission, 2007, 2008) used measures of "potential population" in order to compare participation rates for various service user groups. Drawn from data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Disability, Ageing and Carers Survey (ABS, 2003), the potential population is the number of people per 1,000 with a disability who "potentially" require services, based on severity of disability and age. Potential population is adjusted for the proportion of indigenous people with a disability in particular locations because of the higher prevalence of disability within indigenous groups. When comparisons are made with participation in employment services, the potential population is based only on those people with a disability who are participating in the labour force or looking for work. In our view, the use of the measure of potential population has substantial limitations due to its reliance on dated population data and the inadequate validity. It is also based on the complex assumption that level of disability is a proxy for need for services. In addition, these data require targets or benchmarks in order for complete comparisons to be made.

d) Sources of data

This section of the report identifies and describes the data sources used for this analysis.

The Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement National Minimum Data Set

The Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA) National Minimum Data Set (NMDS) is the data collected by the Commonwealth, State, and Territory Governments for the purpose of reporting on the services delivered under the CSTDA. The Australian Institute of Health & Welfare (AIHW) holds the data set and has provided annual reports since 1999.

Data from the CSTDA NMDS is used for a range of purposes. For example, the Productivity Commission uses the CSTDA NMDS to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of Australian government services through the annual Review of Government Services established under the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) (Productivity Commission, 2007, 2008). Services for people with a disability are included in the review under community services. The CSTDA NMDS has also been used to inform assessment of levels of unmet demand for disability services provided under the CSTDA (AIHW, 2007).

Notable changes in CSTDA NMDS data collection to improve its accuracy for profiling the users of CSTDA services have been the introduction of a statistical linkage key in 1999, and the shift from single day snapshot data to whole of year data in 2002 (AIHW, 2006).

The statistical linkage key allows for the estimation of the number of service users by distinguishing between individual service users and thus minimising double counting. The statistical linkage key has an error rate of 3.1% of records that have an invalid or false linkage key, indicating that it is a relatively reliable measure (AIHW, 2006). The statistical linkage key can be used to report on patterns of multiple service use where individuals have used more than one service within a year. Examples of this include individuals who access accommodation support and also participate in employment services, or individuals who participate in both employment and community access services. There are also potential ways for generating and analysing longitudinal, pathways data that it appears have not yet been explored. A preliminary longitudinal analysis of CSTDA service utilisation data generated by the 2003-04 cohort of consumers or the period 2003-04 to 2005-06 is included in Chapter 6 of this report.

The distinction between snapshot data and whole of year data was identified as one of the barriers to data analysis in the "To take part" report on economic and social

participation by people with high support needs in 2003 (NDA, 2003). The report suggested that snapshot data may under-represent participation levels in both Commonwealth and State/Territory disability services, and should be treated with caution. This was demonstrated in "To take part" which showed that the sample collected on snapshot day in 2000 only captured 32.5% of the total number of people assisted by employment services in that whole year (NDA, 2003). The Commonwealth Government recommended that only whole-of-year data be used when discussing the number of people accessing employment services. This is a limitation to comparative analysis of participation in CSTDA services over time, as whole of year data for employment services have been available since 1999/00, but for community access services, only since 2003/04. Advice was sought from the AIHW and it was confirmed that direct comparisons cannot be made between snapshot data and whole of year data. On this basis, it was concluded that snapshot data would not be directly compared with whole of year data in this analysis.

Direct comparisons can be made within snapshot years, and within whole of year data sets. Such comparisons provide some limited opportunity for trend analysis. It was considered that snapshot data might be useful in identifying whether trends or patterns identified in the whole of year samples continued in earlier years. In an attempt to achieve this, the AIHW included a snapshot date flag within the CSTDA NMDS whole of year data which it was hoped would allow snapshot data to continue to be reported on by identifying those individuals who were at the service on snapshot day. However the AIHW advised that data generated using this tool was not reliable. This means that reliable snapshot data from 2003/04 is not available. The AIHW advised (re-confirmed in February, 2008) that snapshot data can be used to describe a changing profile over time when compared with like data. However AIHW advised that snapshot data is indicative only and should not be used to draw inferences about the broader "whole of year" population.

The CSTDA NMDS used a measure of "potential population" to provide data for comparison with actual service participation data when assessing unmet demand (AIHW, 2007). It was also used by the Productivity Commission when reporting on Government performance in service delivery (Productivity Commission, 2007, 2008).

Despite significant improvements in the quality of the NMDS over time, concerns about the quality and reliability of the data remain. During the review of the CSTDA by the Australian Senate (Senate Community Affairs Committee, 2007), the AIHW

and the Australian Government Department of Housing, Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) identified variations across jurisdictions in the quality of data collection. The Productivity Commission has also identified data quality issues in the CSTDA NMDS, in particular the variations in response rate across jurisdictions and the response rates of 'not stated' for particular items (Productivity Commission, 2006). A further limitation is that not all service types are required to report on all of the same data items within the CSTDA NMDS.

The Australian Government Disability Services Census of services funded under the Commonwealth Disability Services Act (1986)

The Australian Government Disability Services Census (AGDSC) is the mechanism through which the Australian Government meets its obligations under the CSTDA to collect data for the CSTDA NMDS.

Data on Commonwealth funded disability employment services and their consumers have been collected since 1991. In 1995, this data collection was expanded to include data on print disability, advocacy, and information services also directly funded by the Commonwealth, as part of the first NMDS. Data was collected on a biennial basis between 1991 and 1997 and then annually. In 1998 the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) was included to gather information on services accessibility.

In the 2006 report on the 2004/05 AGDSC, it was noted that under machinery of government changes made following the October 2004 election, responsibility for open employment was transferred to the Australian Government Department of Employment & Workplace Relations (DEWR) (FaCSIA, 2006). Under these machinery of government changes, the service type that combined both supported employment and open employment ceased to exist. At this time, individual service outlets were required to identify themselves as either one or the other service type.

This analysis draws on data provided by the Australian Government through annual reports on the AGDSC from 1999 to 2007 for open employment and supported employment. Data from the CSTDA/NMDS for 2005/06 was provided by the AIHW upon request under embargo, on the grounds that neither the data nor any analysis of the data would be made public before the AIHW itself had published the data. The data has now been published (AIHW, 2007).

The CSTDA/NMDS was used as the data source for day options services and the AGDSC was used as the data source for employment services. The AGDSC was used for employment rather than the CSTDA/NMDS because it included a number of data items that were required for analysis which are not included in the CSTDA/NMDS, including employment characteristics. It was our view that a single data source for employment should be used. Population counts between AGDSCC and the CSTDA/NMDS vary slightly due to differences in counting rules, however this does not present a barrier to broad trend analysis. The AIHW confirmed that this was a valid approach, and this advice was reconfirmed in February, 2008.

The Productivity Commission Report on Government Services

The Productivity Commission Report on Government Services was established by COAG as a mechanism for measuring the performance of Government in service delivery. Services for people with a disability are included, in particular those services delivered under the CSTDA (Productivity Commission, 2007, 2008). Key measurements of performance included measures of accessibility and equity based on data from the CSTDA NMDS and the ABS for groups including those with high support needs, and special needs groups such as people with a disability who are born outside Australia, those people who identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, or those people who live in rural and remote locations.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd Reports and the VET sector

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd (NCVER) has published a number of reports on the participation and outcomes of people with a disability in vocational education and training (VET), and traineeships and apprenticeships (NCVER, 2001, 2002, 2003; Cavallaro, Foley, Saunders, & Bowman, 2005). The 2005 report (Cavallaro, et al., 2005) is a statistical compendium describing VET participation by people with a disability in 2003. A significant limitation of the data is the reliance on self-report of the presence of disability by VET students. The report reached the following conclusions.

- Participation rates in VET by people with a disability increased by 71% to 91,439 from 1998 to 2003. In addition to enhanced access, this increase was influenced by the inclusion of additional disability types and better methods of identification. This represented an estimated 2.3% of all Australians with a disability. The Productivity Commission (2007) reported that in 2005, participation in VET by people with a disability and profound or severe core

activity limitation was 4.2% (plus or minus 1.5%) which was lower than the proportion of other people with a disability who achieved a participation rate of 6.4% (plus or minus 0.8%) and below the proportion for people without a disability of 7.9% (plus or minus 0.4%). (p. 13.67)

- The VET sector maintained data on five "equity groups" including women, Indigenous people, people in rural and remote areas, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, and people with a disability. Within the equity groups, people with a disability had the lowest outcomes of educational achievement and employment outcomes from VET.

- The authors of the report commented that the relative lack of achievement of people with a disability in VET "might be related to their reasons for study which are often not vocational" (p. 11). People with a disability were more likely to enrol in Certificates 1 and 11, or non-Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) courses which are considered to be non-vocational.

- In 2004, 51% of VET graduates who had a disability were employed compared to 77% of graduates who did not report a disability.

- Students with a disability in VET had substantially lower levels of prior schooling than other VET students (55% had left school at or before your 10 compared to 40% for all VET students) suggesting the need for early transition planning.

- Participation rates in apprenticeships and traineeships had decreased from 1.5% in 2002 to 1.3% in 2003.

A number of initiatives by the Australian Government Department of Employment, Science and Technology were aimed at assisting students in the transition from school to post-secondary education and employment. These included:

- Disability Coordination and Regional Disability Liaison Officers whose role included promoting successful transitions and participation in post-secondary education for young people with a disability.

- Provision of funding to schools and post-school services to promote and support transition through school-based apprenticeships and work experience.

- Assistance to new apprentices and their employer.

- Promoting linkages between group training organisations (GTOs) and disability employment services.

The interface between schools, the VET sector, and disability employment and day options is self-evidently of considerable importance and examples of good policy and practice at this interface are likely to be effective in achieving employment outcomes. For this reason, some consideration of the VET sector, particularly its interface with schools and employment is included in this report although it was not an explicit part of the brief for this project.

e)   Data quality

While there have been many improvements over time to the quality of data on services for people with a disability, a number of areas for improvement have been identified. The most commonly reported quality issue is the variation in the quality of data across States and Territories. This was identified by both the AIHW and FaCSIA in their evidence to the Senate inquiry on the CSTDA in 2006 (The Senate, 2006). FaCSIA indicated that some jurisdictions have been "unwilling to commit to the level of data collection proposed prior to the last agreement." Variation in data quality was also reported by the Productivity Commission in their report on Government services (Productivity Commission, 2007), in relation to variation in response rates and the "not stated" rates for particular data items across jurisdictions and reporting years. The Productivity Commission recommended care should be taken in making comparisons between jurisdictions and across years.

The quality of data in measuring the success of CSTDA services has also drawn critical comment. In evidence to the Senate inquiry, The Office of the Public Advocate in Victoria called for an outcome based measure of the success of the delivery of services. The Senate report recommended outcome data be included in the CSTDA NMDS, but it recognised that this would require negotiation between the stakeholders in order to define an agreed outcomes framework, and substantial investment to meet the administrative costs of collecting additional data. The Productivity Commission has made an attempt to assess equity and effectiveness in indicators of access through the introduction of "potential population" estimates of access to CSTDA services. This measure also has limitations, some of which have been described above. The Productivity Commission also reported on the impact of services using outcome indicators of labour force participation, social participation, and access to other services which are derived from ABS data. These are gross measures that do not assess service quality or the extent to which services are targeted to those with greatest need. In its latest report (Productivity Commission,

2007), recommendations were made to develop indicators of quality of life and assessment of client and carer satisfaction with service quality.

2 Description and analysis of Australian Government employment reforms

This Chapter begins with a description of Australian Government employment reforms. This is followed by description and analysis of data on employment services and then by an account of the sector consultations relating to employment. Where appropriate in this and the following Chapters, issues raised by the consultations are referenced to evidence provided by the data.

2.1 Australian Government disability employment reforms

In the 1996/97 Budget, the Australian Government announced a broad reform agenda for the disability employment assistance and rehabilitation services it funded under the CSTDA. The key features of this reform agenda were changes to the way in which disability employment services were funded and the introduction of a new Quality Assurance framework.

2.1.1 Funding reforms

The funding reforms announced in the 1996/97 Budget sought to respond to inequities in the historic block grant funding arrangements that were current at the time. These arrangements were considered to be inequitable because there was no relationship between the levels of funding services received and the level of support they provided to job seekers or workers, or the employment outcomes they achieved for those individuals. In response to these inequities, the Government announced in 1996/97 that the new funding arrangements would aim to

- Enhance job seeker access, choice, and employment outcomes.
- Make funding arrangements more equitable.
- Provide employment assistance to as many people as practicable within available funds.
- Promote flexibility and innovation.

The trial of individual outcomes based funding arrangements, case based funding, was subsequently announced in the 1999-00 Budget. Under a case based funding model, payments to service providers would be based on the relative needs of the job seekers and workers they assisted. The case based funding model was tested through a two phase trial from 1999-2001. This trial was subjected to an extensive evaluation. The findings of the evaluation and national consultations with stakeholders were used to inform the final funding model for implementation which was announced in the 2003-04 Budget.

Key aspects of the case based funding model announced in 2003-2004 that are relevant to this project include the following.

- Definition of an eight hour minimum employment outcome.

- Allocation of disability employment service users to funding levels according to relative support need.

- Establishment of a top level of case based funding and the introduction of high cost worker fees to protect those workers being supported at a higher cost than this top funding level.

- A dual servicing policy to enable disincentives for workers to move from a business service to open employment.

- Work-based personal assistance funds to benefit workers who needed personal assistance with eating and toileting in order to participate in employment.

- Incentives to encourage disability employment services to pursue more vocational education and training outcomes for job seekers with a disability.

- Availability of additional funds for rural and remote services to address irregular job seeker referrals and higher servicing costs.

Under machinery of Government changes following the Federal election in October 2004, responsibility for open employment services for people with a disability was transferred to the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) which continued to refine the case based funding model. Refinements to the model made by DEWR included finalising and implementing the policy on continued funding for existing high cost workers and refining the dual servicing policy on people transitioning from supported to open employment. DEWR was also working towards the implementation of a "star ratings" performance framework for disability open employment services similar to that used for the mainstream employment assistance Job Network.

DEWR and FaCSIA have each conducted evaluations of case based funding for the DEN and business services respectively. The project team understands that the DEWR evaluation has been completed but that its release has been delayed by the election caretaker period and subsequent change of Government and machinery of government changes. FaCSIA released the *Review of the introduction of the case based funding model into disability supported employment services* in August 2007. This review found that case based funding had increased employment opportunities

for people with a disability and had enhanced employment outcomes. It also found that the funding classification system provided a good match between the level of funding and the level of relative support provided and was therefore sustainable. The review also found that, as a result of these reforms, the sector was well placed to face future challenges. It found that two-thirds of providers had received an increase in their funding under case based funding and relatively low levels of cash-flow volatility. The evaluation also identified some areas for improvement. These included the need to improve employment outcomes for particular groups of service users, the need to improve the transition from supported to open employment, and the need increase access to education and training opportunities for people with a disability in supported employment services.

2.1.2 Quality assurance

In the 1999-00 Budget, the Australian Government announced a Quality Strategy for disability employment services to improve the quality of services and achieve better employment outcomes for people with a disability. The Quality Strategy included the introduction of quality assurance standards and key performance indicators (KPIs) in the Disability Services Standards. These took effect from 1 July 2002. Under the Quality Strategy, disability employment services are required to be independently accredited by a certified auditor against a revised set of 12 Disability Services Standards in order to receive Commonwealth funding to provide employment assistance to people with a disability. Under Standard 9 Employment Conditions, disability employment services must ensure that people with a disability enjoy working conditions that are comparable to those of the general workforce. A KPI was included which required that disability employment services place people with a disability in open or supported employment where they receive pro-rata award based wages, determined through a transparent assessment tool or process. In recognition that not all workers with a disability are able to work at full productive capacity a range of tools was used for determining pro-rata wages according to productive capacity. For people working in open employment the Supported Wage System (SWS) is used. In supported employment no particular assessment tool is mandated but criteria have been established which assessment tools must satisfy as set out in *A Guide to Good Practice in Wage Determination*. Several options for wage assessment in supported employment are available. In 2004 the Government released the Business Services Wage Assessment Tool as an example of 'best practice'. Its implementation was reviewed in 2005. In early 2005 the Government commissioned research to assess a number of commonly used wage assessment

tools in the business services sector against the *Guide to Good Practice in Wage Determination* (Pearson, 2005a, b). Based on this work the Government has worked closely with the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) and then the Australian Fair Pay Commission (AFPC) to enshrine a number of approved wage assessment tools in the *ALHMWU Supported Employment (Business Enterprises) Award 2001*. The award was varied in October 2006 (AFPC, 2006).

2.1.3 Business services reforms

In 2000, the Australian Government commissioned a review of business services to ensure they would remain viable under the reforms to disability employment assistance, particularly in light of the roles of business services as both service provider and employer (Department of Family & Community Services, 2000). The review identified that at the time, only 35% of business services either broke even or returned a profit, with a resulting direct impact on their capacity to meet the costs of providing supported employment. This would be further affected by the requirement under Quality Assurance to provide pro-rata award based wages. The Business Services Review made recommendations to provide a strategic plan to strengthen the focus of the business services sector on commercial viability.

The 2003-04 Budget, *Improving Employment Assistance for People with Disabilities,* announced support to improve the viability of business services and maximise the number of business services that would achieve quality assurance certification under the *Disability Services Act 1986* under the new quality assurance framework. It included assistance to identify barriers to achieving quality assurance certification, targeted interventions for business services identified as being 'at risk', and an e-marketing strategy. The 2003-04 Budget also identified that a safety net strategy would be developed to ensure continued support for people assessed as having very low productive capacity. In 2003 Government consulted with people with disabilities, their carers and families, service providers and the public about a number of proposed safety net strategies (Department of Family & Community Services, 2003). The *Security, Quality Services & Choice for People with Disabilities* measure announced in 2004, and funded through the 2004/05 Budget, built on the support for business services in the 2003/04 Budget and responded to the 2003 safety net consultations to ensure that people with disabilities in business services would "enjoy continued service, choices in their employment and payment of award wages in a quality environment." The *Security, Quality Services & Choice for People with Disabilities* included

- flexible business assistance to address viability and wage issues.
- an access guarantee that no existing business service employee would lose their place as a result of changes.
- a phase-in of pro-rata award based wages.
- targeted support for services that do not provided standard employment assistance to their consumers and consumers with low productivity who may benefit from having access to other support services and activities.

The targeted support measure included case management delivered by CRS Australia to develop individual action plans. Case management was available to individuals who were working in a business service between July 2003 and May 2004 who were assessed as having a productivity level of 15% or less. Workplace modifications were available for individuals who decided to continue in employment and for those who chose to discontinue employment. Targeted support provided a service guarantee in community access type services, including within business services. During the implementation of reforms to the business services sector it became clear that some employment services, many of them jurisdictional-run business services that provided non-vocational activities, would fail to be accredited as employment services. Accordingly some services were transferred to states and territories on the basis of bilateral agreements between the Commonwealth and the relevant State/Territory. In other cases where a significant number of people within a service outlet were receiving targeted support, the Commonwealth undertook to continue to provide support pending the negotiation of transfers to the relevant State/Territory.

DEWR reported (Steering Committee): "…all business services that participated in the certification process were certified as meeting the required Disability Service Standards by the legislated date. Some business services, however, opted not to participate in the certification process. The services that 1opted out1 were state-run business services providing non-vocational activities. To ensure continuity of service to these service users, these services were transferred to the relevant state/territory jurisdiction under a bi-lateral agreement."

In 2007 the Government announced the Disability Assistance Package which included 500 new places for Business Services. 250 places were targeted at "high performing services" and 250 were targeted at under-serviced areas or groups. In

February 2008 a further 250 places were announced for the establishment of new disability supported employment business services in areas where there was demonstrated high demand. Priority target groups were identified.

- people with a disability in rural and remote locations.
- people with psychiatric disability.
- Indigenous people with a disability.
- younger people with a disability.

2.1.4 Welfare to work

In 1999 the Australian Government announced a review of the Australian welfare system (McClure, 2000). The review identified growth in the number of people dependent on income support, including the Disability Support Pension (DSP), despite strong economic growth, as one of several indicators that the welfare system required reform. Particular problems in the system were identified including disjointed service delivery and complex income support payments with inadequate incentives to work. The review supported the concept of mutual obligation whilst also recognising structural and systemic barriers to participation, including for people with a disability. The review recommended improvements in the assessment of work capacity for people with a disability as well as a greater focus on outcomes, earlier intervention, and better case monitoring and support for job seekers with a disability. It also recommended a participation support payment that recognised the cost of participation, such as for people with disabilities. The review identified low expectations of economic participation by people with a disability by other community members, including employers, and pointed to a low take-up by employers of programs to assist them.

In the 2001-02 Budget, the Australian Government announced its first policy response to the McClure report: Australian's Working Together (AWT). Under this banner the Better Assessment and Early Intervention measure was implemented in 2002, a new assessment process for determining work capacity and directing referrals for people with a disability. It also included extra places in disability employment services funded through the case based funding model.

AWT was followed by Welfare to Work measures announced in the 2005-06 Budget, the most comprehensive Australian response to date to the issues identified in the McClure report. Strong drivers behind this reform were continuing growth of people of working age on income support, low workforce participation by people with a

disability, an ageing population, and a view that employment is the most effective pathway out of poverty. Measures impacting on people with a disability announced either as part of the Welfare to Work package or as additional supplementary measures included

- Changes to the work capacity DSP eligibility criteria from 30 hours per week to 15 hours per week.
- Introduction of comprehensive work capacity assessments.
- The distinction between 'capped' and 'uncapped' disability employment places. The 'capped' stream was targeted at people with a disability who can work 8 hours or more per week and require long-term support in the workplace, and the 'uncapped' stream was targeted at those people with a disability who were assessed as having a mutual obligation (i.e. in receipt of Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance or Parenting Payment and who can work between 15 – 29 hours per week) and who were assessed as being able to work independently at award wages in the open labour market after receiving two years of assistance.
- The introduction of the uncapped stream of DEN services. The uncapped stream was demand driven so a place was guaranteed for all eligible job seekers.

The Welfare to Work package also included strategies to encourage employers to employ people with a disability including expansion of the Workplace Modifications and Wage Subsidy Schemes and the launch of the Job Access - a one stop shop for employers, people with a disability, and service providers that incorporated a free information and advice service and a web site.

Since the announcement of the Welfare to Work package, further details on particular measures were announced. This included clarification on the requirement that all DSP recipients without a current assessment must undergo a JCA in order to be referred to an employment service for assistance should they volunteer to look for work. A JCA is undertaken to ensure a job seeker is connected to the most appropriate service and to ensure they are not asked to do anything that could exacerbate their condition. If a volunteer for employment has had a review of their condition in the last two years, a JCA is not required. Before they agree to a JCA, DSP recipients must be advised that their eligibility for DSP is under review and that a potential outcome of this assessment could be an increase or reduction in their

DSP, or withdrawal of the DSP if they no longer meet DSP eligibility criteria. In partnership with the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS), the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) is examining the impacts of Welfare to Work on people with a disability.

2.1.5 Australian Government Budget 2007

An additional 987 places were announced in the 2007 Budget for the Disability Employment Network. The measure provided additional places for people with disability to access capped places in the DEN. In an environment of skill shortages, an ageing population and strong economic growth, the additional places provided people with disability with a greater opportunity to work to a level that matched their capacity and built on the proven track record of DEN to assist people with disability to secure and maintain employment.

2.1.6 Post-election policy developments

Since the Federal election in November 2007 there have been a number of announcements by the new Government.

As a result of machinery of government changes DEWR was expanded to include education and FaCSIA was expanded to include housing. At this time responsibility for DSP policy was transferred from the new Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to the new Department of Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

In January 2008 the new Government called for feedback on how to improve employment services. In February 2008 the Government called for feedback on the JCA process. Also in February 2008 the Government announced consultations on the development of a National Disability and Mental Health Employment Strategy.

2.2 Issues raised in the disability sector consultations regarding employment services

2.2.1 Shift in underpinning rationales in employment services

There was a strong and consistently expressed view that rationales underpinning policy and practice in employment for people with a disability have substantially changed, largely as a result of Australian Government employment policy reforms. This has resulted in specific impacts on people with a disability, especially those with high support needs, and on the disability service sector. These impacts were both positive and negative, however the overwhelming perception of respondents was of

adverse impacts. The following discussion elucidates the issue of rationale change and impacts under the following headings.

a)   The perceived loss of a developmental, aspirational rationale for people with a disability

b)   The perceived reduction in the scope of employment services

a)   The perceived loss of a developmental, aspirational rationale for people with a disability

As described earlier in this report, the disability employment sector in Australia, particularly in the early development of sheltered workshops, and then open employment services (later known as the Disability Employment Network (DEN)), grew from a set of positive aspirations and expectations for people with a disability, and acknowledged the rights and the potential of those with high support needs. This was associated with the development of evidence-based methodologies for the achievement of employment outcomes, especially around the methods of providing ongoing support to people with a disability who had high support needs. There is a strong perception in the disability sector that this rationale no longer has the same degree of influence on policy and practice.

> *I think the aspirational model should be a model for almost everybody. And it ought to be by evidence that someone can't participate rather than an assumption. The assumption has driven down the eligibility. We have edited out far too many people…Every young person coming out of school should be given the opportunity to work in open employment.*

The aspirational rationale is associated with values that are said to be "person-centred" and to reflect an understanding of the situation of people with a disability. It is common for people to say that they work in the disability sector primarily because of allegiance to these values. People working within that employment model perceived that these values and historical origins contributed to a DEN culture that is distinct from that of the Job Network. Importantly, this 'person centred' or values based culture is believed to be associated with quality employment outcomes for people with a disability. Some participants perceived that this shift in values was leading to staff leaving the disability employment service sector.

> *I think about people who have been passionate supporters of people with disabilities through the DEN system. Many of these people have left that*

system who I know of. One has gone to TAFE. One has gone to run a (day options) service. Others have moved into local government. They're moving because the nature of their work has changed.

Although policy reforms were seen to have moved away from this values-base towards a more economic aspirational rationale, it was believed by some participants to be possible for services to choose to retain a person-centred approach. Encouragingly there was a view by some that the specialised nature of DEN providers and the broader strategies required to achieve quality employment outcomes for some people with a disability were being acknowledged by DEWR.

And employment services, whilst we are process driven, we can choose how we operate. We can choose the model under which we work to developmentally give people opportunities to grow and look at a career path and all those options. We can choose to do that. You know, this is about how you choose to run your service. You know, there becomes some stress, though, when you are trying to give people options and choices and you have a punitive system sitting on top of that, a job first mentality, and that is what the welfare to work is, 'You will take a job whether you like it or you don't.

b)   Perceived reduction in the scope of employment services

Policy changes associated with welfare to work are perceived to have sidelined broader objectives of employment services such as social participation for people with a disability and replaced them with a single objective - employment outcomes, narrowly defined. This policy shift is seen to be largely managed by DEWR in open employment, and participants perceived differences between DEWR and FaCSIA on this issue. Rigorous performance management that focused solely on employment outcomes was perceived to have an adverse impact on participation of people with high support needs in open employment services and on the quality of employment outcomes.

DEWR reported (Steering Committee): "…education and training outcomes are also an important aspect of employment outcomes. Such outcomes are reported and published by DEWR on a regular basis (see: http://www.workploace.gov.au/workplace/Publications).

> *The other signal that has clearly come from the Commonwealth to employment services is that 'you are to focus on employment and nothing else and all your efforts are to be around employment' and that wasn't the traditional model. You know, the traditional model was that these service providers would provide a range of supports. I mean, their principal focus was around providing meaningful work, but they would also assist with a lot of other things in a person's life.*

There was a perceived significant preference by DEWR contract managers for flow through rather than maintenance of open employment consumers. Service providers themselves reported that they know how vulnerable their clients are and that maintenance was often essential to maintain employment. Employers were finding it difficult if their employee with a disability could not maintain reliable service.

> *The feedback I have from providers right from the word go with the kick-off of these health checks was that the contract managers are, in their own mind, 'it is better to have your flow through rather than maintenance.' What is coming through was…the implication that flow through is better than maintenance. People are beginning to think, 'well, will that be reflected in the Star Ratings once they are established?'*

In discussion on this issue, DEWR representatives emphasised the aim of ensuring service providers were providing an efficient and effective service and that consumers were kept on maintenance because they really needed it. Service providers were seen as taking a cautious line on this issue. The Star Rating system will contain measures to ensure services with high rates of maintenance consumers are not disadvantaged. The Star Rating system, acknowledged by DEWR to be a very powerful tool, is part of a range of quality assurance, contract management, and data minding and performance tools that will address this and related issues including providing opportunity for support for career development, and addressing the placement of consumers in lower paid, less demanding jobs with lower hours of work.

DEWR (Steering Committee) reported:"…the move to full case based funding in July 2005 saw a substantial increase in the take-up of DEN services as financial incentives for providers were more closely linked to performance. More than 20,000 job seekers with a disability commenced assistance in capped DEN services in both

2005-06 and 2006-07, compared with about 14,000 in 2004-05. Additional funding was also provided in the 2005-06 budget under the Welfare to Work reforms for an estimated 21,000 full demand driven (uncapped) places over the three years to assist job seekers with disability receiving income support who have part-time participation requirements. These extra places came on stream in July 2006 and by the end of 2006-07 an additional 8,000 job seekers with disability had benefited from this assistance."

2.2.2 Perceived changing profile of people within employment services

This issue addresses the perception that increased numbers of people with low support needs have entered a program model, namely open employment, designed originally for people with high and ongoing support needs, and there has been a decrease in numbers of people with high and ongoing support needs and people from specific disability groups.

DEWR (Steering Committee) reported: "The perceived increase in the number of people with lower support needs will reflect the introduction of a new service stream to open employment services for people with a disability, i.e., for those who will be able to work 15-29 hours a week independently of support within two years. The cohort in the new uncapped stream will, by definition, have lower support needs. However, it is expected that where in the past these job seekers would have accessed capped places, the latter will now be available to people who require additional support."

The profile of people with a disability in employment services, both open and supported employment, addresses one of the central questions of this research - how has the policy reform agenda impacted on participation rates in employment? This was an issue that evoked comment in every jurisdiction and in most consultations. The perception is that the decreased proportion of people with high support needs in open employment services is placing a downwards pressure on supported employment and on day options.

There was little doubt on the part of the great majority of participants who commented on this issue. In open employment services in particular, the perception is that the proportion of people with intellectual disability and high support needs has declined substantially. The disability type is especially relevant here because of some

evidence that people with intellectual disability comprise the large majority of people with a disability who have high support needs. The changes in consumer profile have also included a larger proportion of people with multiple barriers including people with a psychiatric disability with accompanying substance abuse and increased numbers of consumers who have low motivation for employment.

DEWR (Steering Committee) reported: "There is a perception of a decline in the proportion of people in open employment services with an intellectual disability. This is because there has been an increase in the proportion of people with other disabilities, namely psychiatric and physical disabilities. This change in 'service mix' now better reflects the mix of referrals to open employment services. It also reflects improvements in the responsiveness of these services to meet the needs of these clients, both through the establishment of specialist services to meet their needs and through generalist services. While the proportion of clients with an intellectual disability may have declined, it does not mean a reduction in the number of people with intellectual disability accessing open employment services."

An additional factor that is discussed briefly further in this report is the shift in diagnostic criteria that appears to be occurring in which specific diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder, specific learning disability, and attention deficit disorder may be replacing a diagnosis of intellectual disability.

Some respondents commented that this trend has been occurring for some years and is not entirely a result of more recent policy changes, although the more recent changes may have accelerated the process. There was reference to the drift of open employment services over time towards preferences for clients with lower support needs who can be placed quickly in employment. DEWR (Steering Committee) reported that they have "no evidence to support this claim."
Some respondents also reported that Job Network providers were referring people with a disability to business services. This could suggest that some Job Network providers may find it difficult to place people with disabilities in open employment and supports the critical role of specialist disability employment providers in achieving quality employment outcomes for people with a disability.

The profile change is also perceived to have occurred in supported employment, although many business services have retained a historical commitment to their

consumers and were reluctant to "retire" or otherwise move people out of supported employment.

Characteristics of the perceived changed profile in employment consist of

a)   A lower proportion of people with intellectual disability in employment.

b)   A lower proportion of people with high support needs in employment and an increased proportion of people with low support needs.

c)   A more diverse group of employment consumers that includes disability types such as mental illness, and people with drug and alcohol issues.

d)   A larger proportion of employment consumers who have very low motivation to work.

While open employment services have been flexible to the changing demand over time, there is a sense that this latest change, particularly the profile of people entering uncapped places, is a bridge too far. In fact some services decided not even to tender for uncapped places. While many service providers are now calling for an increased focus on the target group, this is at odds with where the Government is creating demand for employment services and also for the Government's perceived preference for service providers offering multiple service types.

I'm sure that people in the DEN would be able to indicate that they are providing services to many more people now than in the past, but if you looked, the hours of employment for people would possibly have gone down. And certainly the number of people with high support needs would have clearly diminished.

I think that what we've seen in the last ten or so years is an increasing number of people with mental health issues coming into the main program. We've seen an increasing number of people with muscular skeletal issues coming into the mainstream program and at the same time, because of the capped nature of the program, we've seen a diminishing number of people with intellectual disability and learning disabilities in the program. Probably more of intellectual disability edited out or screened away and more of learning disability through mild intellectual disability…(People who aren't getting into the program)…are going into business services – into the institutional employment environment –

and a whole heap of others are putting pressures on the states' day options and alternatives to employment programs.

The response in discussions with representatives from DEWR was that it was too early to make a clear assessment about the accuracy of these perceptions. However, DEWR's expectation was that the introduction of the uncapped stream would also change the demographics of the capped stream. By creating a specific stream for people on activity tested payments and/or people who can become independent within two years, capacity should be freed up for people with longer term support needs through the capped stream. DEWR representatives acknowledged that lower unemployment has probably drawn people with more complex needs into the DEN and that this greater complexity is challenging for some in sector. In terms of support needs, DEWR can identify no clear national trends.

There's certainly a pattern of increases in application for (day options) funding and a clear cost shift from Federal to State and it's one the State hasn't been able to meet…You'd find that for those people who are in agency-based (day options) that the service that they receive has diminished probably quantitatively and certainly qualitatively over time in terms of what's available to them.

Some of the Job Network providers…they'll have a person who may be on Newstart and they're searching for employment. Because of their disability they can't find it…they know if they send them to us, they won't get an outcome but they decide 'bad luck. We'll do it anyway'. It's starting to happen…we've had about six in the last 12 months.

2.2.3 Barriers and disincentives to participation in open employment

Employment provides people with a disability with opportunities for social status, financial independence, opportunities for learning and development, social networks and an opportunity to contribute to society. Consistent with the Disability Act 1993 people with disabilities should be afforded every opportunity to achieve their maximum potential as members of the community, and 'to achieve positive outcomes, such as increased independence and employment opportunities'. It is important that the disability service system encourages participation in employment for people with a disability and does not create barriers and disincentives.

Employment reforms were perceived to have resulted in a number of barriers and disincentives to the participation of people with a disability in open employment. These barriers and disincentives reflected the interaction between policy and practice in employment and day options, and the needs and perceptions of families and people with a disability.

The policy and practice context had become increasingly complex and this in itself appeared to have encouraged a more conservative view in regard to the risks that families and people with a disability were willing to take – and there was ample evidence from respondents, that open employment was seen as a risky choice. Fine tuning of policy in the attempt by policy makers to address disincentives and unintended policy impacts may not be understood by consumers and also served to increase policy complexity. A major perceived issue in disability policy and practice was the lack of collaborative, "joined-up" approaches.

The perceptions of families and people with a disability of policy and practice in employment and day options may or may not be accurate, but nevertheless, they have influenced behaviour. A combination of complexity and an aversion to risk has resulted in these primary stakeholders exercising caution and conservatism in the options they chose.

Particular perceived barriers to participation in open employment included the risk of loss of the DSP when assessment of work capacity was linked directly with eligibility for income support, and lack of safety nets in the event that open employment did not work.

The Government's drive to get people with a disability into employment was viewed positively, although limitations on the capacity of the DEN to respond to increased demand from people with a disability who have high or ongoing support needs has had adverse impacts.

DEWR (Steering Committee) reported: "DEWR data showing increased number of people with disability commencing assistance in both the capped and uncapped stream (see previous comment) demonstrates that perception of barriers or disincentives to participation in open employment do not translate into actual behaviour."

Barriers and disincentives to participation in open employment for people with a disability will be described under the following headings.

a)   Families' preferences for a 'stable option'

b)   Open employment seen as 'high risk' with a lack of safety nets

c)   Lack of interface and pathways between employment services

d)   Funding limitations

e)   A service system of silos

f)   Concern over job capacity assessments

a)   Families' preferences for a 'stable option'

Families preferred day options or supported employment rather than open employment because these services were perceived to offer a more comprehensive and reliable support service including more time-in-program. If a single choice is required, many will choose the more comprehensive and reliable support service. This was noted as particularly the case with school leavers. This is discussed further below.

> *If your son or daughter requires a reasonably high level intervention, you might say to yourself it'd be a better option to pump for a state run day options program that might get us 25 hours a week than to risk open employment that might get us eight…That's a real barrier. Equally, a promise of 26 hours a week or more in a business service as opposed to eight hours a week in open employment, given that many of the business services are also connected to broader whole of life support structures, whether they be accommodation or community access, so again, parents are making decisions quite properly on what they see as being the best way of providing a comprehensive suite of supports to their sons and daughters…The pressures on families with kids with significant disabilities as we know is quite substantial…I think the promise is too low. Equally, I think some of the jurisdictional barriers – the capacity to participate in dual programming – is clearly a problem.*

b)   Open employment is seen as 'high risk' with a lack of safety nets

Families and people with a disability perceived a lack of safety nets in moving to open employment, including the risk of loss of the Disability Support Pension (DSP) and loss of a place in day options or business services if they moved from those services.

But also the safety net….over the last couple of years where they want to actually try open employment or supported employment but what happens if they don't like it? Now we have all those 'what happens?'. …….parents don't want to try employment in fear of…if Joe Bloggs doesn't work out in his job, he's going to be sitting at home doing nothing and I've got to finish work etc…And the risk of losing the DSP in the process is a significant barrier. Or the perception of losing it is very real for families and individuals…you have these discussions around probably being able to get back onto the pension, but it's the perception…If they get into a job, the pension is affected for so many hours. It's means tested. If they work full time, then they might actually lose the pension…And they very well might get their pension back, but it's a much bigger gamble….It's much more laborious to actually go back through the system – through Centrelink…Now you have to go through an assessment to show you do have a disability even though three months ago they were on a disability pension…

c)   Lack of interface and pathways between employment services

The perceived lack of a "safe" pathway between supported and open employment acted as a disincentive. This was exacerbated by the perception that it was not possible to access both supported and open employment at the same time.

In discussion on this issue, DEWR representatives confirmed that the current policy position did not support a consumer being in both supported and open employment services at the same time, however DEWR did have arrangements in place with FaCSIA for a place in business services to be suspended if a person with a disability wanted to try open employment. This would allow automatic re-entry within a period of two years back to business services should a person give up open employment, assuming.

During the consultations, knowledge of these arrangements among service providers and consumers was not apparent. Furthermore, because of the lack of interface and pathways between supported and open employment, a perceived problem was that people may be 'waiting around' rather than continuing supported employment, while searching for open employment.

There's a problem around having to resign if you wanted to try moving from a business service into open employment. There would be enormous fear for

parents of jeopardising a business service place. Especially for ageing parents. They are not going to take the risk of a move to open employment.

Many aspire towards open employment, but in terms of the movement from one to another, the decisions by the Government not to allow dual funding means there's no portability or movement.

If you've got State Government funding and you're in a day options program, you can present yourself to a JCA and get access to an employment program and have both. If you make the decision to go to sheltered employment, you do not have that option. For people with significant support needs, that's discriminatory…explained to me by DEWR (that) the system of EA3000 wouldn't allow it because it was picking up that you were getting FaCSIA funding and double dipping.

d) Funding limitations

There were policy and funding limitations that affected the extent of ongoing support that was available through the DEN. This was perceived to be a disincentive for open employment participation, especially if the person with a disability had high or ongoing support needs.

In discussion with DEWR representatives on this issue, the concept of "swings and roundabouts" was explained whereby the Job Network funding methodology, as applied to the DEN, was based on spending less on some job seekers and more on others. At the same time, account managers were generally expected to ensure that level of service corresponds to higher levels of funding.

…the level of funding goes nowhere near being able to support anything more than an 8-10 hour week job for someone with high support needs…certainly agencies secure individual placements for them and high quality placements but should that person require one-to-one support…it doesn't surprise me that services group people with high support needs together in order to give them more hours of service…or they'd set up a work crew or form an enclave or whatever – but it's got to be a group solution so that you have one staff member being able to support a number of people…

A number of DSP referrals to the capped program have not actually commenced due to a lack of places. These people have to either wait for a

vacancy or they can go to the Job Network if they want immediate support. There are risks associated with not engaging them when they are motivated, or of sending people to an inappropriate service.

e) A service system of silos

There was a strong perception across the disability field that employment and day options services did not operate in a collaborative, "joined up" fashion in being separated into different levels of government, different government departments, and different policy contexts and service systems. This did not engender the confidence of consumers, service providers, or policy makers. Few examples were given of effective interfaces between policy and service areas.

One of the things with welfare to work is…the organisations with whom you have to deal now has become a little more muddy. Now you're got DEWR capped and uncapped, Job Network, outsourcing to other programs through vocational rehabilitation, Centrelink JCA – so it's more muddy. That's made the process fairly daunting for people with a disability and their family members.

Policy has forced a Government attitude that as a person with a disability, you are entitled to one service, day options, business services, or open employment, but we (Government) don't subscribe to the situation where you can start in a day options, develop your skills to move to a business service, then move on further to open employment. There's all these barriers in between. It's like you've got State funding so you can't move across to here. But there's even barriers within the Federal Government. You're funded by FaCSIA and there's probably a bigger wall between them and DEWR.
In relation to policy development, even at the level of the CSTDA, even between Commonwealth Departments, FaCSIA and DEWR, each area has their own separate paths and they never meet and that flows down to the State and causes limitations on what can be done.

f) Concern over job capacity assessments

The nexus between assessment for income support and work capacity assessment was perceived to constitute a substantial barrier to access to open employment for people with a disability. Families and people with a disability may not be willing to approach Centrelink and go through a job capacity assessment which may mean a reassessment of eligibility for the DSP.

DEWR (Steering Committee) reported: "DEWR figures showing that overall commencements in DEN being higher than under block grant funding again demonstrate that perceptions do not translate into actual behaviour."

We've got some people in our business service who want to get into open employment, but they're scared because they don't want to chance a reassessment of their DSP. We've got direct experience of people saying that to us.

We have too. Of our nearly 500 people, we'd have about half a dozen a year move to open employment. But there's a real reluctance.

"It is also interesting now that there is evidence coming through – anecdotal, but people are collecting it – of a number of people that once they hear of the hoops they have to jump through for the referral, that they are just saying, 'Sorry, too hard.'

2.2.4 Changes to employment service practices

Services have modified and adjusted their practices as they attempted to maintain their perceived purposes and their viability in response to employment reforms. This had led to some confusion in discrete service models including open and supported employment, and day options. Some of the reported changes to service practices will be described under the following headings.

a)   Focus on employment outputs in the DEN

b)   Increased use of enclaves and other congregate models

c)   Increased commercial nature of supported employment services

d)   Increased vocational activity in day options services

a)   Focus on employment outputs in the DEN

Many DEN providers were perceived to focus entirely on employment outcomes with limited attention to "whole of life" needs or to "quality" employment outcomes. This had resulted in inadequate support to people with high support needs and negative impacts on the achievement of sustainable employment outcomes.

DEWR (Steering Committee) reported: "Around 6,500 Den capped clients achieved employment outcomes of 26 weeks of at least eight hours a week. This is around a 20% increase on the same period last year. Also, the number of clients achieving employment in the DEN uncapped stream is rising rapidly."

Now, you can't say, 'Look, I met with this guy three days this week because he was really having a problem, whereas I haven't had to meet with that guy for two months (before) because he is doing fine. I have just made the occasional phone call.' You can't do that. Every critique of Job Network, and DEWR and Job Network, is it is micro-management. You don't have the flexibility, so I think that is what people are feeling…So the main disadvantage is people with high support needs, because it may be that they require - - You know, you have got to use that 'unders and overs' system to give them intensive support at various times.

DENs need to be held more accountable for their outcomes and for the type and duration of support that they offer. They need to provide realistic on-the-job support. They won't move people off their books until they've got new clients ready to replace them, but at the same time, they don't provide support or further opportunities for their existing clients.

b) Increased use of enclaves and other congregate models

Some open employment services reportedly had moved away from individualised approaches by developing congregate services such as enclaves, or placing people in business services, in order to maximise outcomes and minimise staff support. This was seen to affect quality of employment outcomes.

An enclave in a factory supported by one staff member…and each one gets an outcome. To match that in traineeships and apprenticeships is a massive difference in effort and work – so if I was to go for outcomes…how could I resolve a quick outcome?

There are examples coming through now of combining people with disabilities from open employment on full award wages and employing them in business services. I had one yesterday.

c) Increased commercial nature of supported employment services

Case-based funding (CBF) was perceived to have brought both benefits and disadvantages to different business services and to people with a disability who have high support needs. In principle, CBF should have created more opportunities for participation by people with high support needs. Additional benefits included

improvement in work conditions for consumers of business services and enhanced funding levels for some providers. Some providers did not receive enhanced funding.

The emphasis on the business model was perceived to have threatened the viability of some agencies, particularly smaller agencies and those with larger proportions of high support consumers. Business services were perceived to be less likely to take on people with high support needs and older consumers because of their lower productivity. Similarly there was a view that business services were increasingly unwilling to deal with people with challenging behaviour because of the increased risks and occupational health and safety rules.

I think first it is fair to talk about the positive signals, and the most positive signal is the linking of funding levels to individual support needs, and that is something that in principle we supported strongly, because in principle it means that people of all support levels, or at least up to a certain level, do get access to employment, whereas under the block grant system where you were sort of dividing a lump of money among people with quite varying needs, that in principle and in theory would have disadvantaged people whose support needs were quite high. So I think that has to be acknowledged that that case-based funding system was a good policy response, but there are other signals that are occurring that are probably running against that.

The introduction of case-based funding has been a positive one for our organisation (a business service) in that it's levelled the playing field. There are others who will say it's the biggest disaster that's ever happened…we were block funded at an average of about $2500 per person…now that's increased to about $6,500 per head, so that has obviously helped us catch up.

Within business services as an outcome of the business services review, there has been a very strong message to business services to become more commercially focused and to act more like employers and less like service providers, and to treat supported employees as employees and not as clients, you know, to become more business-like.

…with the pressures now being applied to business services and the need to be profitable, and I don't deny that that has to happen and it's a good thing. But I think there's also a balancing act of what work do we pick up as a business

service for people with high support needs that they can actually do as against finding work that is giving you good dollar income and return for which you really need to have low support need people that can cope with more technical type work that's going to provide the dollars. Now the fact of life is one way or another people will tend to discriminate against employing people with high support needs because they can't cope with that work.

…with the smaller organisations, CBF is an issue because there's not consistent administration amount of funding to keep their operations going…(AN ORGANISATION) is freaking out because all of a sudden they are going to lose thousands of dollars a year(through consumers "retiring")…there's a real risk there, especially for the smaller agencies.

d)   Increased vocational activity in day options services

There was a perception that day options services increasingly offered pre-employment programs as people with a disability were unable to access supported or open employment services. In some jurisdictions, government funded day services were incorporating pre-employment programs and some governments have encouraged pre-vocational service development.

…the day options industry started developing these pre-employment programs and there was quite a lot of confusion …because that's what the Commonwealth are paying for…Day options lost a lot of focus in the last five or ten years because they were wanting to become one-stop shops – you couldn't get into training because the training was so scarce and so inflexible in its provision of service for high support people so day options started creating little training RTO's (registered training organisations). Where day services have tried to be creative or do pre-employment…so they just kept doing pre-employment and pre-employment, and pre-employment! And people have been pre-employing for years.

2.3 Profiles of users of open and supported employment services

This section examines data from the AGDSC and data provided by the AIHW to identify patterns and trends in the profile of users of disability employment services. The following Chapter describes the profiles of users of community access services.

This analysis addresses the following variables.

1. Age
2. Disability type
3. People with a disability who have high support needs
4. Main source of income

In addition to these demographics, this section also describes trends and patterns in the representation of people with a disability from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) groups, and people with a disability living in rural and remote locations.

References are made to analyses by the Productivity Commission to define and measure performance indicators of government objectives of targeting services to those with the greatest level of need and on an equitable basis. Groups for analysis include people with high support needs, people with a disability who are from a CALD or ATSI background, and those who are living in rural and remote locations. The Productivity Commission recommended that this data be used cautiously, as it relied on estimates of potential population and on the validity of the CSTDA NMDS which is compromised by high levels of non-response to some indicators.

2.3.1 Profile of users of employment services by age

a)   Open employment

Figure 2.3.1A shows the proportional distribution of all consumers in open employment by age for the years 1999/00 to 2005/06[1].

Figure 2.3.1A: All consumers by age 1999/00 – 2005/06 (open employment)
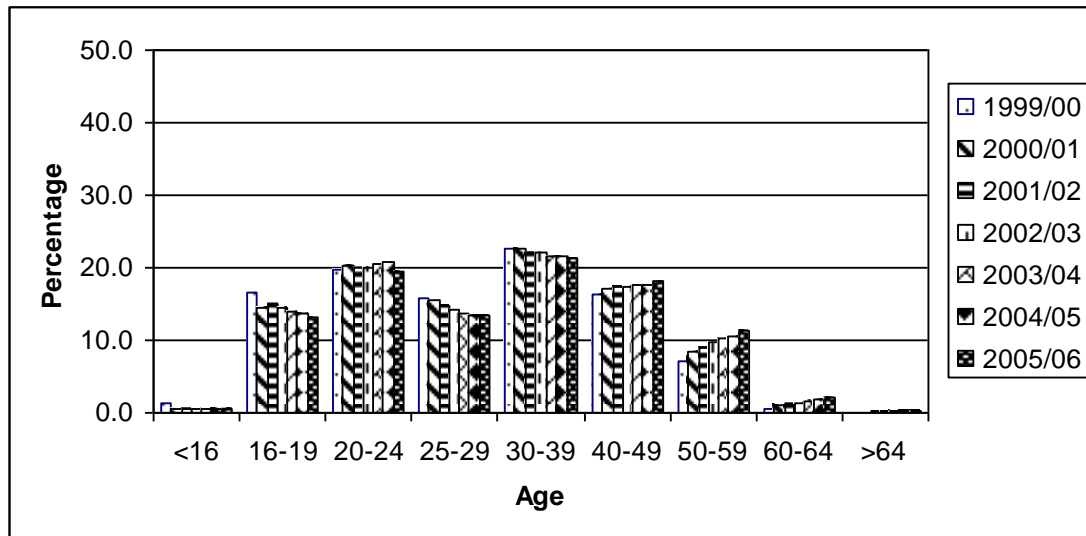
Figure 2.3.1A shows the following trends in the proportions of service users accessing open employment services.

- A downward trend in the proportion of service users in the 16-19 years age group which has decreased from 16.6% in 1999-2000 to 13.2% in 2005-06 although numbers have increased from 5,364 to 7,135.

- A downward trend in the proportion of service users in the 25-29 year age group which has decreased from 15.8% to 13.4%. The overall number in open employment in this age group increased from about 5,100 in 1999/00 to 7,235 in 2005-06.

- There are upward trends in each of the age groups from age 40.

The snapshot data for 1999 to 2003 shows similar patterns of distribution[2].

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[1] The data for Figure 2.3.1A can be found at Table 2.3.1A in Appendix C
[2] Snapshot data can be found at Figure 2.3.1B and Table 2.3.1B in Appendix C

b)   Supported employment

Figure 2.3.1B shows the proportional distribution of all consumers in supported employment by age for the years 1999/00 to 2005/06[3].

Figure 2.3.1B: All consumers by age 1999/00 – 2005/06 (supported employment)
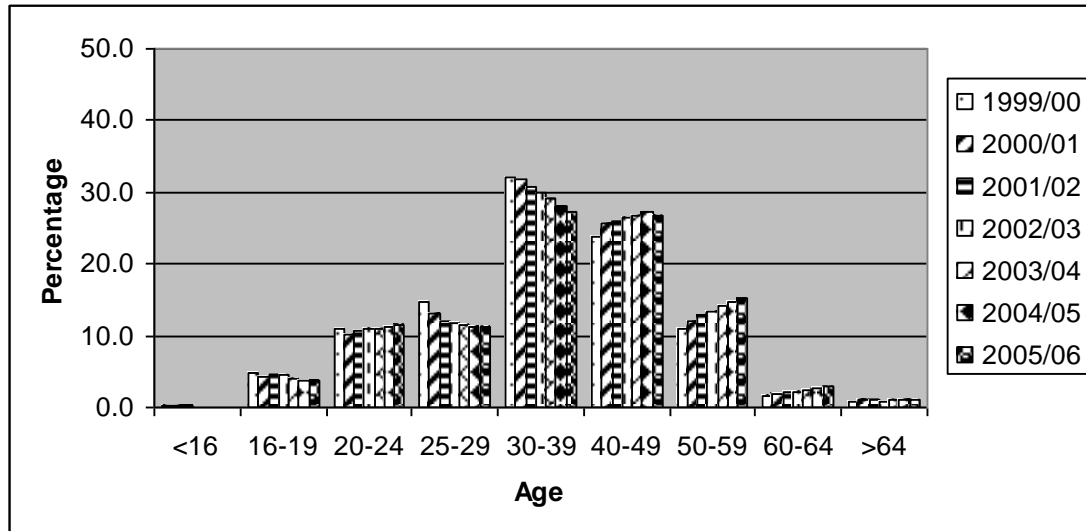
Figure 2.3.1B shows

- Service users are most commonly aged 30-49 (between 56% in 1999-2000 to just over 54% in 2005-06) indicating an ageing cohort, the profile of which is older than in open employment.

- The proportion of service users aged 60 and over is small although this proportion is likely to increase substantially over the next 5-10 years as the 50-59 years group ages, assuming they remain in supported employment.

- There is a relatively small group participating in supported employment after age 64, possibly reflecting a "retirement" effect.

The snapshot data for 1999 to 2003 shows similar patterns of distribution[4].

c)   Summary

The data on the age distribution of service users in open employment indicates a downward trend in the proportions of younger service users. This may partly be a reflection of policies and practices in the transition of young people with a disability from school which direct a smaller proportion of school leavers to employment.

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[3] The data for Figure 2.3.1C can be found at Table 2.3.1C in Appendix C
[4] Snapshot data can be found at Figure 2.3.1D and Table 2.3.1D in Appendix C

Additionally, and discussed briefly further in this report, the downward trend may reflect young people remaining longer at school and also increased numbers accessing VET. There is an upwards trend in the proportions of services users aged over 40 years. There is a clear upwards age trend in supported employment. Supported employment has a more ageing profile than open employment with a large cohort of service users moving into the 60+ age group.

2.3.2 Profile of users of employment by primary disability type

This section examines data from the AGDSC and data provided by the AIHW to examine patterns and trends in the profile of primary disability types across employment services.

a)   Open employment

Figure 2.3.2A shows the distribution of all open employment service users across primary disability groups.[5]

Figure 2.3.2A: All consumers by disability type 1999/00 – 2005/06 (open employment)
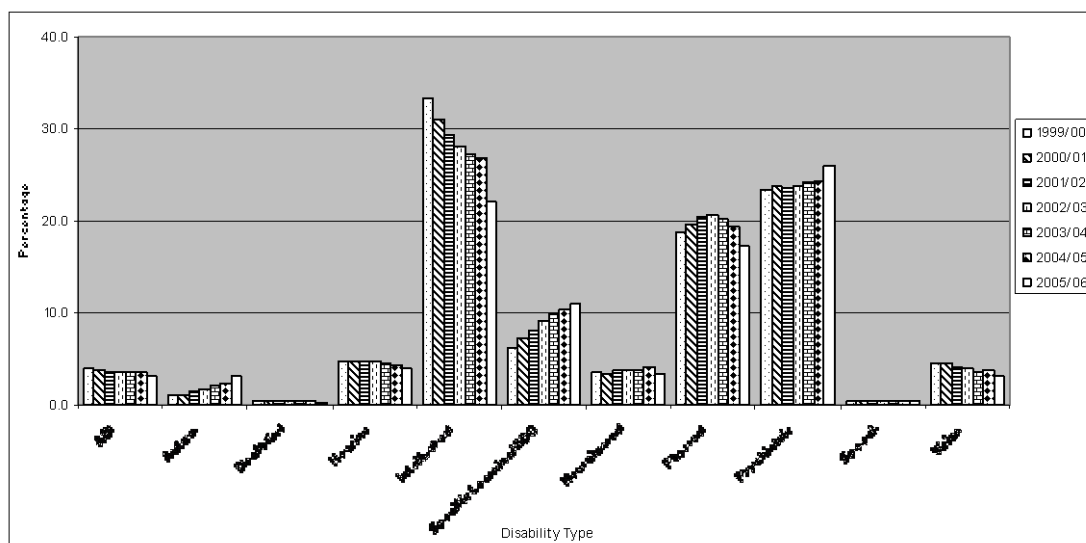
Figure 2.3.2A shows

- While it remains the most common disability type in open employment, the proportion of service users with an intellectual disability has declined by over 20% during this period. In the 2005-06 year, there was a large proportional decrease from 26.8% to 22% that reflected a net increase of only 32 service users with an intellectual disability.

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[5] The data for Figure 2.3.2A can be found at Table 2.3.2A in Appendix C

- Although there is a substantial proportional decrease with service users with an intellectual disability, between 1999/2000 and 2005/06, the number of open employment service users with an intellectual disability increased from 10,786 to 12,357 (14.6%).

- Representation by people with a psychiatric disability has remained relatively steady, with a substantial increase in 2005-06 at which time it exceeded the proportion of service users with an intellectual disability.

- Both autism and specific learning/ADD have increased proportionally during this time.

- All other disability types represent less than 5% of service users each.

What Figure 2.3.2A does not show is whether or not there has been a more notable shift in the disability profile in open employment prior to 2000.

Figure 2.3.2B shows the distribution of open employment service users across primary disability groups using 'snapshot' data for years 1999 to 2003[6].

Figure 2.3.2B: Consumers 'on the books' by primary disability group 1999 – 2003 (open employment)
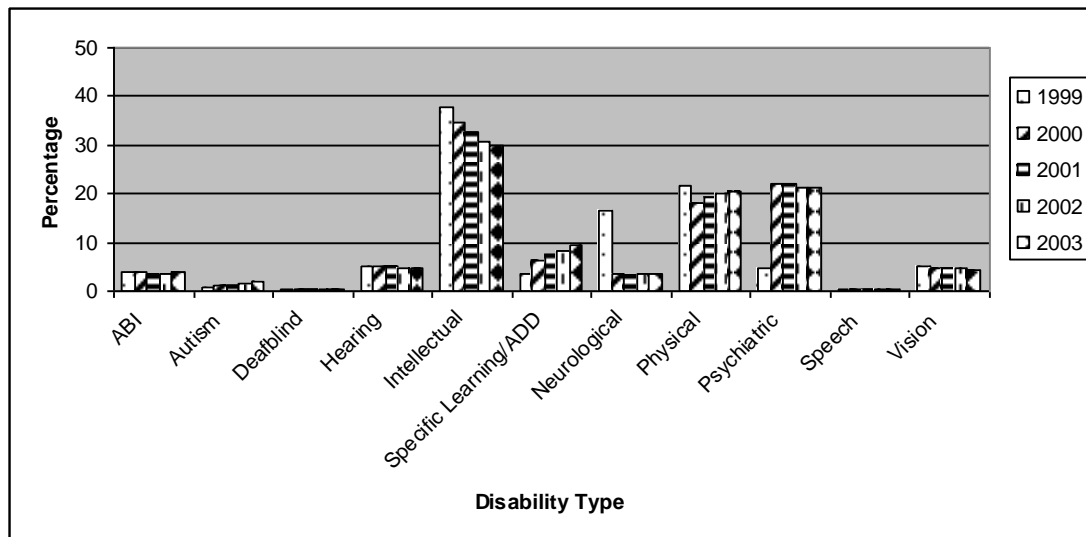
Figure 2.3.2B shows

- Some trends for 'whole of year' data from 2000 are observed in 'snapshot' data.

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[6] The data for Figure 2.3.2B can be found at Table 2.3.2B in Appendix C

- Participation by people with a psychiatric disability increased dramatically between 1999 (4.8%) and 2000 (21.9%).

- Participation by people with a neurological disability decreased by 79.4% between 1999 and 2000, and has remained constant ever since.

- The downward trend in proportion of service users with intellectual disability is clear from 2000 onwards.

b)   Supported employment

Figure 2.3.2C shows the distribution of all supported employment service users across primary disability groups[7].

Figure 2.3.2C: All consumers by disability type 1999/00 – 2005/06 (supported employment)
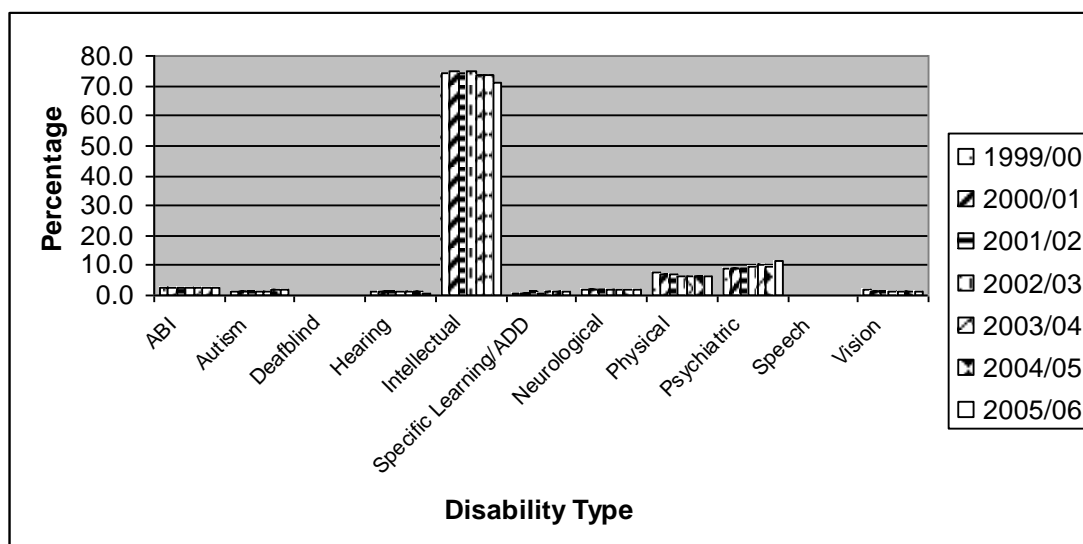
Figure 2.3.2C shows

- There have been no marked changes in the profile of disability types in supported employment during the time period apart from a small proportional decrease in the intellectual disability group and a small proportional increase in the psychiatric group in 2005/06.[8]

- People with intellectual disability comprise over 70% of consumers of supported employment services.

- People with a psychiatric disability represent over 10% of people in supported employment in 2005/06.

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[7] The data for Figure 2.3.2C can be found at Table 2.3.2C in Appendix C
[8] The snapshot data for 1999 to 2003 show a consistent pattern. See Table 2.3.2D and Figure 2.3.2D at Appendix C

c)   Summary

Whilst the proportional profile of service users in supported employment has remained relatively unchanged until 2005/06 when the proportions of service users in the categories of intellectual disability and psychiatric changed, the profile of service users in open employment according to primary disability type has changed substantially. As reported from the sector consultations, the proportion of people with an intellectual disability in open employment has declined and this decline has been occurring steadily since 1999/2000 and accelerated in 2005/06. Some of this change could be attributed to more refined diagnosis in which service users who would have been categorised as having an intellectual disability have been diagnosed as having autism or specific learning disability/ADD, both categories of which have proportionally increased over the entire period. However, in the light of consistent feedback from sector consultations, we believe it is unlikely that this would account for the extent of the change. Another factor may be that fewer school leavers with intellectual disabilities are accessing employment. This is supported to some extent by the age data.

These data suggest that transition from school to work policies and practices are not addressing successfully the reducing trend of school leavers with a disability, particularly intellectual disability, accessing open employment. This finding needs to be examined against the profiles of day options services and unmet demand.

The sector consultations also made reference to the greater diversity in the service users group in open employment and the growth in service users with what was perceived to be low work motivation. This may well be a reflection of the increasing proportion of service users who have psychological disorders whose needs may be more complex and are likely to be different from those of service users with an intellectual disability. People with an intellectual disability still make up the great majority of service users in both forms of employment, reflecting, amongst other factors, the historical origins of the development of employment services. There is a greater diversity by disability type in open employment (and in community access) compared with supported employment.[9]

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[9] However, there is also a relatively high rate of community access service users not identifying disability type.

2.3.3 Profile of users of employment by high support needs

For the purpose of this analysis high support need was defined according to the level of support/assistance needed in the three Activities of Daily Living (ADL)[10] and activities of work. To enable comparisons over time, because of definitional changes in 2002, high support need was defined as requiring *Continual Support/Assistance* from 1999/00 to 2000/01 and *Unable to do/Always needs help* from 2001/02 onwards.[11] An important question for this analysis is whether *Frequent Support* should be included in the category "high support needs". It was concluded that "high support needs" should be defined in relation to the population of CSTDA funded services rather than in relation to the general population and that on that basis high support needs would be limited to *Continual* and *Unable to do/Always needs help*.

Table C below shows the pre-2002 and post-2002 classifications of support need used by the NMDS. While these support classifications are not directly comparable, they are considered similar. Neither the Australian Government's AGDSC report nor the AIHW's report on the NMDS for that year offer any commentary on the anticipated or actual impacts of these changes. In comparing these definitions of support need classification, the most notable difference is between *Frequent and Sometimes*. These definitions have very different implications about the level of support need. In particular *Frequent* implies a higher level of support than does *Sometimes*.

Table C: Support need classifications pre-2002 and post-2002

Severity of Core Activity Limitation	Pre 2002	2002 Onwards
No core activity limitation	None – no support or assistance needed in the area specified	Does not need help or supervision in this life area and does not use aids and/or equipment
Moderate core activity limitation	Occasional support and/or assistance needed in the area specified, i.e., usually does not need support, or requires only minimal support	Does not need help or supervision in this life area but uses aids and/or equipment
Severe core activity limitation	Frequent support and/or assistance needed in the area specified, i.e., needs substantial support and/or assistance usually, but not always	Sometimes needs help/supervision in this life area
Profound core activity limitation	Continual support and/or assistance needed in the area specified, i.e., requires extensive and continuous	Unable to do or always needs help or supervision in this life

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[10] Self-care, mobility and communication

[11] On advice from the AIHW. An additional change in 2002 was the expansion of mobility activity to include support related to transport.

	support and/or assistance, with the person being unable to perform the task(s) without support or assistance, or being unable to perform them at all	area
	Not Known	Not Known

Sources: FaCS, 2002; FaCS, 2001 (reports on the disability services census).

Compared to other variables, there was a relatively high proportion of *Not Known* responses to support need. This places limitations on the validity of interpretations of these data.[12]

This section examines patterns and trends in the percentages of people who are defined as having high support needs in open employment and supported employment. It also examines the impact of changes to the support needs classification scale for the NMDS in 2002.

a) Open employment

Figure 2.3.3A shows the percentage of all consumers accessing open employment services who have high levels of support need between 1999/00 and 2005/06.[13]

Figure 2.3.3A: All consumers by high support need 1999/00 – 2005/06 (open employment)

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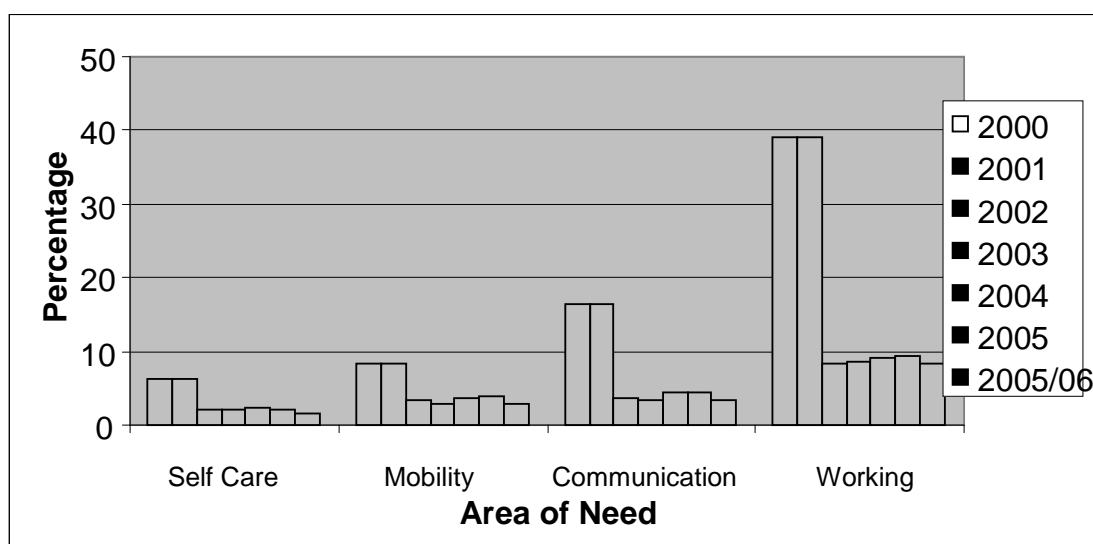
[12] On written advice from the AIHW, it is expected that levels of 'unstated' support need are not likely to have an impact on the analysis of people with high support needs. There is an assumption by the AIHW that those who do not report tend to have lower support needs on the basis that despite the rate of 'not stated' varying over time, the percentage of people with high support needs tends to be stable over time.

[13] Data for Figure 2.3.3A can be found in Table 2.3.3A in Appendix C

Figure 2.3.3A shows

- Greater need for support in activities of working than in any of the ADL.

- Gradual, small increases in the percentage of people with high support needs across ADL over the period.

- A drop in the percentage of people with high support needs in activities of working between 2000/01 and 2001/02 followed by a gradual increase, yet to reach 2000/01 levels.

The level of unrecorded support need in open employment is fairly consistent across areas of need over time. The highest recorded *Not Known* percentage was 12.6% for self-care in 2000.

b)   Supported employment

Figure 2.3.3B shows the percentage of all consumers accessing supported employment who had high support needs.[14] Compared to other variables, there was a relatively high proportion of *Not Known* responses. This places limitations on the validity of interpreting these data.

Figure 2.3.3B: All consumers by high support need 1999/00 to 2005/06 (supported employment)
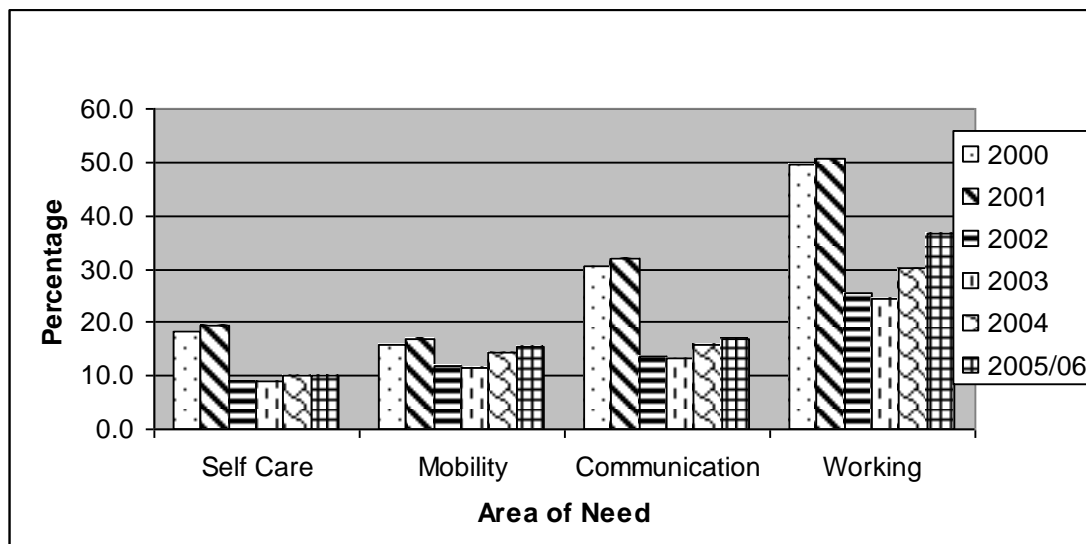
Figure 2.3.3B shows

- Greater need for support in activities of working than any ADL.

- Greater need for support in ADL compared with open employment.

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[14] Data for Figure 2.3.3B can be found at Table 2.3.3B in Appendix C

- A gradual increase in the percentage of people who are defined as having high support needs across ADL and activities of working.

The levels of unreported support need are slightly more variable than in open employment, with the highest rate being 10.2% for self-care in 2002.

c)   Summary

The analysis of access to work for people with high support needs shows that in each of the service types there are higher levels of support need in the activities of work than there are in the ADL. Furthermore there are clear differences in the proportions of people who require high levels of support in the ADL between the three service types. People with a disability who participate in community access (see section 3.3.3 below) have higher support needs in the ADL than do those in supported employment, who in turn have higher support needs than those who participate in open employment.

For each of the employment service types, there is a trend towards increasing proportions of people who have high support needs over time. This trend is far more obvious in supported employment than it is in open employment and in the case of open employment, the trend reversed in 2006. However, there is a definite decrease in the percentage of people with high support needs in the activities of working in open employment between 2000/01 and 2001/02. Levels of participation by this group have not returned to pre-2001/02 levels.

In its Report on Government Services, the Productivity Commission suggested that the proportion of people who are accessing services by severity of core activity limitation, or support need, can be used as an indicator of access: "The proportion of people accessing CSTDA funded services by severity of core activity limitation is an output (access) indicator of government's objective to use available resources to target services to people with the greatest level of need." (Productivity Commission, 2007, p. 13.21). On this basis, it appears that people with high support needs have greater access to community access services than they do to employment services, and greater access to supported employment than to open employment.

An additional measure used by the Productivity Commission to measure access is the "proportion of the estimated potential population using CSTDA funded services". (Productivity Commission, 2007, p. 13.14). The potential population for both

community access and employment services are those people with profound or severe core activity limitations as determined by the ABS survey. These numbers are mediated by particular factors in each service group.[15] For community access services, the potential population is also defined as being aged under 65 years and an Indigenous factor is also included. For employment services potential population is further defined by an age range of 15-64 years, and both Indigenous factors and labour force participation rates are also factored in. According to the Productivity Commission's definition of access, the higher the proportion of the estimated potential population using the service, the greater the level of accessibility. On that basis, the Productivity Commission found that employment services perform better than community access services in relation to accessibility, with 19.4% of the estimated potential population using employment services in 2004/05 and only 5.3% of the estimated potential population using community access services in the same year (Productivity Commission, 2007, p. 13.16).

2.3.4 Main source of income

This section examines data from the AGDSC to examine patterns and trends in the main source of income of people with a disability who access open employment and supported employment. Analysis of main source of income is based on full year data and main income source, by employment service outlet type in the AGDSC between 2000 and 2005.[16]

a)   Open employment

Figure 2.3.4A shows the percentage of people in open employment who indicated the Disability Support Pension (DSP), New Start Allowance/Youth Allowance (NSA/YA) and paid employment as their main income source.[17]

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[15] In terms of level of support need profound or severe core activity limitations equates to **Continuous/Unable to do** and **Frequent/Sometimes** respectively.

[16] Due to changes in the reporting of data on the main income source in 2004 which do not distinguish between open and supported employment for income sources other than DSP and NSA/YA, Figure K only shows data for DSP & NSA for all years. Paid employment is also included for years 2000 to 2003 as it is also amongst the top three main income sources.

[17] The data for Figure 2.3.4A can be found at Table 2.3.4A in Appendix C

Figure 2.3.4A: All consumers by main income source (open employment)
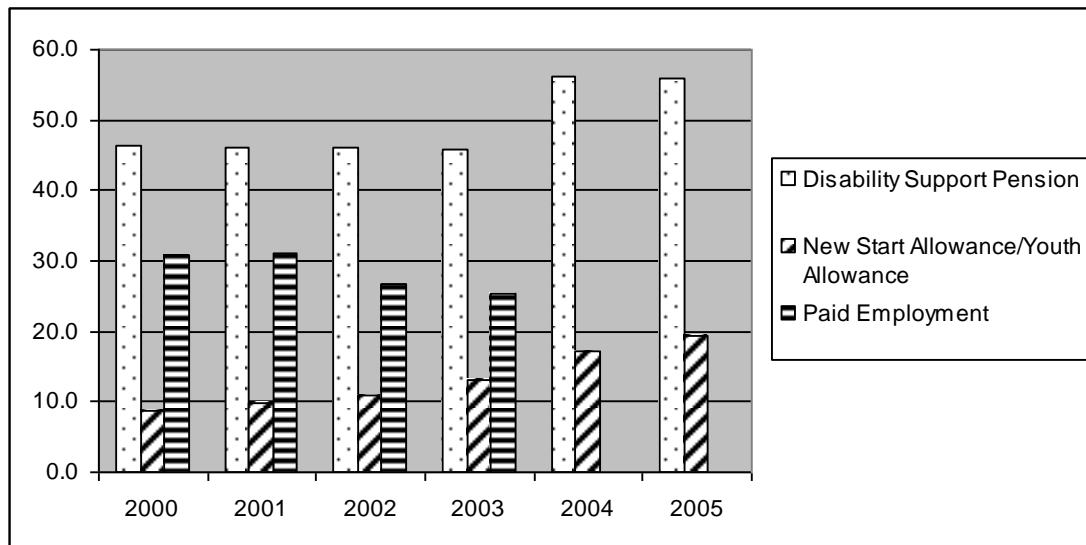
Figure 2.3.4A shows

- The percentage of people receiving DSP as their main source of income has increased over time.

- The percentage of people receiving NSA/YA as their main source of income has also increased over time.

- The percentage of people indicating paid employment as their main income source decreased between 2000 and 2003. Paid employment data is not available for 2004 and 2005.[18]

b)   Supported employment

Figure 2.3.4B shows the percentage of people in supported employment who indicated the Disability Support Pension (DSP), New Start Allowance/Youth Allowance (NSA/YA) and paid employment as their main income source.[19]

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[18]Reporting on main income source in the 2004 Disability Services Census did not distinguish between open and supported employment for this income source, therefore data beyond 2004 cannot be provided.
[19] The data for Figure 2.3.4B can be found at Table 2.3.4B in Appendix C

Figure 2.3.4B: All consumers by main income source (supported employment)
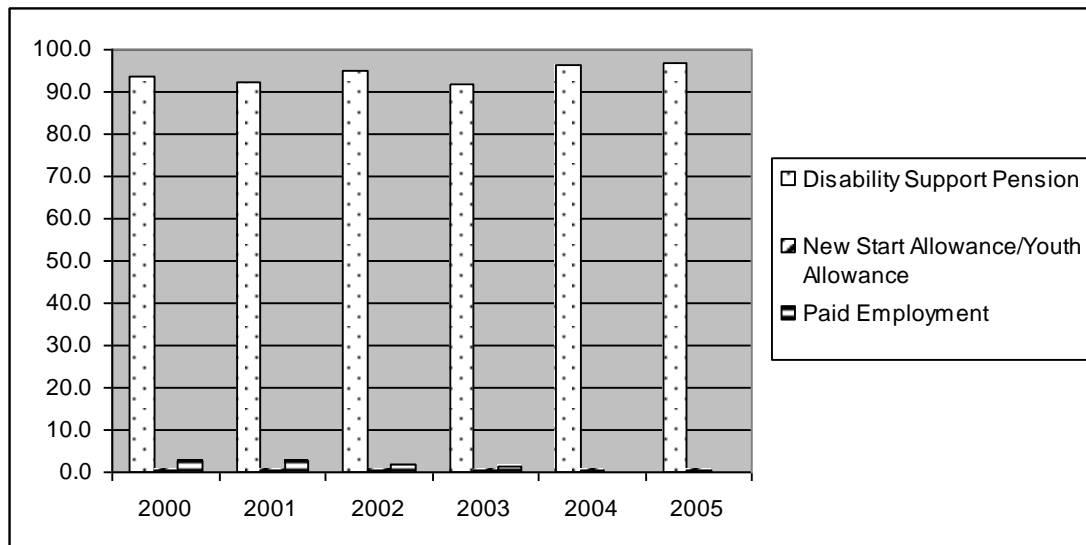
Figure 2.3.4B shows

- The vast majority of people in supported employment indicated the DSP as their main source of income.
- A much higher percentage of people were in receipt of DSP as their main source of income compared with people in open employment.
- There has been a decrease in the small percentage of people indicating paid employment as their main source of income.

c)   Summary

While the DSP remains the most common main source of income across the employment service types, some trends are emerging, particularly in open employment. In open employment, the proportions of people receiving DSP and NSA/YA as their main source of income have both increased. At the same time the percentage of people for whom paid employment is the main source of income has decreased. Over this five year period, the level of people on NSA/YA has doubled. With the introduction of welfare to work changes, the patterns in main source of income may have changed further.

2.4 Profile of employment characteristics in open and supported employment

This section examines data from the AGDSC to identify patterns and trends in the characteristics of employment outcomes in open and supported employment between 1999 and 2005.

This section examines the following variables.

1. Weekly hours
2. Weekly wages
3. Basis of employment
4. Wage type

Data on employment characteristics is only gathered on a "snapshot" or "on the books" basis for individuals who are employed. Data on employment characteristics is provided here for consumers who are "on the books" at 30 June and have a status of "worker" or "independent worker". Data on weekly hours and wages is calculated as an average over the financial year.

2.4.1 Weekly hours of employment

a) Open employment

Figure 2.4.1A shows the distribution across weekly hours of work in open employment, by individuals who were employed.[20]

Figure 2.4.1A: Employed consumers by weekly hours of employment 1999-2006 (open employment)
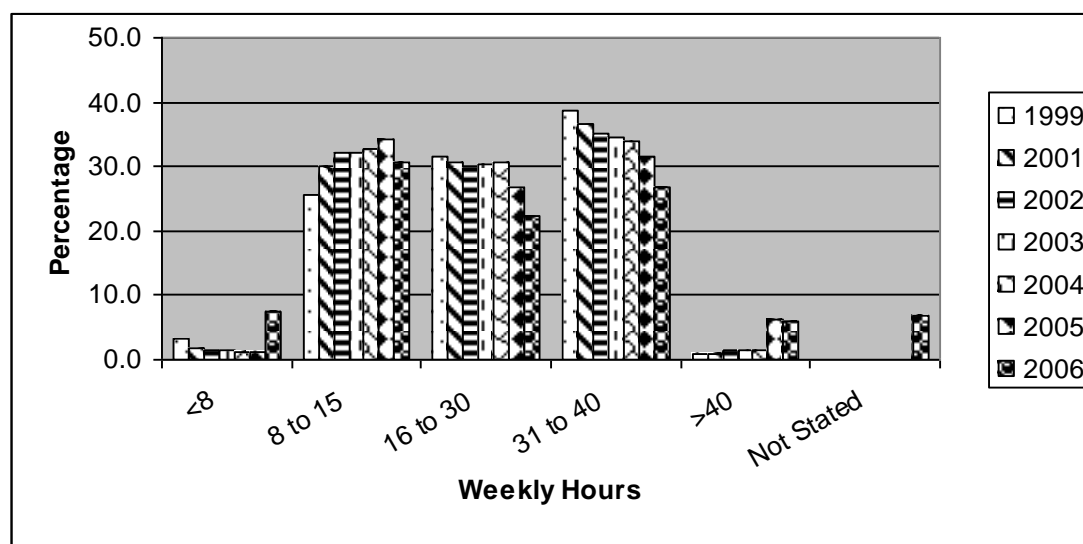
Figure 2.4.1A shows

- There has been a steadily decreasing trend of employed service users who are working 31-40 hours from around nearly 39% to around 28%.

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[20] The data for Figure 2.4.1A can be found at Table 2.4.1A at Appendix C

- The percentage of people working 16-30 hours decreased from nearly 32% to around 22%.

- The percentage of those working 8 – 15 hours has increased from nearly 26% to around 30%.

- The percentage of people working more than 40 hours has increased from a very low base rate of 0.8% in 1999 to around 6% in 2006.

b)   Supported employment

Figure 2.4.1B shows the distribution of weekly hours of work in supported employment, by individuals who were employed.[21]

Figure 2.4.1B: Employed consumers by weekly hours of employment 1999 – 2006 (supported employment)
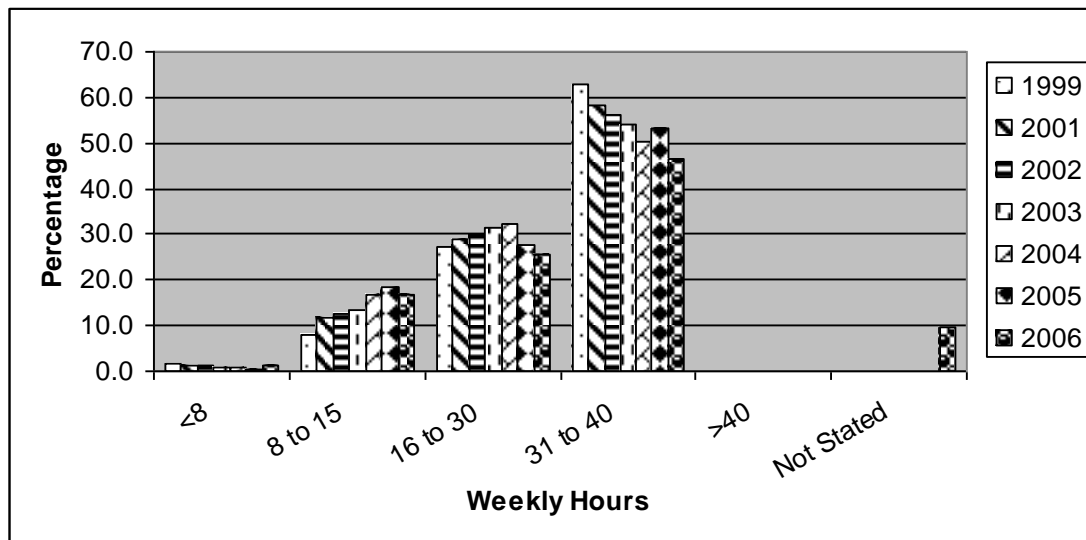
Figure 2.4.1B shows

- The proportion of employed consumers working 8-15 hours has increased from nearly 8% in 1999 to around 18% in 2006.

- The proportion of those working 16-30 hours increased from just over 27% in 1999 to just under 27% in 2006 with a decreasing trend since 2004.

- The percentage of those working 31-40 hours decreased from nearly 63% in 1999 to around 47% in 2006.

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[21] The data for Figure 2.4.1B can be found at Table 2.4.1B at Appendix C

c)   Summary

There has been a clear proportional trend of decreasing weekly hours in employment for service users in both employment types. Growth has occurred in the lower range of working hours (8 – 15 hours) along with a decrease in working 16-30 and 31-40 hours. In open employment there has been an increase in the proportion of people who are working more than 40 hours, however this remained a small percentage of the population. Employed consumers in supported employment continued to work more hours per week than those in open employment.

2.4.2 Weekly wages

a)   Open employment

Figure 2.4.2A shows the distribution of weekly wages in open employment, by individuals who were employed.[22]

Figure 2.4.2A: Employed consumers by weekly wage 1999 – 2006 (open employment)
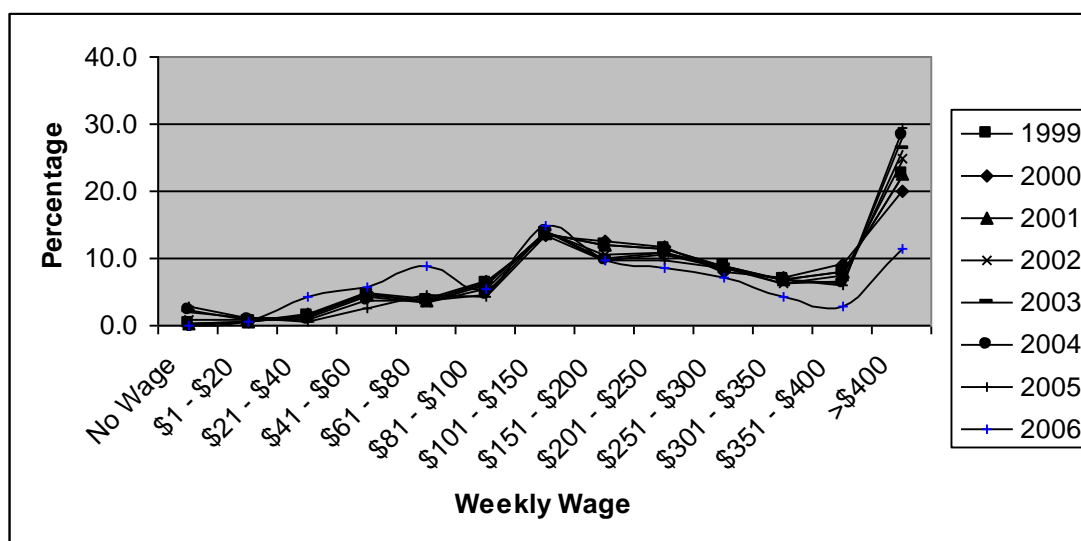
Figure 2.4.2A shows

- The proportion of employed consumers earning more than $400 a week has decreased substantially from 20-30% to around 11%.

- There has been a decrease in the proportion of people in most of the income brackets over $200.

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[22] That data for Figure 2.4.2A can be found at Table 2.4.2A at Appendix C

b)   Supported employment

Figure 2.4.2B shows the distribution of weekly wages in supported employment, by individuals who were employed.[23]

Figure 2.4.2B: Employed consumers by weekly wage 1999 – 2006 (supported employment)
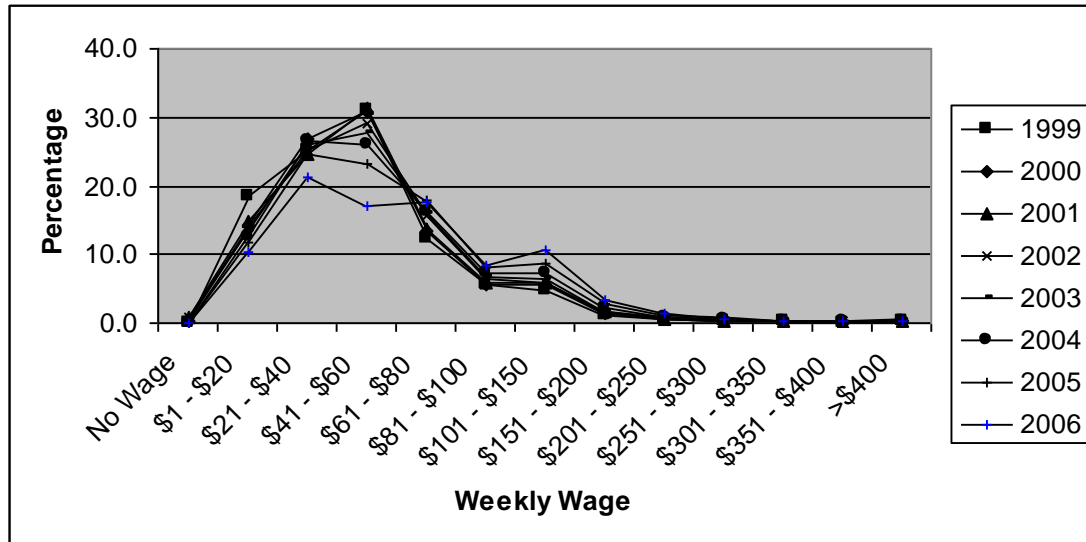
Figure 2.4.2B shows

- The proportion of employed consumers in each of the income brackets >$61 per week has increased.
- The proportion of those earning <$60 per week has decreased.

c)   Summary

Both open and support employment show a trend towards increased wages for employed consumers, however the earnings of those working in supported employment remain far lower than those in open employment.

2.4.3 Basis of employment

a)   Open employment

Figure 2.4.3A shows the distribution of wage types in open employment, by consumers who were employed.[24]

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[23] That data for Figure 2.4.2B can be found at Table 2.4.2B at Appendix C
[24] Data for Figure 2.4.3A can be found at Table 2.4.3A at Appendix C

Figure 2.4.3A: Employed consumers by basis of employment 1999 – 2006 (open employment)

Figure 2.4.3A shows

- The proportion of consumers employed on a full-time permanent basis in open employment has decreased from 33% in 1999 to around 25% in 2006.

- The proportion of those employed on a permanent part-time basis decreased from nearly 40% in 1999 to around 31% in 2005 and then rose rapidly in 2006 to over 50%.

- The proportion of those employed on a casual permanent basis has increased from over16% in 1999 to around 26% in 2005 and then declined rapidly to around 5% in 2006.

- The proportion of those employed on a casual temporary basis has increased from just over 4% in 1999 to over 11% in 2005 and then declined rapidly to around 2% in 2006.

- The relative movement in casual employment seems likely to reflect a changed definition of casual and part time employment.

b)   Supported employment

Figure 2.4.3B shows the distribution of basis of employment in supported employment, by individuals who were employed.[25]

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[25] Data on Figure 2.4.3B can be found at Table 2.4.3B in Appendix C

Figure 2.4.3B: Employed consumers by basis of employment 1999-2006 (supported employment)
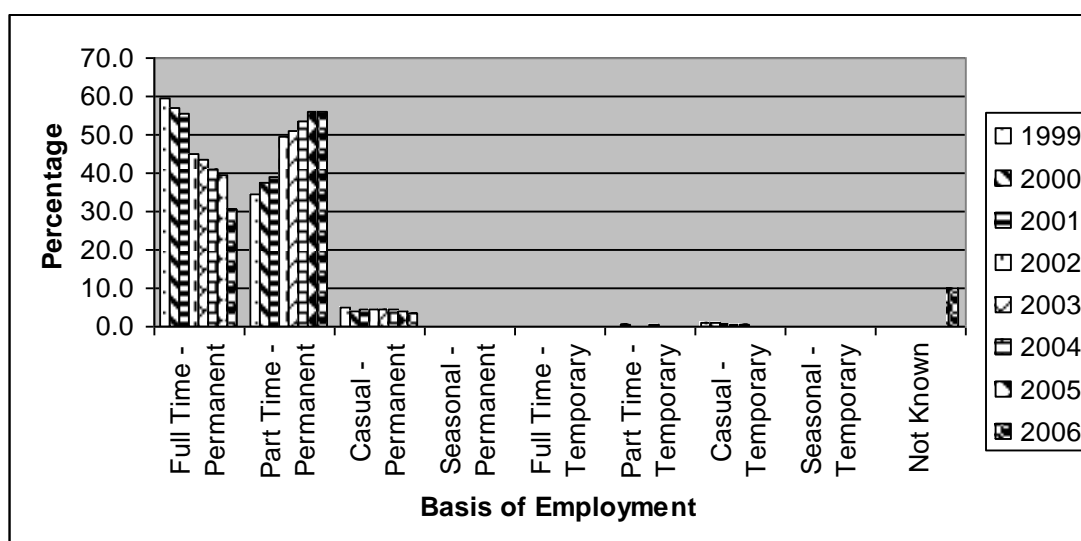
Figure 2.4.3B shows

- The proportion of consumers employed on a full time-permanent basis in supported employment has decreased from over 59% in 1999 to just over 30% in 2006 with a clear and consistent downward trend.

- The proportion of those employed on a part-time permanent basis has increased from over 34% in 1999 to around 56% in 2006.

c)   Summary

In both open and supported employment there have been very clear shifts in the basis on which people are employed.   In open employment, data until 2006 suggested that there has been a definite casualisation of employment as well as growth in those working on a temporary rather than permanent basis. In 2006, permanent part time work appears to have increased substantially.   Permanent employment is the primary basis of employment in supported employment and there has been a marked shift away from full-time to part-time employment.

2.4.4 Wage types

The AGDSC only reports on wage types for all employed consumers and does not distinguish between open and supported employment. In 2004 changes were made to the wage type item. In particular *Full Award Wage* was renamed *Respondent to an Award* and *Other pro-rata/productivity based wage under legal industrial agreement* was removed.

a)   All employment

Figure 2.4.4A shows the distribution of all employed consumers, by wage types from 1999 to 2005.[26]

Figure 2.4.4A: All employed consumers by wage type 1999 – 2005
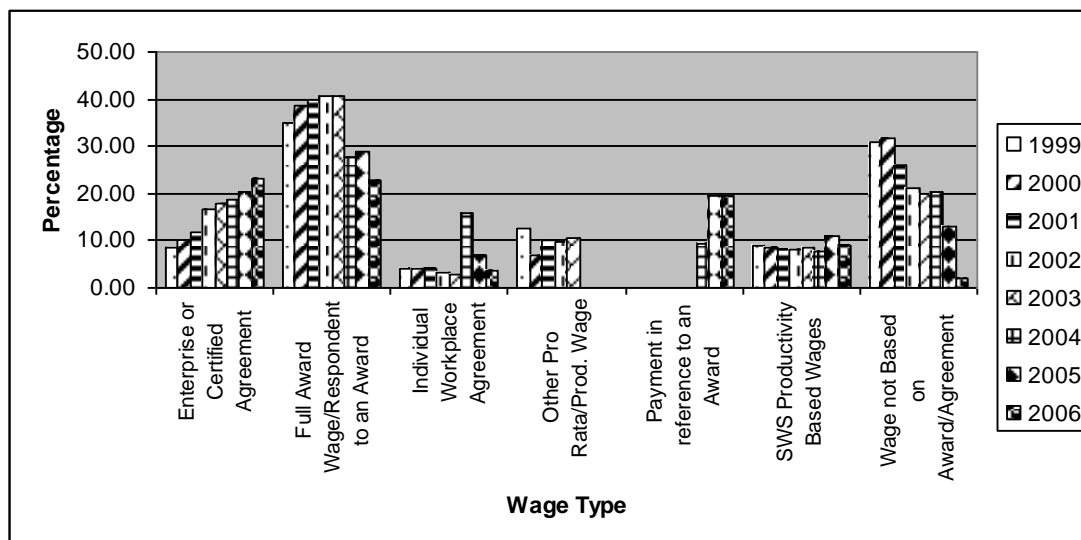
Figure 2.4.4A shows

- An increase in the percentage of employed consumers under an enterprise or certified agreement.

- An increase in the number of people paid under an Individual Workplace Agreement in 2004, and subsequent decrease in 2005 and 2006.

- A decreasing trend in the percentage of people paid a wage not based on an award or agreement.

2.5 Direct and indirect support hours in open and supported employment

This section examines data from the AGDSC to identify trends and patterns in direct and indirect support hours in open and supported employment.

2.5.1 Open employment

Figure 2.5.1A shows the relationship between direct and indirect support staff hours in open employment.[27]

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[26] Data for Figure 2.4.4A can be found at Table 2.4.4A in Appendix C. The 2002 report on the AGDSC does not provide complete data on wage types.
[27] Data for Figure 2.5.1A can be found at Table 2.5.1A in Appendix C

Figure 2.5.1A: Direct and indirect support staff hours 1999 – 2006 (open employment)
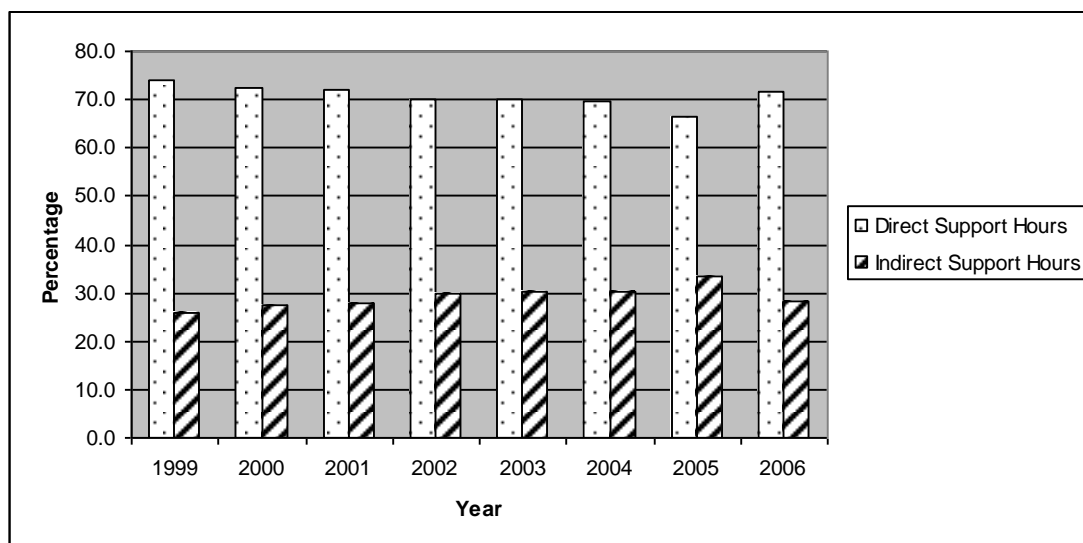
Figure 2.5.1A shows

- The major proportion of staff hours is provided in direct support.
- There is no clear trend in the relative proportions of direct and indirect support hours.

2.5.2 Supported employment

Figure 2.5.2B shows the relationship between direct and indirect support staff hours in supported employment.[28]

Figure 2.5.2B: Direct and indirect support staff hours 1999 – 2006 (supported employment)

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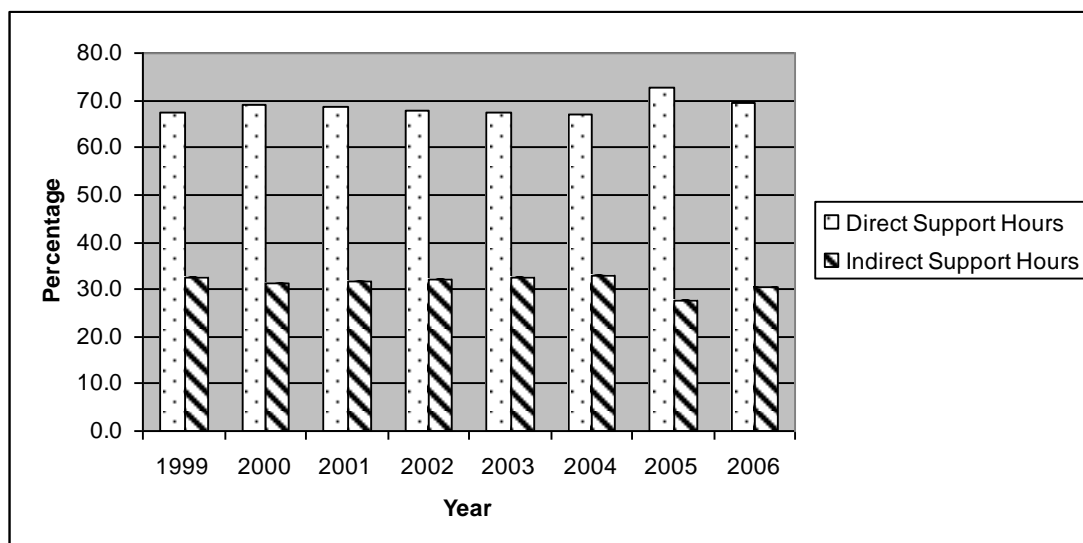
[28] Data for Figure 2.5.2B can be found at Table 2.5.2B in Appendix C

Figure 2.5.2B shows

- The major proportion of staff hours is provided in direct support;
- There is no clear trend in the relative proportions of direct and indirect support hours.

2.5.3 Summary

In both open and supported employment, most staff hours are spent providing direct support. The distribution of support hours between direct and indirect support has remained fairly steady.

3 Description and analysis of State and Territory day service reforms

3.1 Australian State and Territory day options developments

Under the CSTDA, day options for people with a disability, also known as community access services, are the responsibility of State/Territory governments. Day options programs include skills development, recreation, and a focus on community inclusion, with the ultimate goal of enabling people with a disability to participate in the community without paid support. Several jurisdictions are currently reviewing or reforming their day options programs with a focus on improving the post-school transition for young people with a disability and enhancing accountability through the introduction of outcome and/or performance frameworks. There is also a trend amongst governments to pay greater attention to the transition of people with a disability as they age and seek to retire from employment and/or modify their day options programs.

The following description is largely based on information about day options programs that is publicly available in literature and on the internet. This is supplemented by information provided by jurisdictional representatives, primarily during consultations.

3.1.1 Australian Capital Territory

Program 1

The Transitional Pre-Vocation Support program.

Description

This is a time limited (three year) program that seeks to assist young people to plan for the future, build skills, experiences, and confidence as they move toward their adult life and future participation in vocational activities independently. The project involves the planning and coordination of services as well as paying for support items which will make progress with those goals easier.

Target group

The program is targeted at school leavers who cannot currently participate in full-time employment or may not be able to do so in the future, including young people who have the capacity to participate in vocational activities such as employment, volunteering, further education, training, and require additional support to do so.

Program eligibility is broad. People must have a disability as defined under the ACT Disability Services Act and the CSTDA and have completed school with no option to return. In addition, they must not be able to undertake full time study (75% course load) or full time training or realistically pursue full time employment (30 + hours). Funding should make a substantial difference to the quality of life of the person. The primary disability should not solely be attributed to a mental illness.

The individual is considered vulnerable because of high/intensive and complex needs, significant health and ageing issues for the primary carer (reduced capacity to provide ongoing support), because current support arrangements cannot be maintained, the person with a disability is homeless or living in temporary or inappropriate accommodation, or where there is violence, abuse or neglect.

Funding model

Written applications for the program are shortlisted for an assessment interview to clarify and verify the information provided using the Inventory for Client and Agency Planning. Assessors come from Disability ACT and community agencies and have experience working with people with a disability, with specific training provided. Assessors will also discuss options for alternative approaches, and provide service information and referral as appropriate. Applications are then assessed by a panel to determine eligibility and priority within the available funds. The panel includes four representatives of the ACT government with experience in therapy, health and disability, as well as one community representative.

Applications are assessed according to the impact of the support on the person's life that will minimise the effects of the disability, maximise independence and make a substantial difference to the quality of life, and strengthen the support of family or carers where relevant.

The program is funded on an individual basis through a non-recurrent Individual support package for a maximum of three years. The maximum level of funding is $10,000 per year - $30,000 over three years. The individual, selected service provider, and government negotiate a Funded Support Plan which will include a description of the hours and frequency of support, base costs and additional on-costs.

Program 2

The Ongoing Support Through Community Programs Associations – Frameworks

Description

The program supports people who require ongoing daytime services to assist them develop their role as a member of the ACT community. The program offers a combination of planned community access services, and services that work to establish and support natural unpaid relationships between clients of this service and members of the community. The program can be centre-based or community-based according to an individual's needs and goals.

Target group

The program has the same target group and application process as the first program.

Funding model

The program is funded on an individual basis through a recurrent Individual Support Package according to whether the individual is assessed as requiring low to moderate sustained support or high and sustained support respectively. The maximum level of funding is $40,000 per year. The individual, selected service provider and government negotiate a Funded Support Plan which will include a description of the hours and frequency of support, base costs and additional on-costs.

Recent initiatives

In 2003 the ACT government evaluated its Individual Support Packages to determine their person-centredness. A number of areas for improvement were identified. In 2005 the ACT government developed an evaluation framework for its programs which included eight different components.

Also in 2005, the ACT government released *A Blueprint Project for the Future: Developing Future Directions in Service Delivery to Better Support Community and Employment Participation of People Having a Disability in the ACT* (ACT 2005). This report identified a lack of systemic planning across sector to create pathways from secondary education to further education and training and employment for students with a disability. It recommended the development of relationships between community access, employment assistance services, and employers.

In 2006 the ACT government established Local Area Coordination (LAC). The LAC model includes community development strategies to support the inclusion of people with a disability in mainstream activities.

3.1.2 New South Wales

Program 1

The Transition to Work program (TTW).

Description

The program is a time limited (two year) program which aims to support and improve employment outcomes for school leavers who can transition to work within one or two years. The program assists school leavers with a disability to develop skills and qualifications that will help them move into employment or education.

The program includes initial assessment and ongoing regular reviews, work focussed skill development, work sampling, specific job or career related training, and support to build a working lifestyle. If the young person is studying, TTW funding may be used to provide additional support to enable access where the usual supports provided by training and educational facilities are insufficient. The education would or training would generally have a vocational focus.

Target group

The program is targeted at young people with moderate to high needs who are unable to immediately access employment or attend TAFE or university due to their support needs, but are assessed as being likely to achieve employment after a two year TTW program.

To be eligible for the program, the applicant must be a school leaver with moderate or high support needs who has completed year 12, has an intellectual, psychiatric, physical, or sensory disability and is assessed as eligible for a service under the NSW DSA 1993. A current TTW user (including those from ATLAS – the previous post-school transition program) and people not undertaking employment, full time vocational or higher education are also eligible. Additionally, an applicant should not be in paid employment for more than eight hours a week, or in full time vocational or higher education.

The program makes some provision for early entry where there are strong reasons for a young person not to remain at school and they are otherwise eligible. Arrangements are also possible for late entry within two years of leaving school where an individual is otherwise eligible but was not referred, or sought other options.

Students with a disability in their final year of school apply for the program through their school. Eligibility for access to the program is determined according to the Post School Program Eligibility Assessment. This tool is a functional based assessment conducted by teachers with specific training and independently scored by the University of Wollongong. Wherever practical, applicants and carers/guardians also participate in the assessment process.

Funding model

The program is block funded at a rate of $17,213 for the 2008 calendar year.

Program 2

The Community Participation (CP) program.

Description

This program is an ongoing program to assist to assist young people to develop the skills they need to work towards their goals, increase their independence, and participate as valued members in the community. Service users can choose from three service types:

- Centre based with community access;
- Individual community based options; or
- Self-managed packages.

Target group/eligibility

The program is targeted at young people with a disability with moderate to high support needs who require an alternative to paid employment or further education in the medium or longer term.

To be eligible for the program an applicant must be a school leaver with moderate to high support needs with similar requirements to the previous program. Additionally, an applicant should not be in paid employment for more than 4 hours per week, or in full time vocational or higher education.

As for TTW, there is provision for early entry where there are strong reasons for a young person not to remain at school and they are otherwise eligible. Also consistent with TTW, arrangements are possible for late entry within two years of leaving school where an individual is otherwise eligible but was not referred, or sought other options.

Applicants are assessed as for the TTW but with a different benchmark for eligibility.

Funding model

Funding for the program is individual and recurrent. Individuals are streamed to one of four funding bands according to the Post School Program Eligibility Assessment of their support needs. The funding levels in 2008 ranged from moderate support at $20,701 per annum to exceptional support at $51,754.

Exceptional support is defined as requiring assistance with all daily living and all personal care and may also have complex behavioural issues.

<u>**Program 3**</u>

Day programs.

Description

Day programs are ongoing programs that provide meaningful activities which are based on a person's Individual Plan and that promote learning, skill development and enable access, participation, and integration in the local community. Day Programs occur primarily in groups settings either centre based or across a range of settings.

There are four areas of activity:
- Skills development
- Community access
- Adult education
- Leisure and recreation

Day programs do not provide services for ill clients, weekend, evening, or holiday programs. Respite is not provided unless it has a developmental element.

Target group

Day programs are provided for people with an intellectual disability aged 18-65 years who have moderate to high support needs. People with multiple disabilities where an intellectual disability is also present are also eligible.

For the purposes of eligibility intellectual disability is defined using the international definition of an IQ of two standard deviations below the mean with significant deficits in adaptive behaviour skills and manifest in the developmental period (prior to 18 years).

There is provision for young people with an intellectual disability aged 16-18 or over the age of 65 years after negotiation if they are otherwise eligible.

Applicants have an independent assessment of their level of support needs. Priority is given to:

- People with high and complex needs;
- People with assessed complex challenging behaviour;
- People who are at risk of entering a more restrictive option and/or whose carer is likely to be at risk unless entry into the service is facilitated;
- People who are currently in a government accommodation service;
- People living with an aged or sole carer who is not accessing other support services; and
- People who have no or limited access to other services for reasons of social isolation, geographic location and lack of peer support networks.

Funding model

The program is block funded.

Recent initiatives

The TTW and CP programs were announced in 2004. In response to low rates of young people with a disability in NSW transitioning to employment (only 6% each year through the former Adult Training, Learning and Support (ATLAS) transition program) the NSW government initiated a pilot project in 2002 to test new approaches to the post-school transition to employment. Under the Transition to Employment project, participating organisations, mostly disability employment services, received an individual's two years of ATLAS funding and continued to

receive the funding after individuals made the transition to employment. Defining an outcome as 26 weeks of employment, the final project report indicated that 37% of participants achieved an outcome in open employment and 24% in supported employment.

The CP program was revised in 2006 in response to a consultation with stakeholders about reforms to the program, *New Directions for Community Participation*. The NSW government has also guaranteed a minimum number of hours for the CP program. From 1 January 2007, CP participants in the Moderate and High funding bands receive a minimum of four days (24 hours) support weekly and people in the Very High and Exceptional funding bands receive a minimum of five days (30 hours) support weekly.

In addition to the introduction of these two programs, the NSW government has also introduced changes to the way it purchases, monitors, and evaluates day option programs for people with a disability. The NSW government has implemented a tender process for purchasing both CP and TTW services. It is also developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks, including performance indicators, in order to monitor the performance of the programs. Information gathered on the performance of service providers in delivering these programs will be used to inform future service purchasing decisions. For the TTW program for example, success is measured by the extent to which young people

- Move to open or supported employment at the completion of their program or their course of study.
- Perform satisfying and meaningful work that is consistent with their employment goals.
- Develop the skills and qualifications necessary for the transition to sustainable employment.
- Sustain their work and training commitments.
- Come from ATSI or from CALD backgrounds.

Outcome data for the TTW program at November 2007 shows that out of 692 participants, 52% had achieved an employment or education transition outcome, 18.4% had transitioned to open employment, 13.4% to supported employment, 16.5% to 'other' employment, and 3.5% to an education outcome.

The NSW government is also seeking to improve the access to, and effectiveness of, these programs for Indigenous people with a disability and people with a disability from CALD backgrounds. Specialist services are available for these groups and program monitoring includes specific indicators for those target groups.

3.1.3 Northern Territory

Program 1
The Darwin Post-School Options program.

Description
This is a time limited (four years), centre-based program which aims to assist young adults with high to very high support needs who are leaving school to reach their full potential. The program encourages young people to further develop their life skills and experience a range of options to further their education and training, skill development and employment opportunities.

Target group
The target group for the program is young people who need support to further develop employment and life skills and/or who require intensive support to participate in centre based activities and to access community and recreational activities.

To be eligible for the program, applicants must:
- Have a disability as defined by the CSTDA;
- Be over 18 years old and have not yet have reached their 25th birthday;
- Be leaving school in the year prior to entering the program; and
- Require ongoing and intensive support to participate in centre-based activities, community access, recreation, and skill development.

To apply for the program, Local Area Coordinators (LACs) work with Department of Education and Training Support Offices to complete an Assessment of Needs and Application for the Post School Options Program. Applications are reviewed by the Post-school options (PSO) panel to determine eligibility for funding and a place on the program.

The Assessment of Needs Tool assesses support needs across key life areas including communication, accommodation, health care, daily living skills, financial,

mobility and transport, education/employment, and recreation and leisure. The tool also considers possible areas in which the person may be at risk. The assessment processes also considers existing support networks, including services already being accessed and extended family and friends.

Funding model

The program is block funded.

Program 2

Day programs.

Description

This is an ongoing program to provide learning and life skills development to enable access, participation, and integration in the local community for people with an intellectual disability.

Target group

The program is targeted at people with an intellectual disability whose support can be maintained with out-of-home recreation, leisure, or life skills development.

Recent initiatives

In 2006/07 the Northern Territory government reviewed its disability services. The Disability Services Review provided a "whole of service system" framework and an implementation plan is in place. Current implementation projects include improving the intake and assessment process.

The Northern Territory government has implemented additional programs to support the post-school transition. This includes Remote Schools Pathway Grants for students with a disability and a Transition From School Program to assist schools to help young people with a disability make a smooth transition from school to appropriate adult life pathways. The program includes the coordination and development of Individual Transition Plans (ITP) with the involvement of the community and service providers to implement the ITP with information and ongoing support including

- Liaising with local employers and organise work experience opportunities for students to develop work and life skills.
- Employment options.

- Post-secondary education.

- Maintaining a home.

- Becoming appropriately involved in the community.

- Experiencing satisfactory personal and social relationships.

A number of Transition Support Groups across the Territory have also been formed with the goal of supporting school leavers with a disability to become connected lifelong learners. The networks include a range of stakeholders who are all seen as important to the post-school transition to provide input, advice and support. The stakeholders cover a range of services and supports including Vocational Education and Training, disability employment services, further education, accommodation, respite, community access, leisure and recreation, transport, mobility, and also legal services, and income support.

3.1.4 Queensland

Program 1
The Post-school Services program.

Description
This program enables young people with a disability to experience a range of options and opportunities as they transition toward establishing a life after school, including

- Participation and contribution to family life.

- Linking with and participating in the community.

- Exploring a range of interests and activities including possible future vocational activity.

The program supports young people with a disability to identify their needs and goals and explore the range of possible formal and informal supports required as well as assistance to source supports and services identified.

Target group
The program is targeted at young people who, on leaving school, are not able to access further education, training, or employment programs.

To be eligible for the program, applicants must be

- Eligible for CSTDA services.

- 18 years old by 31 January in the year they enter post-school programs, but not older than 21 years of age at 31 January.

- Exiting or have exited special school or special education programs and/or services.

- Of a level of disability which results in high and complex needs.

- Eligible for DSQ services.

- Not accessing tertiary education, vocational training, or employment options.

Applications for assistance are assessed against criteria to establish the level of disadvantage and to identify factors that have a highly significant impact on the young person's capacity to pursue transitional goals. Factors for assessment include

- Medical support requirements.

- Challenging behaviours.

- Cultural considerations for participating in family or broader community activities.

- People acting in a way that is detrimental to well-being or creates risk.

- Individuals living in a congregate living situation which is inappropriate, or have no carer.

The assessment also takes into account the family or carer's capacity to support the individual's transition goals as well as the types of services available and the barriers to accessing those services or supports.

Applications are prioritised by Regional Priority Panels. These assessments are then moderated through a state-wide process.

Funding model

The program is funded on an individual basis according to recommendations by the Regional Funding Panel of the support required to assist the young person to achieve their transition goals. There are two funding bands. The Low band provides funding of up to $14,500 (including up to $2000 for transport assistance). The High band provides funding of up to $18,500 (including up to $2000 for transport).

Program 2

The Adult Lifestyle Support program.

Description

This program supports people with a disability to live at home and manage their household, take part in recreation and leisure activities, strengthen personal and family relationships and networks and purchase necessary aides and equipment.

Target group

To be eligible for the program, applicants must be

- Aged 18 - 65 years.
- Be eligible for DSQ services.
- Be eligible for CSTDA services.
- Experience substantial reduction of capacity in communication, social interaction, learning, mobility or self-care and requires support.

Assessments of applications consider a number of factors including

- The individual's occupation or employment situation.
- The security and appropriateness of their current accommodation arrangements.
- The individual's social and/or physical isolation.
- Any barriers to accessing services.
- Any dependents.
- The carer's needs.
- How the person with a disability would like their lives to be different.

As per the Post-School Services program, assessments are prioritised by Regional Priority Panels and then moderated by a state-wide process.

Funding model

As for the Post-School Services program.

3.1.5 South Australia

Program 1

Day Options. This program now incorporates the Moving on program which was first established in 1997.

Description

The program aims to help school leavers with an intellectual disability or autism spectrum disorder to have interesting and meaningful things to do during the day. The program provides a range of education, leisure, and activity choices for this group who have left school and are not in employment in order to develop new social and practical skills. The age of entrants into the program varies as some people with an intellectual disability may remain at school until 20 years of age.

Approximately 25 organisations provide day options throughout the state. Three larger, centre-based programs are provided at Oakden, Highgate, and Northlink. These programs provide adult pre-vocational and vocational services in addition to leisure and recreation services.

Target group

The priority is school leavers with moderate to severe intellectual disability who require intensive and ongoing support. Approximately 60-100 young people who leave school apply and 60-70 are eligible for support. Applicants are assessed using the Vermont Assessment that identifies five support need levels. Only levels three to five are eligible.

Following referral from schools, Service Coordinators from Disability SA (DSA) work with people with a disability and carers to develop a service plan. This occurs in the middle of the year in which a student will leave school.

Funding model

Service users may receive an individual funded package of support, however service agreements are with the service provider/s.

Comments

Minimal movement on from day options was reported by representatives of DSA.

All but a small number of service users who access day options are school leavers and these will usually be individuals who require accommodation with an associated day placement or individuals experiencing critical need.

Day options services focus only on two disability types – intellectual disability and autism spectrum disorder.

During the consultations, a limited interface with business services was described in which a small number of people in day options tried employment. The examples given were in rural areas. The extent to which day options provide respite rather than developmental options was raised and also the need for clearer understandings of the functions and outcomes for these programs.

Recent initiatives

There have been significant developments in South Australia around transition from school for young people with a disability. In Chapter 6, the initiatives of the SA Social Inclusion Board and the State Disability Transition Program are described. The latter program reflects productive collaboration between education and employment.

3.1.6 Tasmania

Program 1

Supporting Individual Pathways (SIP).

Description

SIP provides assistance to young adults with a disability who have left school and are making the transition to adult life. It takes a pathways approach in which disability-related support costs may be provided for an individual to follow further education and training and pre-vocational options. The program specifies the nature of particular pathways that include voluntary work, VET programs, Work placement as part of an accredited training course, further education, transport training, specialist equipment, and support costs such as for personal care.

Target group

The target group is people with a disability who are under the age of 25 years and have high support needs. Priority is given to people who have completed year 12 at school, have a transition plan, and live in rural or remote areas.

Students enrolling in TAFE of university must have discussed their support requirements with relevant disability advisors.

Funding model

The program is individualised and does not fund support in employment, day options, or schools. Funding continuation is linked to the tenure of the course the young person has chosen.

Comments

There are no established lines of communication between DHHS and the Education Department regarding school leavers with a disability. Service Coordinators from DS have the major role in establishing connection between support programs and potential service users.

Program 2

Day Options

Description

The program provides a range of activities based on identified, individual client needs and may include work, leisure/recreation, education, skills development, and community access.

Target group

Priority is given to school leavers and to people leaving the SIP program. Entry into this program is dependent upon a vacancy occurring. Service Coordinators from Disability Services (DS) are responsible for the management of the program including filling vacancies in day options programs.

Funding model

DS area offices negotiate funding with the service provider and the Individual Funding Unit confirms the arrangement with the service provider. Full-time support is assessed as 30 hours per week and part-time as less than that. Service coordinators assess level of need which is linked to funding levels, however there is no consistent tool used to determine need.

Funding is essentially by block grants direct to day options services providers and is not fully individualised. At the present time, the program has no growth funding and access to the program is dependent upon vacancies occurring.

Comments

Entry into established day options programs is extremely limited. Although we could not access data, it is apparent that movement in and out of day options is minimal.

Recent initiatives

In December 2007, A review of Tasmanian disability services was initiated by DHHS. It is considering the respective roles of government and non-government services, efficiency and effectiveness of existing service models, and opportunities for improvement in non-government services.

3.1.7 Victoria

Program 1

Futures for Young Adults (FFYA)

Description

The FFYA program is aimed to provide focused and targeted support for young people with a disability to enable them to make the transition from school to further education, training, and pre-employment participation, including looking for work. The program initially was a response to the numbers of students with a disability who were remaining at school into their late 20s and was intended to be of up to three years duration.

Largely because relatively few people with high support needs were "graduating" from the program and following a Ministerial Advisory Group report, in 2004 existing participants in the program who required ongoing supports were able to remain in the program. They would be subject to a review process consisting of transition planning carried out by FFYA transition workers who utilised an individualised planning framework to ensure key stakeholders were involved in the process. Where appropriate, participants in the FFYA program could transfer to the community options program and others, for whom FFYA was no longer necessary, could exit the FFYA program.

Target group

The target group is people with a disability who are receiving school support through a disability program, who will be aged 18 years at the end of the calendar year, and who will be leaving school. A safety net provision allows young people to be eligible

to enter the program up to age 21 years if, for example, they had tried some other alternative. Students are ineligible if they intend to enter employment or are seeking admission to further education.

Funding model

Funding is individualised and dependent upon the content of the transition plan, assessed level of need according to the Support Needs Assessment tool (based on the Vermont assessment), and the availability of funds. Mainstream services are preferred and funded supports do not cover costs that other community members would be expected to pay.

Comments

The FFYA program is a good example of a well-constructed and flexible transition support program that has responded to two systemic problems in day options services across jurisdictions: the substantial number of young people with a disability leaving school and not accessing employment or employment services, and the reality that relatively few people exit these day options services.

Program 2

Community Options

Description

The Community Options program is essentially a response to the young people remaining in FFYA who have not moved out of FFYA and essentially provides similar support to FFYA.

Target group

People in the FFYA program who require ongoing specialist support and have been in their current placement for more than three years. An assessment using the Support Needs Assessment tool is not required in order for a transfer between programs to occur.

Funding model

Funding is individualised and based on a plan.

Program 3

Day Services

Description

The Day Services program provides daytime support and activities for adults with a disability to develop their skills, independence, and community participation. Many of these services originated with the original day programs developed by parent-inspired day centres in the 1950s (Adult Training and Support Services).

Day services provide activities in nine areas.

- community access.
- independent living training.
- pre-employment training.
- cooking and learning about health and nutrition.
- communication skills development.
- fitness, sporting, recreation, and leisure.
- art and craft.
- literacy and numeracy skills development.
- personal and social skills development.

Target group

People with a disability aged over 16 year of age.

Funding model

Funding is provided to service providers according to assessed level of support needs of individuals.

Recent initiatives

The *Changing Days Initiative* is aimed to promote more inclusive opportunities for people with a disability by assisting disability day services to develop their services towards more individualised planning and support in the community and to promote pathways to employment and social participation. In 2006-07, $4.14m was allocated over four years for this initiative. In 2006-07, ten projects were funded.

In 2005, the FFYA program funded five new pre-employment programs aimed to make participants job ready through accredited training, intensive support, work

experience, development of work skills, and job search experience. Six programs came on line in 2006. The correspondence with the role of the DEN is striking.

In 2007, the Disability Services Division released details of a new quality framework for disability services in Victoria and a resource kit for "person directed planning" (Disability Services Division, 2007). The framework applies across the range of disability services.

Comments

In discussion with DHS representatives, it was noted that consultative mechanisms between levels of government are still developing. It was also noted that data related to service usage in day options is not public.

3.1.8 Western Australia

Program 1
The Alternatives to Employment (ATE) program.

Description
This is an ongoing program that aims to ensure people with disabilities who are not able to maintain full-time employment have access to a range of meaningful options that encourage involvement in everyday community life while providing skills development, enjoyment, and satisfaction.

Target group
The program is targeted at people with disabilities who require an alternative to paid employment.

To be eligible for the program people with disabilities must
- Be eligible for Disability Services Commission (DSC) funded services.
- Have a permanent intellectual, physical, neurological, sensory, or psychiatric[29].
- Disability.
- Have no option of returning to school.
- Have a disability that is manifest before the age of 65 years.

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[29] People with a primary psychiatric disability are assisted to access employment only.

Young people with disabilities leaving school apply for the program via the Post-School Options process. Applications completed for students and assessments are done in conjunction with school staff and families during the final year of school.

Adults with disabilities apply for the program via the Disability Services Commission's Combined Applications Process (CAP) (described in the case study at the end of this chapter) which gathers information on the person's impairment, functional capacity, and current supports.

Funding model

The program is funded on an individual basis according to the assessed relative support need in hours. Support of one to six hours is funded at up to $1,712. Support of 15 to 25 hours is funded at up to $23,861.

Recent initiatives

In 2004, the Western Australian government conducted a pilot program, *Learning for Work*, to assist school leavers with a disability who required further skill development before they would be ready for an effective transition to employment. The pilot sought to respond to an identified gap in service provision between schools and disability employment services that the WA government identified as having responsibility for post-school transitions to employment. The pilot was evaluated and the program discontinued. An evaluation report is not available.

In 2006 the WA government commissioned a review of operating and funding arrangements for the ATE program. The resulting report (KPMG, 2006) identified a number of issues including concerns about the use of ATE as a form of quasi respite and a need for a greater focus on community inclusion. The report recommended the introduction of an outcomes based approach and a review of the funding matrix which determines the level of support and funding. A draft outcomes framework has been developed in consultation with the sector as part of a revised quality strategy for disability services in Western Australia.

In 2007 the WA government conducted a pilot project to ensure the seamless transition of students with a disability from school to the ATE program. Eligible 2007 school leavers were identified through the PSO process and invited to participate in the pilot. School leavers and their families selected an ATE provider, and the Department of Education funded the provider to provide support in the school for one

day per week during the first four weeks of the fourth term. During weeks five to ten, the student attended the service provider for one day per week. The school leaver then commenced their ATE program upon leaving school. Forty two students from 14 schools and 12 ATE providers participated in the project.

3.1.9 Summary of day options models

Although there are differences across the eight jurisdictions in the manner in which day options are provided, there are some common elements and trends that can be described.

- Each jurisdiction has clearly prioritised school leavers over older adults in both program specifications and access. In some jurisdictions (see case study below), no new resources have been allocated to the provision of new places for older adults unless there is a crisis or the adult is in supported accommodation that is funded through the CSTDA.

- There is thus a clear pathway in all jurisdictions from school, especially special education, to day options, particularly for students with high support needs. High support needs is clearly a common element of eligibility criteria. Some jurisdictions, whilst specifying high support needs, have narrow disability types as eligibility criteria and others have very broad criteria.

- Some jurisdictions established time-limited post school options programs (two or three years) and then found limited movement from the day options programs. This has led to modification and additional initiatives to deal with this reality. Without movement through day options programs, jurisdictions must anticipate an ever-increasing number of people seeking day options from each school leaver cohort, year by year.

- Many jurisdictions fund vocationally oriented activities as part of their CSTDA-funded day options. In one jurisdiction, the relevant program established a service model that resembles that of the DEN. Clearly, in all jurisdictions, a need has been identified to develop vocationally-oriented programs even though the CSTDA has placed responsibility for employment with the Commonwealth.

- There remains in all jurisdictions a reliance on day centres, many of which provide for a group that was historically created by the closure of large institutions and/or day centres established many years ago. This service model is usually block funded. Some jurisdictions have carried out, or are in the process of carrying out, reviews that incorporate day options programs. Generally the purpose is to encourage greater individualisation of services,

greater community connection, clearer developmental objectives, and measurable objectives.

- In almost all jurisdictions, the preferred funding model is based on assessed level of need that determine funding bands. In a few jurisdictions, this is largely individualised, with families and people with a disability having more or less control over the options chosen and the governance of funds. In others, the level of assessed need determines the amount of funding a service provider will receive in a block. A number of different assessment methods are in use across jurisdictions.

- In some jurisdictions, there is a move towards planning that is person-centred. Person-centred planning, individualised service provision, and individualised funding form a coherent service model from which there is evidence of better outcomes and greater family and service user satisfaction.

- There appeared to be no clear pathway from many day options to business services or open employment even if the program emphasised vocationally-oriented activities.

3.2 Profiles of users of community access services

3.2.1 Users of community access services by age

Figure 3.2.1A shows the distribution of all consumers by age for the years 2003/04 to 2005/06[30].

Figure 3.2.1A: All consumers by age 2003/04 – 2005/06 (community access)

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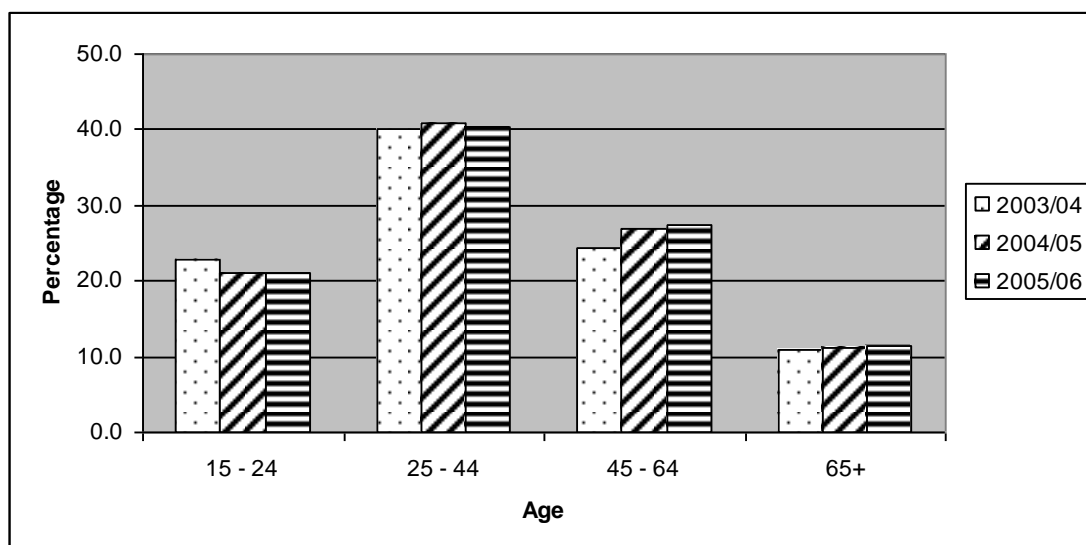
[30] The data for Figure 3.2.1A can be found at Table 3.2.1A in Appendix C

Figure 3.2.1A shows

- The patterns of distribution across age groups differ little apart from a decreasing trend in the 15-24 year age group and an increasing trend in the 45-64 year age group.
- The proportion of service users is most concentrated in the 25-44 age group.
- A substantial proportion of people with a disability over age 65 remain in community access services.

In the absence of a longer series of whole year data, whole of year data was compared with 'snapshot' data going back to 1999 in order to establish whether the observed pattern of distribution differed prior to 2003-04. Figure 3.2.1B shows that the age distribution for 'snapshot' day is consistent with the whole of year data[31].

Figure 3.2.1B: Consumers 'on the books' by age 1999 – 2002 (community access)
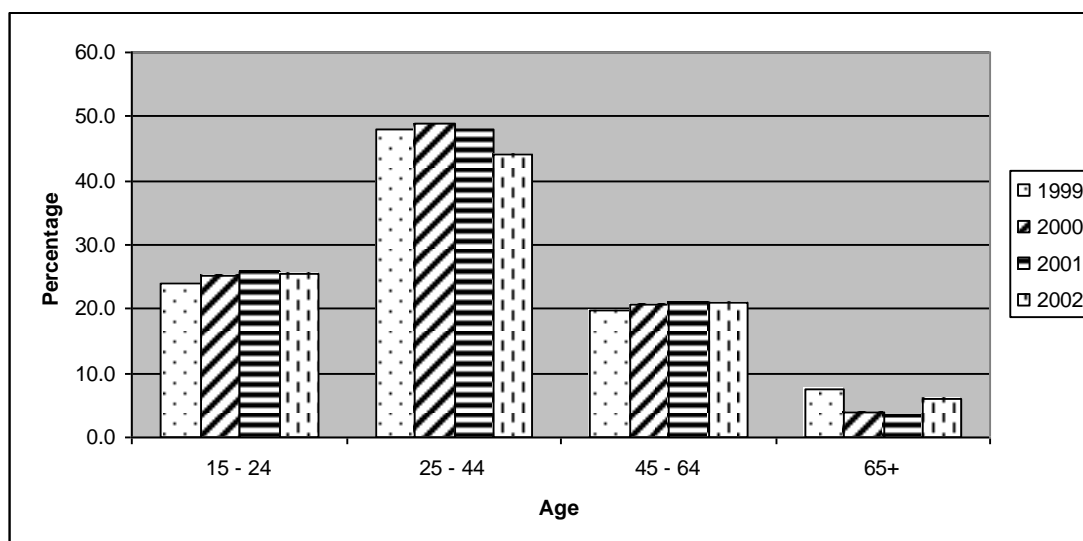
Summary

Most jurisdictions have a post-school transition process which streams young people into community access or employment. Sector consultation feedback on disincentives to choosing employment over community access would predict a relatively higher level of community access participation by those aged 15-24, but this would be limited by availability of community access places. Some jurisdictions have had an historic provision for students with a disability to remain in school after year 12, with some anecdotal evidence suggesting some young people have stayed

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[31] The data for Figure 3.2.1B can be found at Table 3.2.1B in Appendix C

at school into their twenties. Lower proportions of service users in the 15-24 age group may reflect young people remaining longer in schooling. Further anecdotal evidence suggested that significant numbers of young people leaving school access vocational education and training (VET). This would also contribute to the peak in participation after age 24 as young people exit VET.

A significant proportion of service users aged over 65 remained in community access services.

Also of note in relation to the employment/day options interface is that the proportion of people in community access decreases at the same age at which it is decreasing in both open and supported employment. This may indicate that people who are exiting employment as they age are not entering community access services.

These data do raise the important question of what happens to the substantial number of people with a disability who are no longer in any of these services after around age 50.

3.2.2 Users of community access services by primary disability type

Figure 3.2.2A shows the distribution of all community access service users across primary disability groups.[32]

Figure 3.2.2A: All consumers by primary disability type 2003/04 – 2005/06 (community access)

All Consumers by Disability Type (Community Access)

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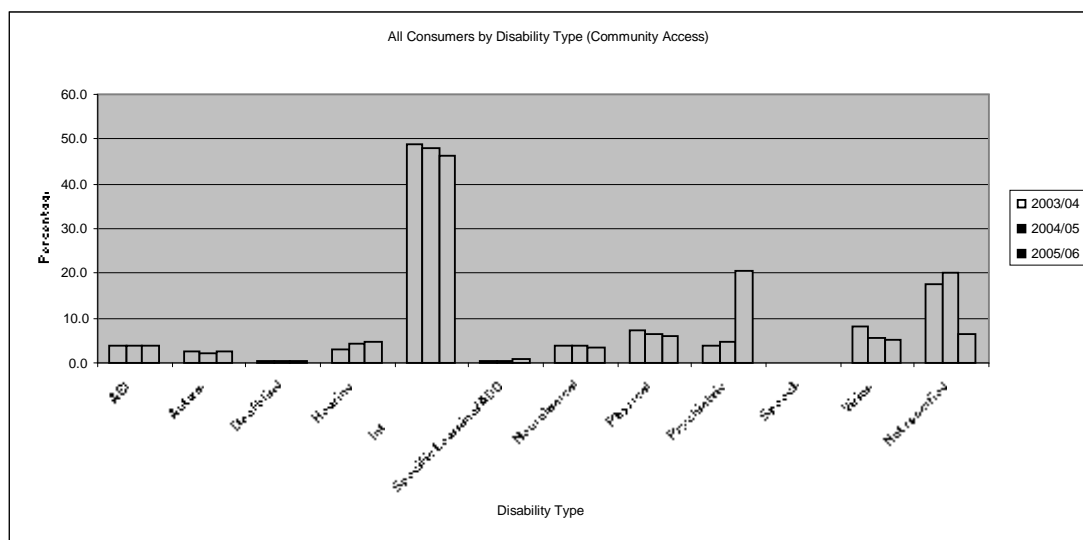
[32] The data for Figure 3.2.2A can be found at Table 3.2.2A in Appendix C

Figure 3.2.2A shows

- There are high levels of non-specification of disability type in community access data - up to 20% in 2004/05, but with a substantial reduction in 2005/06.

- While it remains the largest disability type there has been a slight decrease in the proportion of people with an intellectual disability over the period.

- There was a marked increase in the proportion of people with a psychiatric disability in 2005/066 (20.6%) from 4.7% in 2004/05.

- There was a decrease in the percentage of people with a physical disability.

Figure 3.2.2B shows the distribution of community access service users across primary disability groups using 'snapshot' data for years 1999 to 2002.[33]

Figure 3.2.2B: Consumers 'on the books' by primary disability 1999 – 2002 (community access)
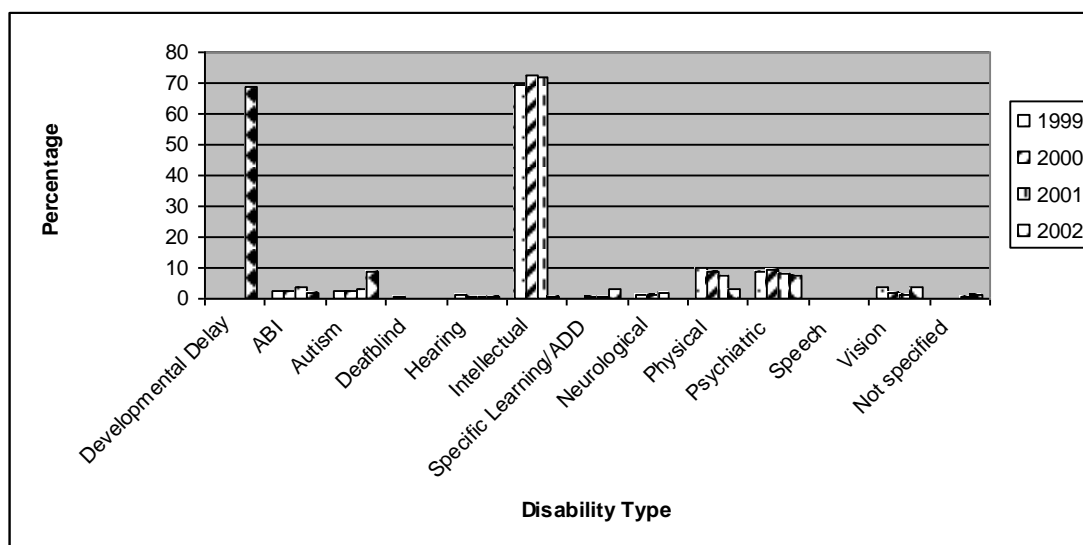
Figure 3.2.2B shows

- The introduction of 'developmental delay' as a disability type in 2002 for the 'on the books' data had the effect of virtually replacing intellectual disability.

- The distribution across disability types for the 'snapshot' data is fairly consistent over time.

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[33] The data for Figure 3.2.2B can be found at Table 3.2.2B in Appendix C

3.2.3 Users of community access services by high support need

Figure 3.2.3A shows the proportion of all consumers accessing community access services who have high support needs.[34]

Figure 3.2.3A: All consumers by high support need 2003/04 – 2005/06 (community access)
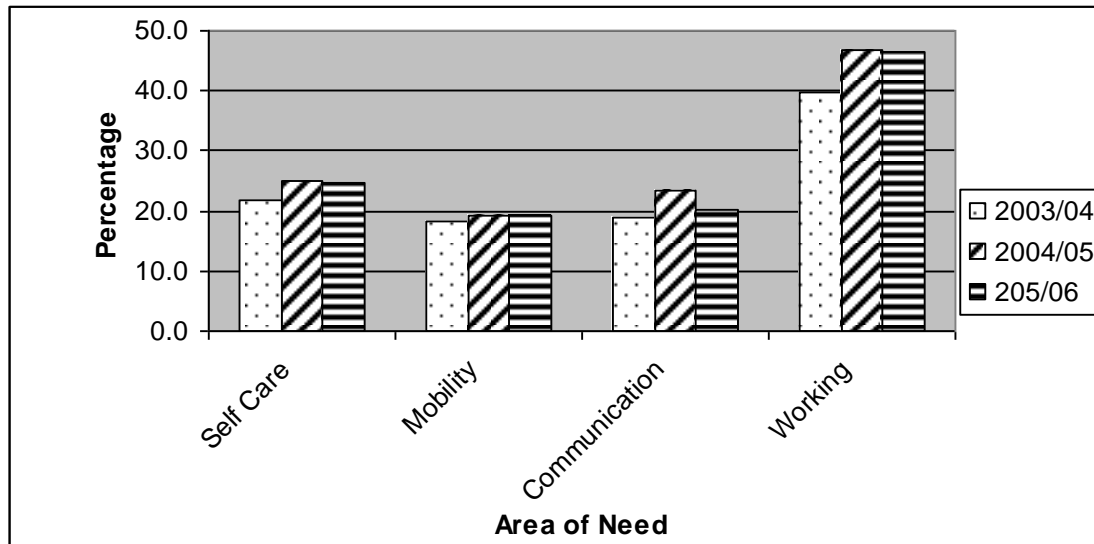
Figure 3.2.3A shows

- Levels of need for working activities at a higher level than ADL.
- Higher levels of support need in ADL than in supported employment.
- Higher levels of support need in working activities than in supported employment.

Levels of unreported support need in community access are much higher and variable than for the employment types, ranging from 12.8% to 25.1% in ADL and reaching nearly 50% for working activities in two of the reporting years.

Figure 3.2.3B[35] shows the percentage of people with high support needs accessing community access services on snapshot day from 1999 to 2002. This supplements the limited three years of full-year data that is available for community access.

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[34] The data for Figure 3.2.3A can be found at Table 3.2.3A in Appendix C
[35] Data for Figure 3.2.3B can be found at Table 3.2.3B in Appendix C

Figure 3.2.3B: Consumers 'on the books' by High Support Need 1999 – 2002 (community access)
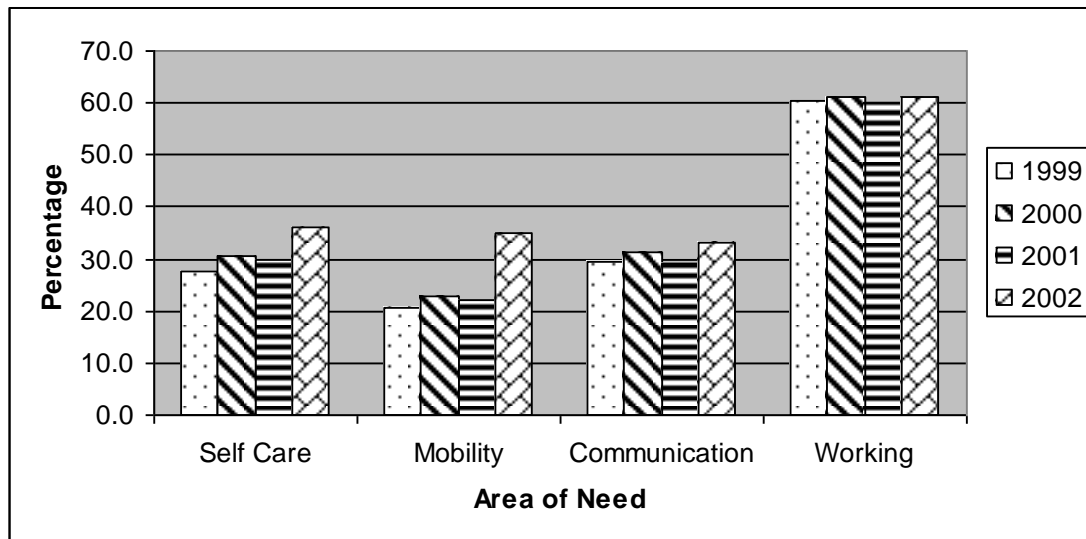
Figure 3.2.3B shows

- Higher proportions of people with high support needs compared with the whole of year data across the ADL and activities of working.

- Substantially higher levels of support need in the activities of working compared with ADL that is consistent with whole of year data.

- An increase in the percentage of people with high support needs in the area of mobility, possibly as a result of the expansion of the definition of mobility in that year.

3.3 Issues raised in the sector consultations regarding day options services

Issues raised in the sector consultations regarding day options services are detailed in following sections of this report, especially Chapters Four and Five and will not be repeated here.

3.4 Case study: the Western Australian Combined Applications Process (CAP) for funding CSTDA day options services

This case study is provided to illustrate issues in day options services in one Australian jurisdiction. It provides an approach to identifying and summarising many of the issues that emerge around the issues and developments in day options across Australian jurisdictions. The case study illustrates what can only be described as a deteriorating situation in regard to availability of day options services relative to demand. We believe these issues have relevancy within all Australian jurisdictions.

The unmet demand report (AIHW, 2007) commented that there had been little change in the management of demand for day options services across Australian jurisdictions since their 2002 report. Unlike other jurisdictions, the WA demand management process developed by the Disability Services Commission (DSC) was described as centralised and coordinated at the state level (p. 44) and as including CSTDA funded services of accommodation support, alternatives to employment (ATE), and respite services. The WA Combined Applications Process (CAP) represents a transparent method of attempting to manage demand for disability services equitably in the face of excess and scarce financial resources. In that sense, it could be described as "better practice" within the Australian context.

Adult applications for ATE are via the CAP. School leavers use the Post School Options process to access ATE funding. This is not part of the CAP process. The applications process requires family members to provide information and justification on need. For many families, that is very stressful, particularly because priority for funding in a highly competitive situation requires families to paint a negative picture that emphasises family crisis and the deficits of the family member with a disability. We do not endorse that aspect of the CAP. The public reporting aspects of CAP do illustrate some issues about the priorities and allocation of resources in one Australian jurisdiction with wider relevance to others.

The CAP was introduced in 2000 in order to manage equitably the distribution of State funds in the three funded services. A committee headed by an external person reviews applications for funding through three funding rounds per annum (four rounds per annum when CAP was first introduced). In 2003-04, a standard reporting format was introduced that enabled comparisons to be made over the succeeding five year period across a range of variables. These data are reported in funding bulletins that are published by the DSC following each funding round. The latest bulletin (Bulletin 17) was released in November 2007. Bulletins were first released after a number of funding rounds had taken place so bulletin numbers do not correspond to the actual number of funding rounds that have taken place since the inception of the CAP.

The WA Developmental Disability Council (DDC) carries out regular analyses of the data and the following information is drawn from their most recent analysis of Bulletin 17 in December, 2007 (DDC, 2007). These data and analyses do not include applicants who use the Post School Options process to access ATE funding.

In Funding Bulletin 16 (DSC, June 2007), the WA DSC indicated that the growth funding provided for ATE services in the 2007-08 budget was $1.75m. The DSC commented that because of a more consistent application by the WA Department of Education and Training of the requirement that students leave school at the end of the year in which they turned 18 years, the DSC was anticipating an increase in demand for ATE services by school leavers. The DSC stated that the priority would be school leavers through the post school options process, and applications for adult ATE support would be placed on hold. Consequently, none of the 162 applicants for adult ATE funding in this most recent round were funded. In Bulletin 17, the DSC noted that applicants also will be held over in the next round.

In other Australian jurisdictions, there is a similar situation where school leavers are given priority for day options over adults who may have no day service or may have left employment. In South Australia, for example, day options funding is available only for school leavers unless the applicant is a resident in care and without a day placement or is in crisis. This is also a common situation in other jurisdictions.

Across day options in Australia, by all reports, the movement out of day options is minimal. If a person leaves a day options service, for example, to try out for employment, that available place will be quickly filled. This provides one explanation for the lack of any effective interface, even within agencies that provide both day options and employment services as the perceived need for an interface would be seen as of low priority.

The following charts are sourced from the DDC (WA) (DDC, 2007) and were drawn from data publicly available through the DSC funding bulletins. The DDC (WA) gave permission to draw from their analysis. The purpose here is to illustrate the situation in regard to the ATE program in WA. Data is provided across Funding Bulletins 4-17, beginning from the period when the DSC developed a standard reporting framework, i.e., a five-year period from 2003-04 to 2007-08.

Table D shows Alternatives to Employment – Funded and Unfunded Applicants. Table D compares cumulative figures (unfunded) with non-cumulative figures (funded).

Table D: Alternatives to employment - funded and unfunded applicants

DSC WA Funding Bulletins 4-17

Funding Bulletin	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Funded	13	19	11	13	15	25	34	30	35	35	12	11	8	0
Unfunded	47	46	58	64	65	61	76	89	60	43	94	121	143	162
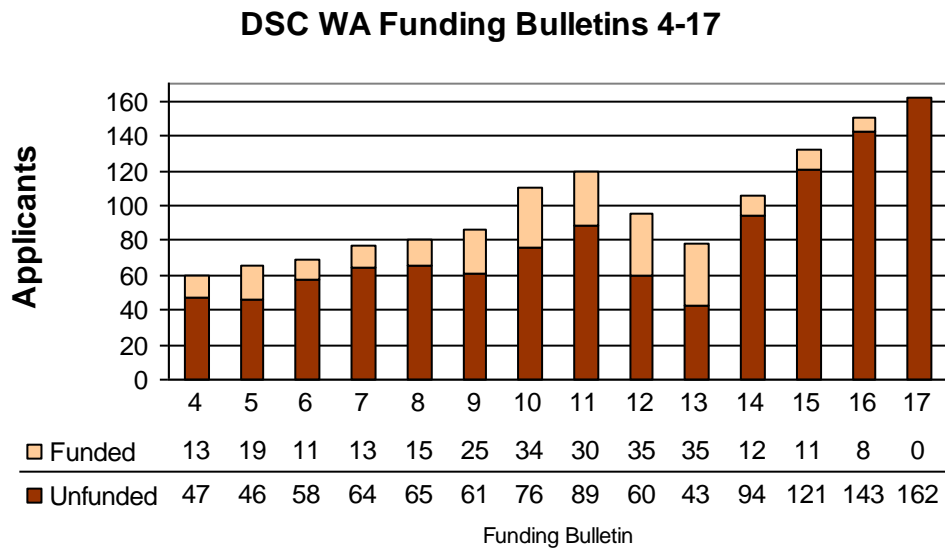
Comment

Although there is variation over the five year period, considerable discrepancy exists between the number of applicants and applicants funded in each of the reported funding rounds, with a substantial increase in applicants over the period (from about 60 to over 160). There is a substantial decrease in applicants funded since the funding round reported in Bulletin 14, and no applicants (apart from those applying through the post school options process) were funded in the latest round.

Applicants for ATE who are acknowledged to have critical needs but who are not able to be supported within existing available funding are automatically re-submitted for consideration in subsequent funding rounds. The following Table E illustrates both new and repeat applicants for ATE funding.

Table E: Alternatives to employment – re-applicants and new applicants

DSC WA Funding Bulletins 4-17

	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
■ Reapplicant	47	37	48	58	53	62	76	82	71	57	52	95	109	130
□ New Applicant	13	28	21	19	27	24	34	27	24	21	54	37	42	32
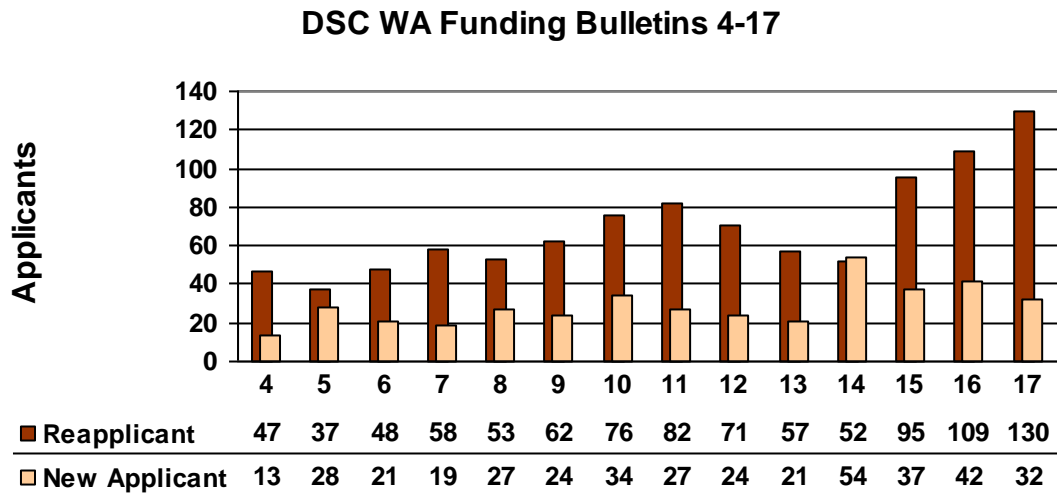
Comment

Table E indicates a considerable increase in people re-applying over the past three funding rounds. Over the entire period, new applicants have ranged from less than 20 in the funding round reported in Bulletin Four to over 50 reported in Bulletin Fourteen.

Table F provides the distribution of the age of carers of applicants for those people with a disability living with family support.

Table F: Alternatives to employment - carer age of applicants living with family support

DSC WA Funding Bulletins 7-16

	7	8	9	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
70+	4	6	7	6	6	4	7	5	2	2
61-69	14	6	7	5	8	1	1	6	12	7
51-60	12	8	9	7	11	8	10	11	19	20
41-50	2	2	2	5	4	4	4	7	9	7
<40	0	2	0	3	2	1	4	5	8	11
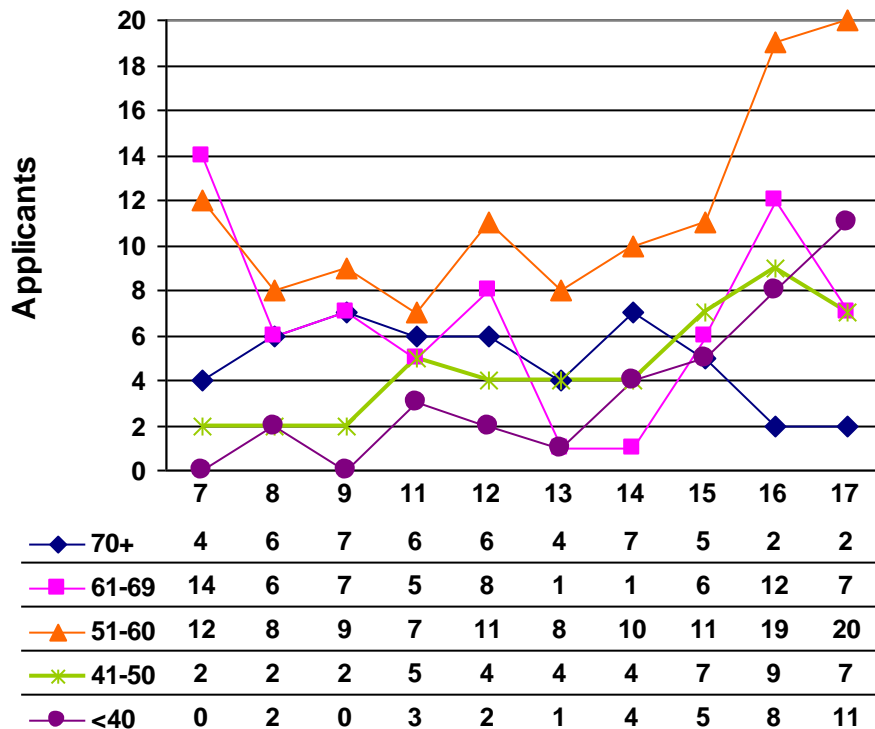
Comment

Table F indicates that the carers' group aged 51-60 years is the largest applicant group. There is a high proportion of older carers. This is predictable as younger parents with younger children with disabilities are more likely to apply to access the post school options process. However, over the past three funding rounds, the numbers of younger carers have increased and this may be a continuing trend to some extent reflecting younger people with a disability who have left employment services and are now seeking day options.

Discussion

Our purpose in this case study is to illustrate a common scenario in regard to day options across Australian jurisdictions. A number of observations can be made about the situation described here.

1. The growth of need for day options and employment services for school leavers with a disability is a major driver of jurisdictional policies and practices. Each year, a substantial cohort of school leavers with a disability exit the school system needing day options and/or employment, and adding to an ever-increasing demand and backlog.

2. All Australian jurisdictions have placed a priority on school leavers in their funding and provision of day options to the disadvantage of older adults with a disability including those who have left, or wish to leave employment services, or those who wish to combine employment and day options.

3. Jurisdictions must also place a high priority on providing access to day options for service users in supported accommodation, since funding usually does not allow for support during the day, and also priority on service users and families who are in crisis. Jurisdictional agencies are closest to the "coal face" and usually have a more direct responsibility to respond to crises on a day to day basis. In addition, some government disability agencies provide accommodation services and have a direct responsibility to provide service users with day activities.

4. The implications for older carers, and for people with a disability who exit employment services because of age or other changing circumstances are considerable. It is likely that the pressures resulting from a lack of day options and/or employment contribute to carer stress and family breakdown.

5. If access to employment services for younger people and people with high and with complex support needs is declining, then day options provision will be squeezed by demand pressures at each end - from school leavers and older adults from that group.

6. As described further in Chapter Five, some jurisdictions have embarked on policies to better define the purposes and outcomes of funded day options services. For example, the *Changing Days* initiative in Victoria encouraged traditional day options services, some of which were first established over 50 years ago, to develop their programs from a focus on centre-based to more community access activities and also to pre-employment programs. These efforts can be seen to be attempts to make the day options services more effective.

7. A second strategy in some jurisdictions has been to foster the development of pre-vocational programs within day options services, clearly with the aim of encouraging the movement of service users into employment.

8. In addition to strategies to develop more effective day options services, this analysis also suggests that more effective transition policies and practices that lead to greater access to employment services by school leavers will serve to relieve pressure on day options services.

9. Whereas the CAP and other demand management systems may ensure some degree of equity of resource distribution, clearly the crisis-driven nature of access to day options is not conducive to effective planning. Inevitably, the population served by day options services will increasingly have substantial and complex

needs. Inevitably, families and people with a disability who have no, or time-limited, day options, are paying a price.

10. This analysis suggests that without effective collaboration between jurisdictions who are responsible for day options and the Australian Government which is responsible for employment, jurisdictional strategies to increase employment participation will be much less effective than they could be.

4 Impacts of reform on specific stakeholder groups

4.1 Young people with a disability

Responses of participants in the consultations indicated that transition of young people with a disability from school to adult life illustrated critical issues around the interface between and within levels of Governments and service providers. A major issue was the lack of, or limited, interface, linkages, and collaboration between education/school-based agencies and post-school agencies, particularly those concerned with employment.

The involvement of two levels of Government, one which deals with post school options and the other which deals with employment, sets up an interface issue. This was particularly so when there appeared to be no systematic direct policy or program connection between post school programs and employment. A similar interface issue existed at both State/Territory and Commonwealth Government levels between day options, employment, and vocational education and training (VET).

DEWR representatives indicated that the Commonwealth's role in regard to employment in the transition process does not commence until after a decision is made to pursue employment. While young people are at school, they were seen to be the responsibility of the schooling system. We believe this policy is a barrier to increased participation of school leavers in employment. We anticipate that with the establishment of the new DEEWR, it is more likely that a more facilitative policy will emerge.

Once young people had identified employment as the preferred option, they then needed to gain access to employment services. Although school leavers who were leaving special schools or special education units were not required to go through a JCA, they were competing with all other job seekers for access to capped places when they approached an open employment service.

One of the earliest post school options programs in Australia was established in Western Australia in 1991 and operated under an arrangement between the State disability service and FACS. The arrangement processed the annual population of students with a disability who were leaving school into day options and employment services, including mixed options. Open employment was seen as the preferred option within this program. With the separation of supported and open employment

services into different Australian Government Departments, this arrangement ceased. While some saw this as a successful model, reflecting constructive collaboration between levels of government and an attempt to introduce a "seamless" transition, it was also perceived by others as an avenue for cost shifting between levels of government.

Although some jurisdictions were well advanced in having taken initiatives to address these needs, others were at early stages. Without a clear policy framework and a systemic response for the transition of young people with a disability, innovation and success depended greatly on individual initiatives. There was a strong perception that in most jurisdictions, the success of transition policies and practices came down to individual initiatives where cooperation and collaboration between school-based and post-school agencies were the key ingredients.

Some clear principles that underpinned successful transition were expressed by respondents including more effective interface between schools and post-school services, providing better information to schools and families, and beginning systematic transition practices such as planning, and access to work experience, apprenticeships, and traineeships earlier in the students' school career.

From the perspective of families, school to post-school was a critical transition as they moved from a system that had supported the young person with a disability for many years into what was essentially unknown territory. This was a time when clear information, policies, practices, and pathways were crucial. Decisions made in this transition period were seen to impact strongly on whether or not a school leaver with a disability takes an employment pathway. The perception was that many school leavers and/or their families were choosing non-employment pathways for reasons that were more closely related to policy and practice barriers and disincentives than to the potential or desire of the school leaver to work successfully.

Transition from school to employment/day options is described under the following headings.

a)   Limited interface
b)   Effectiveness of transition programs
c)   Maximum hours of support as a driver for families
d)   Limited information available and/or accessed by families and teachers

a)   Limited interface

There were significant interface and linkages issues in the transition of young people with a disability from school to adult life. For example, there was limited coordination and relationships between post-school services, schools, and parents of students with a disability. In some jurisdictions, there were systematic processes to link schools with post-school options and in others, these processes were underdeveloped and ineffective. In some jurisdictions, open employment services and business services had forged relationships with schools in their vicinity and were offering both work experience and a pathway to employment but this depended upon individual initiative and not always supported with funding. There were indications that school transition officers in some jurisdictions facilitated work experience for students with a disability, but there was not follow-up after students left school. Interface between schools and day options programs appeared to be more systematic and reflective of State/Territory responsibility for both education and day options. At the same time, coordination between State/Territory education departments and corresponding disability agencies was still developing in almost all jurisdictions and almost non-existent in regard to the engagement of Commonwealth departments associated with employment.

Forming relationships with local stakeholders seems to be a key component of getting the system to work better – cross-membership of boards, reference committees and sub-committees, linkages with the school counsellor.

…the work that needs to be done in the front end with employment and the planning and the linking with schools is probably the other big gap in this whole thing…it's actually parents who are driving wanting people…with disabilities to see employment as an option…and we've got a lot of work to do with education within special schools as promoting employment as an option for people with significant disabilities as well…and I think it's just a difference in there's two government departments…

The biggest problem we find is that there is a lot going on between the departments and none of it is coordinated, so a lot of them are double handling… So the state departments aren't really good at coordinating.

A transition plan needs to occur at the beginning of the final year. We need to be involved when the process begins. We (disability services)have no involvement in these processes.

…..we are seeing some coordination now between (GOVERNMENT DISABILITY SERVICES) and Education over this post-school transition stuff, but not a lot of it yet. There are a lot of schools out there that once they have finished with your child that is it. They are not interested any more, you know, and that is just not good enough. We need to have a process where it is seamless.

It makes sense to support those sorts of programs by linking them into the national jurisdiction…And there is a clash of those. That has been presented to DEWR and that, but there doesn't seem to be any driving force to kind of link those with the states. There doesn't seem to be much motivation to do that.

b)   Effectiveness of transition programs

A number of issues with post-school transition programs were identified. Some post-school transition programs did not transition young people into employment or other services but maintained them in transition programs for long periods of time. This was perceived to be particularly the case with some post-school vocational education and training (VET) programs that were not clearly linked to an employment pathway or availability of a day option service was lacking. It was also the case for day options programs where there was perceived to be minimal progression to employment. Extended periods of time in VET programs were perceived to detract from the work intentions and motivations of young people with a disability.

Transition planning and work experience opportunities for people with a disability were widely acknowledged to be very effective in promoting employment outcomes, however, these occurred too late in the students' school career, usually into their final school year. Lack of planning meant that families were ill-prepared for the transition of their sons and daughters and were faced with a stark decision regarding day options or employment. The perception was that parents were more likely to choose a conservative option because of the lack of preparation for the possibility of an employment option.

Transition practices in most jurisdictions reflected initiatives by individual schools and individual post-school agencies including open and supported employment services. Commonwealth funded employment services were not funded to undertake, and have rules which prevent undertaking, transition programs in schools until the last six months of school.

DEWR (Steering Committee) reported: "Disability Employment Network members are able to assist school students with disabilities who have the capacity to work for a minimum of eight hours a week with intervention where

a)   the student is of legal working age and is working or intends to work part-time outside of school hours at award-based wages; or

b)   the student is in the last six months of school and is considering post-school options/employment opportunities; or

c)   full-time students who are participating in a school based apprenticeship which is recognised by a NAC and a training contract is lodged on the Training Recognition system (TRS) are eligible to access DEN."

Quite often the DENs are working with young people to get a training qualification. It becomes a roundabout. One qualification leads into the next. One particular individual for example, since 2001, had qualifications in about five or six different areas. In 2003, he was the young citizen of the year in (STATE) and he still can't get a job.

…but when they leave that (post-school options) after four years they just go back to (DAY OPTIONS), so I don't know why they just don't go to (DAY OPTIONS) in the first place.

Anyone who goes to TAFE and we end up with them (in supported employment), it takes four or five years to get them back to where they were before they left school…because they've lost the work ethic. All they've gone back to TAFE for is for a great social activity – no outcome.

You can't get them into (DAY OPTIONS). We have got clients who are ready to leave post-school and we've got nothing.

Although many of our students are recognised in our region as being 'the best prepared'   for   work   experience   places   and   receive   excellent

feedback…employment opportunities are not present and the risk of failure is too great to encourage school to employment pathways.

The need to expose young people to employment while still at school, e.g., through quality work experience opportunities, is an important factor in creating a successful transition to employment. It is also important for providers with employment experience to be involved in that process to demonstrate an employment versus recreation orientation.

Young people with a disability should be able to access some work experience training from Year 9 to Year 10. They should be able to visit and sample services during this time. This time should be used to identify talents, strengths, interests, etc and would help determine the most likely suitable service option.

…students don't start their transition process until their last year of school…Families need a longer transition.

…immediately upon leaving school. You have to decide then and there whether you're going to work or not work. If you're not going to work then you'll be slotted into a day option program. If you are going to work, then you're going to take the punt and be a jobseeker in open employment for a while – could be a long time – or…be slotted directly into a sheltered workshop…parents haven't got a clue.

What we're hearing clearly is that people are very frustrated about the lack of time that's available to adjust the whole family circumstances, because the quantum of support after school is far less than what they're received at school.

c) Maximum hours of support as a driver for families

Families and school leavers with a disability were choosing day options services rather than employment services. For many families, the post school option could serve a respite function as families were faced with finding support for their child with a disability that covered similar hours to the school week. The choice of a more conservative day option over employment also reflected the perceived security and funding support for day options services, and also the range of different activities they offered.

Respite is a big issue. I've been dealing with a student at the moment with severe and multiple disabilities and respite is the biggest thing that creates anger because after the secondary setting, the parents are looking for after school care. There's nothing there and in a regional community, it's the most difficult thing.

We have parents who are keen for the children to stay in their special schools until they're 20 or 21, because their view is that while at school, they're learning, but it's not necessarily an educational program – it can be a respite thing."

One of the issues I think is that in a funny way (THE GOVERNMENT POST SCHOOL PROGRAM) in (STATE) was not only providing the two things people, I guess, wanted – it was guaranteed and it was secure and it was lifelong, and it was very attractive. Like, there was almost a smorgasbord …of options. They could actually go into expos and say, 'I'll have a bit of that; I'll have a bit of TAFE here and something else there.' Why would you go to employment? So the experience of employment providers, at least the open employment providers in (STATE), they tell us, 'We don't get people with high support needs.'…because high support people don't come to employment in (STATE), because the (GOVERNMENT POST SCHOOL PROGRAM) is so effective.

Post-school outcomes are also influenced by perceptions of day options as being more secure than employment. As employability or employment makes people ineligible for state funded programs in many cases, or puts people at the bottom of the triage list, this creates incentives to downplay young peoples' potential. In some states (e.g., STATE) there is also a mandated number of support hours in day options which also acts as an incentive for day options.

d)   Limited information available and/or accessed by families and teachers

Post school outcomes were influenced by a lack of information about transition alternatives by both teachers and families. It was perceived that students in special education were more informed and had access to better information and generally had better managed transitions from school.

Well, as a parent we got no funding and the school wasn't of much use, and even all the employment opportunities, half a day a week for the last two years of school we had to find, yeah, it is really hard. Where do you go to? Who knows?

It is only through asking. I mean people in the know don't know about these. What hope have we got?

One (barrier) is the understanding that parents have of students, particularly those with severe and multiple disability, what do those different agencies do, what is their role, where are they funded, why do they not talk to each other, how come they are funded for a period of time and then it stops, how do I get funding as a parent to do the things I want to do as a parent? I've been doing this for 12 years of my child's education and now I've come to the end of school and I don't understand the system at all. There's no one to help – and they (parents) just don't understand it.

4.2 People with a disability who are ageing

4.2.1 Issues identified in the sector consultations

People with a disability in supported employment services who were ageing and because of age or health problems were no longer productive, faced reductions in their employment time on one hand and on the other, difficulties in accessing day options services. This potentially resulted in people with a disability extending their working life beyond a time that might appropriate for them. There was a general concern for what was perceived to be ageing cohorts in business services and some services addressed this issue by developing retirement planning processes. This was further exacerbated for people who lived in supported accommodation not being able to spend time in their home during the day because of staffing limitations. Addressing this problem could potentially provide employment places for younger people requiring employment opportunities.

Issues for people with a disability who are ageing are described under the following headings.

a) Lack of day options alternatives to employment

b) Ageing people with a disability in supported accommodation

a)   Lack of day options alternatives to employment

Business services saw retirement transition into day options as the appropriate retirement pathway for ageing people with a disability who required reduced employment time, however limited availability of places in day options services meant that this was generally not available. With a shortage of day options places, it was less likely that a person with a disability who had a supported employment placement would gain a place. Many ageing people with a disability in business services had been attending particular services for many years and services described the quandary of their commitment to individuals and families, many where parents were elderly, and the press towards commercial viability.

…we've got employees…we're now reducing their hours to four hours a week, to two days a week, or maybe a number of hours…The problem is (the local day options service)has got a waiting list so that if we've got employees who are in this transition, it's transition to what? The facilities just aren't available.

There is a real danger that people will be 'parked' in a service not because it benefits them, but more the support networks (or lack of) that are around them caring for their every day needs. The demands on parents and carers (who may themselves be ageing) can be enormous.

We have got ageing programs here. Well, what we are doing is we are setting up a program for individuals who are aging, which just means they slowly, slowly, slowly reduce the expectations for work. We maintain the hours as far as possible, particularly if they are with older parents, and the focus is on about maintaining the skills they have and very, very simple strategies. ….We can't do very much about the toilet, seeing as someone has to go in with her, but we have written up and done it in conjunction with physios about getting a personal care plan happening that again, as often as possible, looks about preserving as many skills as she has.

b)   Ageing people with a disability in supported accommodation

In business services in particular, changing needs associated with the ageing of clients may suggest a reduction of work hours. This was made difficult to achieve because of lack of availability of alternative day options and staffing limitations in supported accommodation. Access to HACC services such as respite may not be possible for ageing people with a disability who live in supported accommodation.

In nearly all cases it seems the increased expense to the house-staffing roster is the main driver in the retirement from work conversations. The (needs of a) person with a disability do not get much of a look in. One accommodation provider even suggested that if the person retired they (the service) would have to send the person back home to their parents, as they only get funding to support a person with a day option.

A lot of business service clients are in our residential, so we are getting an increasing number of clients who are perhaps unable to work full time because maybe their back might be giving back problems or whatever. Therefore, their doctors are recommending, 'Maybe you should be staying home and going two or three days a week or changing your work pattern.' There are others from our experience who are opting out of business service, because they don't want to be there. It is difficult to communicate with these people and you are not too sure why they don't want to be there. So somebody who has been a really good hard worker, who keeps us his productivity levels, may be suddenly suffering from severe headaches. Remove him from the work environment and the headaches are gone.

Well, the chap we have got the problem with in (LOCATION) at the moment who has left business services and is unofficially a disability services (client) because we can see he is at risk and he is not meant to be there, we went to HACC because HACC fund day services in (LOCATION) as respite, but he was ineligible to go to those because he lived independently, because it is designed as a respite and it wasn't giving respite to anybody. So here is this poor chap home on his own during the day, and he is at risk. He doesn't have the capacity to safely look after himself and he is ineligible to go to those services because he is not giving his family any respite.

4.3 People with a disability living in rural and remote locations

4.3.1 Issues for people with a disability living in rural and remote locations from the disability sector consultations

During the consultations, we heard many examples of cooperation between services and other stakeholders in rural areas in which ways were found to overcome barriers in order to achieve desired outcomes. Nevertheless, people with a disability in rural and remote areas do experience particular disadvantages in regard to both

employment and day options. In many areas with limited resources and opportunities, highly specialised services are not viable, making flexibility and cooperative effort necessary.

Issues for people with a disability in rural and remote areas will be described under the following headings.

a)   The advantages of close communities

b)   Limited scope and viability of services in rural and remote areas

c)   Additional costs for people with a disability in rural and remote areas

d)   Difficulties with job capacity assessments

a)   The advantages of close communities

There were numerous examples during consultations in rural and remote areas of local people overcoming barriers to achieve positive outcomes for people with a disability through personal contacts and relationships between service providers, families, and people with a disability.

> *My experience is it's a bit different in the country because it's a bit harder to say to the son or daughter of someone who you'll be knocking into at the supermarket and playing tennis with, 'no. Fred can't come here.' So in country locations there's more of an accommodation made. That's my experience of human services generally in the country. Being in relationship with people and part of community often opens doors, more so than when there's no relationship.*

> *…schools have access in Years 11 and 12 to VET funding…for students with disabilities…in the community that I'm familiar with…the school contracts the DEN using those funds to run their work experience program. As a result, the DEN…finds appropriate work experience placement for those students an has the opportunity then to assess their work readiness and develop a relationship with them so that when the end of Year 12 comes, they are in a position to honestly know whether under the guidelines they can actually register that person.*

> *Ideally, our preferred option is to stop these silos. Even breaking the employment into tiny silos doesn't seem to work for us. I know it works for accountability and bureaucrats, but in practical terms, it didn't…Our agenda is*

actually pooling resources to get economics of scale and to respond to our population need.

b)   Limited scope and viability of services in rural and remote areas

Programs in rural towns, even if they did exist, may be limited in what they could offer and may have limited viability. Non-Aboriginal people moved from remote areas that were under-serviced to the cities which had more options. Without adequate post-school employment programs, the skills of young people with a disability dissipated. Job opportunities in rural and remote areas may be limited and seasonal work made the sustained employment more difficult to achieve.

With a family who once their child with a disability leaves school – I suppose they are really a young adult by that stage – there is nothing whatsoever. So unless that parent is very, very active and actually speaks out, those families receive no support whatsoever. So they are not just not getting funding; they have lost the life that they built up while they were at school, their friendships have gone, all those linking services that were there when they were at school have just disappeared off the face of the earth, because rural communities most of the time are put into the too hard basket because any type of support system or whatever has to travel hundreds of kilometres.

Not much to do in (LOCATION); walk up and down the main street basically, window shopping.

We are dealing with a very small population dispersed over a large area. We are quite mindful of the boxes. The more you divide the boxes, now DEWR and FaCSIA, the more services are not viable or the market is not big enough for their products.

I'm principal at (A.) School which is the specialised facility for students for disabilities for the southern region. We cater for students from the age of three and a half to 20. At the moment we have a full cohort of transition to work students. We have like a senior sub-school and then we have our transition to work group, and they are involved in doing work experience which is through a program that S. works with through the Department. We try to give them as many opportunities as we can to be in the community and involved in very worthwhile learning activities, but we feel that there is a break in the

opportunities that are around, because (THE LOCAL BUSINESS SERVICE) at the moment is full and they can only cater to clients with a certain kind of need and we have got students who are leaving us at the age of 20 and they have nothing to do. There is nowhere for them to go because they don't fit into the criteria that (THE BUSINESS SERVICE) can cater for.

… we need a place where you have got trained people who can further develop people skills that they have learnt at special schools before they are lost, because you keep people hanging around for 12 months and everything that has been done prior will be just about lost. So, you know, it is a pointless exercise.

See, our data performance that we got back for July to December last year which is our peak season, we were 25 per cent above the national average for 26-week outcomes. We were like, 'Whoopee!' And it was like, 'We've got six months of slack season now that no one does anything.' So from January 2007 to June, we will probably be 25 per cent under the national average, you know, and that is where the departments and that's where our funders have to be realistic.

…we have an industry that is on the downside. We are in a rural area with only one industry. They are putting off mainstream workers. They are not looking to re-engage people that have barriers or disabilities.

c)   Additional costs for people with a disability in rural and remote areas

People with a disability in rural and remote areas were faced with additional costs which may not be adequately compensated. They were disadvantaged by distances required to be travelled, particularly in regard to employment. Service providers were also faced with the added costs associated with distances in rural and remote communities.

DEWR (Steering Committee) reported: "All new and existing DEN services located in accessible, moderately accessible, remote and very remote ARIA classified regions may be eligible to access additional fees for rural and remote services, including up to 30% loading for travel to DEN participants."

And with the travel allowance they are not compensating F.'s (OPEN EMPLOYMENT STAFF MEMBER) wages for five hours. They are

compensating the distance in the travel. You are also writing off - - You know, F. can't work on the computer and do other things while she is driving down. A two and a half hour drive is lost; it is dead money.

We have no public transport.
That's right.
They forget that. They go, 'Oh, he could get a job here and they could do this' but they can't. There is no public transport. You can't take a taxi. The money would just be gone.

…That's the other thing, too, you know, this bloody mobility allowance stuff. We have got a Down Syndrome girl who lives way out, 20 km out of town. I live 20 km out of town, too, but she is in P. Road, right? There is no bus; there is no public transport. Because she is Down Syndrome – she is walking. She is not in a wheelchair – she is only eligible for the low mobility allowance, not the higher one, okay. Now her taxis are $30 each way, but she is not eligible for taxi vouchers, anyway, because she walks. But, there is no bus out there. If her mum didn't spend I don't know how much money …if her mum didn't bring her in and out to work, four days a week - she works, you know.- But, like, that is discrimination. It is not an issue anywhere else, because nowhere else is 20 km without a taxi or a bus service or anything like (LOCATION), not even in (LOCATION).

d) Difficulties with job capacity assessments

Service providers in rural and remote areas were concerned that some job capacity assessors did not have a realistic appreciation of conditions, particularly when assessments were carried out from a distance.

I don't think the JCA's take into account a person's location. You know if somebody does live rural and remote then the chance of their employment have dropped, I mean, by more than half.

I have got a gentleman in (LOCATION) and he has 13 interventions on his JCA, and he really shouldn't be with us, because he should be with a PSP provider… But because there is no PSP provider who services the (LOCATION) region, he comes to a DEN. Well, the interventions that they have noted on that JCA can't be addressed in (LOCATION), anyway, because the services aren't there.

They don't have all the services that he requires. This gentleman is 51; he has to have a colostomy bag. He has come back uncapped, and they think I am going to find him employment for 15 to 21 hours work in (LOCATION), but I'm not; I know I am not.

I had a woman ring me up. She made an appointment for me for 8:30 for a gentleman in (LOCATION), but it takes me two and a half hours to drive out there. So, then she rung me back and she said, 'I've made it for 8:30' and I said, 'Well, that's no good; I'm not leaving (HOME) at half past five in the morning to make sure I get there.' She didn't even know where (LOCATION) was.

I: So where was she based?

Canberra. Because he had a phone interview with Canberra, but she didn't know. See, that's the problem, they don't.

4.3.2 Profiles of people with a disability living in rural and remote locations

This section examines data from the AGDSC and data provided by the AIHW to examine patterns and trends in the participation by people with a disability living in rural and remote locations in employment and community access services. This section will examine the distribution of open and supported outlets across locations as well as the distribution of all employment consumers across locations.[36] It also includes data from the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services on access to services by this group in 2004/05.

In 2005 the Australian Government changed the way it categorised locations for the AGDSC from the ARIA classification to the Australian Bureau of Statistics *Australian Standard Geographical Classification of Remoteness Areas* in order to be more consistent with other Australian Government publications. The impact of this change was to remove accessibility as a factor for classification and to consider remoteness only. Table G below compares the two classifications. While these classifications are not directly comparable, they are considered similar. The 2005 report on the AGDSC does not include a commentary on the anticipated or actual impact of this change in definition.

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[36] The AGDSC does not report on where consumers live by ARIA classification by employment service types.

Table G: Location definitions

ARIA Classifications	ABS Remoteness Areas
Highly Accessible	Major City
Accessible	Inner Regional
Moderately Accessible	Outer Regional
Remote	Remote
Very Remote	Very Remote

Source: FaCS, 2004, 2005.

a)   Open employment

Figure 4.3.2A shows the distribution of open employment outlets, by location from 1999 to 2006.[37] Compared to other variables, there was a relatively high proportion of Not Known responses. This places limitations on the validity of interpreting these data.

Figure 4.3.2A: Location of outlets 1999 – 2006 (open employment)
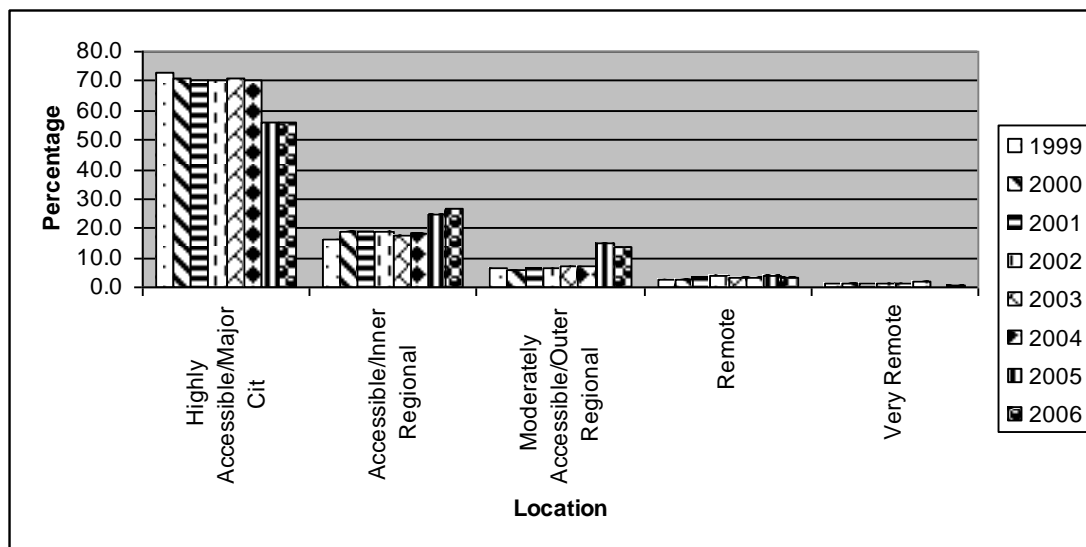
Figure 4.3.2A shows

- Around 55% of open employment outlets are located in highly accessible areas. This proportion dropped from around 70% in previous years.
- The decreased proportion in highly accessible years was associated with an increase in regional and moderately accessible/outer regional categories.
- These changes probably reflect the changes in categorisation that occurred in 2005.

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[37] The data for Figure 4.3.2A can be found at Table 4.3.2A in Appendix C

- The proportion of open employment outlets in a location decreases with remoteness/accessibility.

b)   Supported employment

Figure 4.3.2B shows the distribution of supported employment outlets, by location from 1999 to 2006.[38]

Figure 4.3.2B: Location of outlets 1999 – 2005 (supported employment)
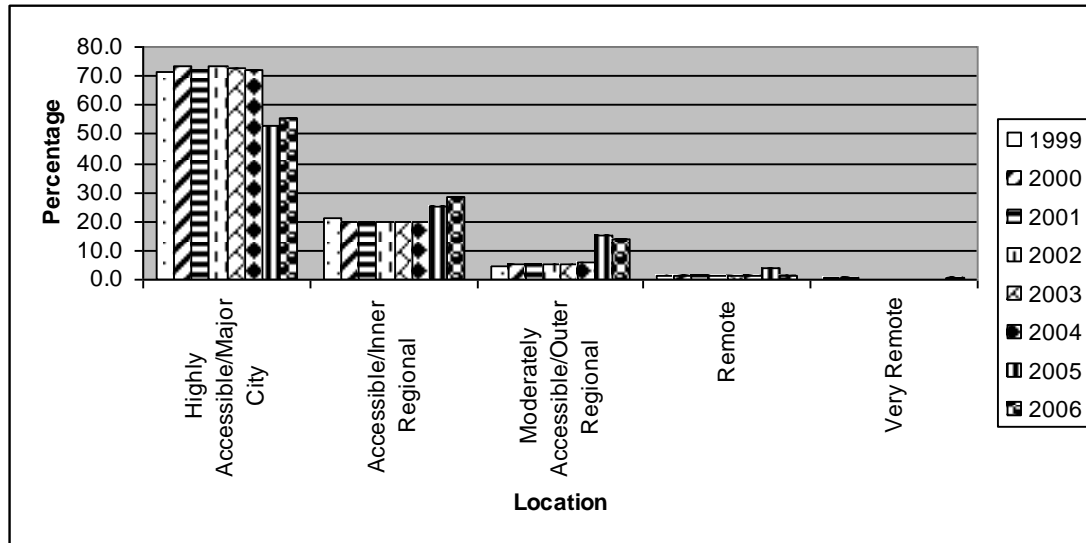
Figure 4.3.2B shows that the distribution of supported employment is consistent with that of open employment

Figure 4.3.2C shows the distribution of all employment consumers, by locations.[39]

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[38] The data for Figure 4.3.2B can be found at Table 4.3.2B in Appendix C
[39] The data for Figure 4.3.2C can be found at Table 4.3.2C in Appendix C. Data is only available to 2004. The 2005 report on the AGDSC does not provide data on where employment consumers are living.

Figure 4.3.2C: All consumers by location 1999 – 2004 (employment)
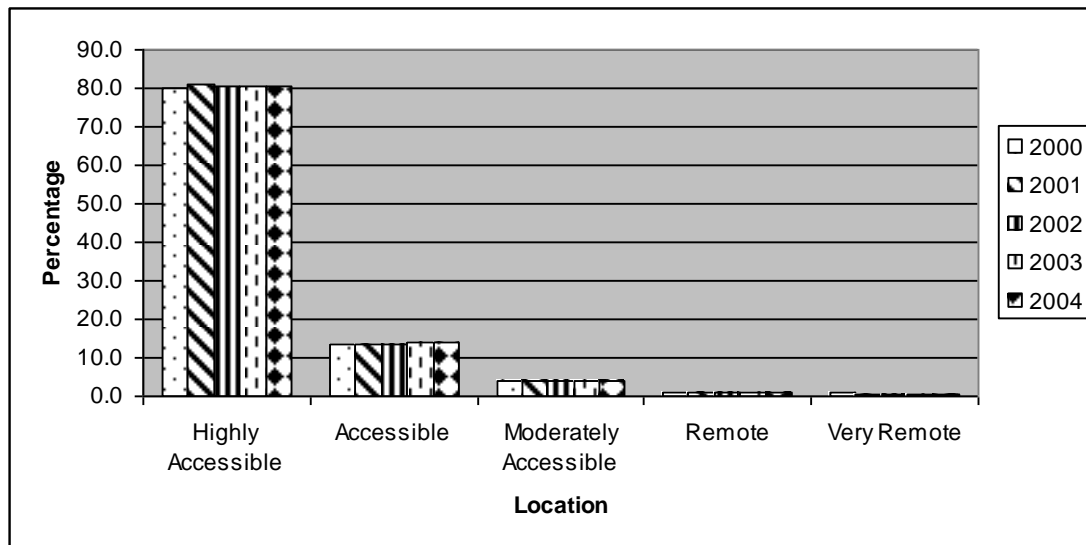
Figure 4.3.2C shows

- The majority of employment consumers lived in highly accessible locations.

- Proportionally, there are slightly more employment consumers living in highly accessible locations than there are employment outlets located in those areas.

- Proportionally, there are slightly less employment consumers living in accessible areas than there are employment outlets located in those areas.

- The distribution of employment consumers across locations has remained stable over time.

c)   Community access

Figure 4.3.2D shows the distribution of consumers of community access services, by location.[40]

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[40] Data for Figure 4.3.2D can be found at Table 4.3.2D in Appendix C

Figure 4.3.2D: All consumers by location 2003/04 – 2005/06 (community access)
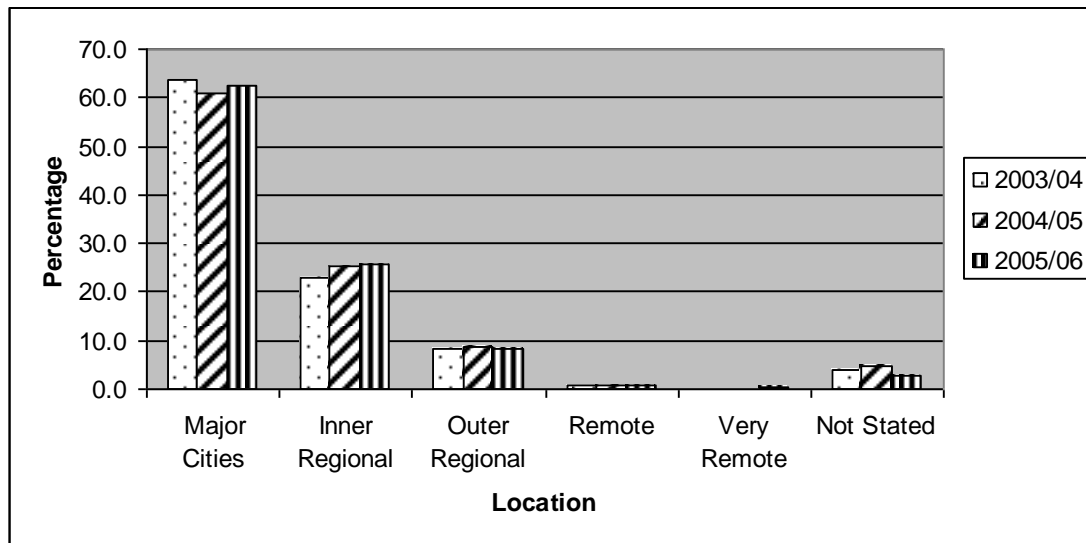
Figure 4.3.2D shows

- The majority of consumers of community access are located in major cites.
- More than 20% of consumers live in inner regional locations and this has gradually increased over the period.

d)   Summary

Most consumers of employment and community access services lived in the more accessible locations, and numbers of service users in both service types decreased as remoteness increased. Patterns of distribution of consumers across locations were consistent with the distribution of outlets across those same locations and participation tended to remain consistent over time.

According to its measures of accessibility, the Productivity Commission found that for 2004/05 employment services in inner regional communities were slightly more accessible than those in remote/very remote locations, which in turn ranked higher than employment services located in major cities (Productivity Commission 2007). Only 4.5 service users per 1000 people aged 15-64 years accessed services in the major cities compared with 5.0 service users per 1000 people in remote/very remote locations, and 5.6 service users per 1000 people in inner regional areas.

4.4 ATSI people with a disability

4.4.1 Issues for ATSI people with a disability from the disability sector consultations

Issues for ATSI people with a disability reflected significant cultural differences and the double disadvantage that comes from ATSI status and disability. Issues for rural and remote communities described above apply to indigenous people who reside in those communities. Many of those consulted had a limited knowledge of disability service provision for ATSI people. In addition, there appeared to be no incentives for disability services to work with this group, particularly in regard to employment. ATSI people may not get picked up by transition programs from school, because they often are not attending school when such programs begin. There were perverse incentives for families to continue to care for individuals with a disability. While some women were seen to work hard to provide care, there was also concern around neglect and exploitation of DSP or carer payments.

Issues for ATSI people with a disability are described under the following headings.

a)   Double disadvantage from disability and ATSI status

b)   Lack of ATSI workers in disability services

c)   Lack of work role models, high work expectations, and family support

d)   Cultural appropriateness of post-school disability programs

a)   Double disadvantage from disability and ATSI status

There were many stories told in consultations about people with a disability who were kept with their communities where they and their families were not adequately supported. Families and people with a disability experience racism and discrimination, particularly in regard to accommodation and employment.

> *…but if people are on their communities, they don't want to leave their communities and there are no options on communities. Therefore, they are not going to come into town, because that is where their cultural land is. They don't leave that willingly. That is sort of enforced upon them because of a disability, and quite often that will create a family break-up, anyway, if that person has to come into town. So it creates lots of other social issues. So there is access to what is happening there, and some of that is not happening.*

Those people are in from the communities because their communities, two things, either did not want them – too much trouble to look after – or the families were unable to manage them any more because of their high support needs. So the policy was then for the people to come into… care.

There is still not much on the (remote) community to support any disability. They are neglected quite a lot.

We have huge requests from remote for respite to come into town and there is no way that we can fulfil the requests. Some of these, mostly women, care for numerous individuals. They care for their mother and then possibly a sister with a disability and then they have two children, and children from another sister. So they could have six individuals in their home with disabilities and then ten other individuals that don't have disabilities.

The biggest issue that we are having at home with placing indigenous people is racism within our small community.

Employers are not sensitive to time off for funerals and cultural business.

I: If you work with employers, can they be sensitive to some of that cultural stuff?
No, no. I know that ours aren't. They just say, 'It is just a black full of shit.'
They don't want a cripple working. How am I going to get a job? How do I look? Flogging a dead horse mate! Being Aboriginal, you feel it every day. You've got to work twice as hard.

It is creepy though. We work with stigma through all of it; it is not just with indigenous. You still have got ones out there that think, 'Oh, someone with a disability can't do a job as well as anybody else.' So it is in all areas.

See, I have got one job seeker at the moment, an indigenous lady, and we don't have any community housing in (LOCATION), so she is actually living at the night shelter. So she has to vacate the night shelter every morning at about 7:30 and then she goes over to the park and hoists all of her belongings up a tree, and then that night she has to go back and see if she can move back in.

We've tried to find her alternative - - It is very hard trying to find accommodation.

With Aboriginal people, though, the situation with housing is even worse because the landlords in (LOCATION) won't rent to black fellows. So, they won't rent it. So if you are Aboriginal, you are not going to get a house.

Boarding houses are a real problem as well. We've had people living in cars and trying to maintain a job; they can't get on a housing list and maintain a job, I might add. We had a lot of our people coming in and out of the acute unit and they will put them into a boarding house; well, you know, if drugs are a problem, guess where the drug peddlers are? – At the boarding houses. So housing is chronic in this area.

Yeah. We have got two clients at the moment up there [alcohol detox]. But in terms of, you know, we've got clients that turn up and say, 'You know, I am so tired.' It was like, 'What were you watching on television last night? Why weren't you in bed?' They haven't been to bed. You know, they were sleeping in the river and somebody was fighting and somebody was drinking and there wasn't any tucker and they haven't had their medication and they are hungry. How can you expect people to concentrate on their work? So we usually give them a couple of dollars to go and get something to eat and go home, you know.

We had another client here who is now somewhere at (LOCATION) we think. She was blind and deaf, but she was alert. You could write English upside down, capital letters, and she knew and would write back. Every time her family ran out of money, they would come into town. She was up from one of the bores; one of the communities near a bore. Her family would come into town and drive around to pick her up wherever she was, get her card, and then they would take her back out bush, but they would leave her there. Just by accident one day the LAC coordinator in town had gone up to visit something else and just sort of passed C. sitting under a tree, 'What are you doing here?' She would say, 'Oh, you know, waiting for the family.' They left three days ago. Three days she had no food, a little bottle of water – so, terrible abuse.

b)   Lack of ATSI workers in disability services

A common suggestion during consultations was that the provision of ATSI workers in disability could help overcome many cultural issues that contribute to unwillingness of many families to seek support from disability services if they are available.

Yeah, we have only got a couple of Aboriginal support workers. If we were to get more clients coming down from the Cape, then we would certainly need more Aboriginal support workers. I think it is much, much easier if you have got their own people to work with them; they understand them. If it is long term, like in residential or whatever, you have got cultural issues and so on that they understand. So it certainly is preferable.

We run a pre-employment training program where people come in for two days. It is open to anybody; no qualifications required. We provide information on (THE ORGANISATION), what we do, on intellectual disability and what it is all about, what the role of a support worker is, and then the other side we provide information on disability service standards, values, professional boundaries to give a clear picture of what the role is… You will often pick up people who have never worked in the area, but they have got the right values and attitudes and it is not difficult to train them because we are constantly running training programs all the time. So that way we have picked up a few indigenous people, because they won't apply - - If you put an ad in the paper for a support worker, they are not going to answer it, but you can get them in that way and train them up if you think they have got the capacity.

The young man is really able to relate to him, so he is getting a lot of relevant support. He has been taken to the indigenous men's groups that are set up in (LOCATION) to provide counselling and support to him.

We need Nunga (Aboriginal) workers who know families and their expectations and have a connection to the community and know cultural matters.
There is a lack of Aboriginal workers to help young people feel comfortable in the service – we need to open up access points for Aboriginal people.
We have been advising since 2002 for Aboriginal workers in these disability services…

c)   Lack of work role models, high work expectations, and family support

A range of social barriers to employment for ATSI people with a disability were described. A major barrier was perceived to be the lack of motivation, support, and opportunity to work. During one consultation session with ATSI disability workers and consumers, the question of employment for an ATSI person with a disability was raised evoked much laughter and reference to the wider issues of welfare dependency and unemployment for ATSI people.

no lived experience of what it is to get up and go to work and maintain work

The Aboriginal people normally never had employment of any form as well. They were disadvantaged in that they had no education, they had no employment, and it is only if they were disabled and it is only if they were ageing.

…and a lot of them in a lot of the communities were just hidden away. They were just hidden away. People didn't even know there were people with disabilities living in those places, some of them. They were just there.

Still the drugs and alcohol problems are coming through with them [young indigenous men] that they are not in treatment or getting any assistance with that, so we try and do something around that. Mostly it is just lack of lived experience of what work is – that is what I observe – and then whatever dysfunctional environment they come from that has not helped at all, and most of them are not seeking any treatment or what-have-you. Sometimes I think that is a good thing, but sometimes a bit of assistance with clinical counselling is good.

Not having the behind the scene support, like the family support in regards to things like being on time, being appropriately dressed, and all that sort of stuff. Also, too, not having the support – and I guess this is sort of a little bit of a cultural thing, too – having a job is not seen as something that they need to have.

The only one that we have had any issues with was he would be working and his mum used to ring up and, you know, 'Can you go and get me a bottle of milk and bring it home?' and he would just goes missing all the time from work. So

we ended up we just worked in with the family and we just got mum together for an afternoon tea, sort of thing, and just politely led it down that path that, you know, 'G. really has to stay at work. When he goes to work he has to stay there'. If there was an emergency and someone was in hospital maybe, that that would be the level or something that she could get in touch with work. She was fine. She just didn't realize that she was doing anything wrong.

I think the other thing is to recognize that it takes time. Like, systems need to understand - - Like, for this young fellow who has come from this terrible background of family being in and out of the park and that, like, he is trying. The fact that he came here for a start, because he came voluntarily at the time, and he does want it, but the difference between want and getting is huge, and it takes time to narrow that gap. So I think systems need to be aware of that, and then of course it is the community stuff, like, with the stigma.

d)   Cultural appropriateness of post-school disability programs

ATSI people with a disability resisted participation in day options because of cultural differences and issues. Programs were seen as being for Europeans with a disability. ATSI people with a disability were often reluctant to disclose a disability and this may not be understood by Centrelink.

Those in the system are receiving a service that is not culturally appropriate, e.g., male workers for male clients and do not like mixed gender – our expectations. Dads are also protective of daughters and wary about the set up of programs.
…the Aboriginal clients weren't part of these services anyway. Most of the time, they didn't participate.

There were barriers that we had to break down, especially the word disability. A lot of people don't like - - And Centrelink questions and departmental speak and language is, 'Do you have a disability?' You are sitting at Centrelink and there is a queue of people behind you and, 'No way, what are you asking me that question for? That's stupid', you know.

JCA assessments are all based upon a deficit model. Providers are trying to work on building people's capacity and self-image, but this may mean they

don't admit the extent of their disability in critical situations, such as assessments or at Centrelink.

We had a young lady and when they asked her whether she had a disability for their job capacity assessment, I am sitting in there as an advocate. It was a face-to-face meeting. They said, 'Have you got a disability?' She said, 'No, I haven't got a disability.' The JACA said, 'What am I doing here? Why did you want this person referred to you?'

We've done the same.

I always say to them, 'When we start, we have got to go to Centrelink and we've tell them everything that is wrong with you. We've got to tell them everything that is wrong with you, and when we've finished that then we want you to forget that you've got them.'

4.4.2 Profiles of service users from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background

This section examines data from the AGDSC and data provided by the AIHW to examine patterns and trends in the participation of people with a disability from an ATSI background in employment and community access services. Data from the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services on access to services by this group in 2005/06 are also examined.

a)   Open employment

Figure 4.4.2A shows the proportion of all people with a disability in open employment services, by ATSI status.[41]

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[41] The data for Figure 4.4.2A can be found at Table 4.4.2A in Appendix C

Figure 4.4.2A: All consumers by ATSI status 1999/00 – 2005/06 (open employment)
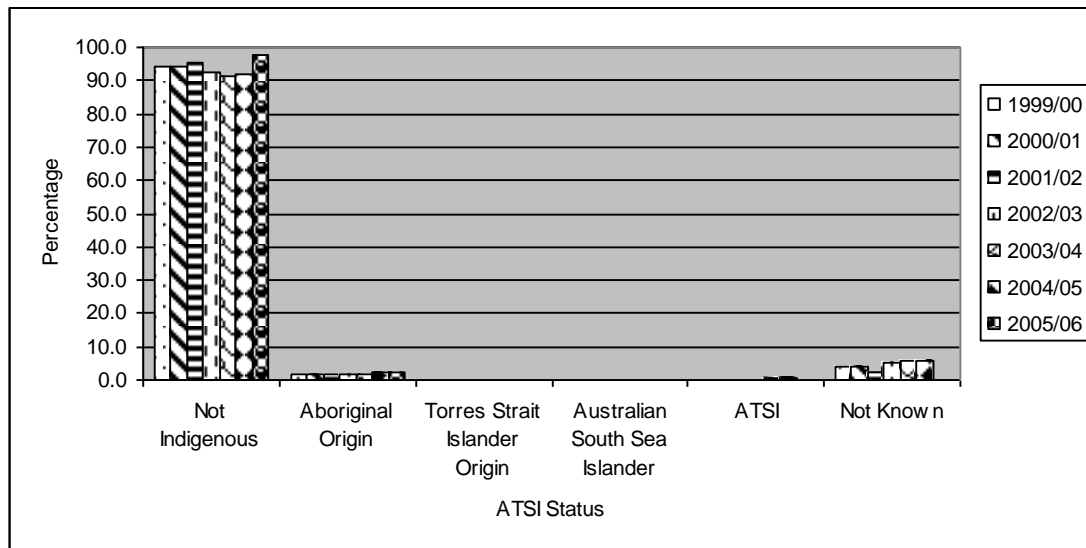
Figure 4.4.2A shows

- Over 90% of people with a disability participating in open employment are not of ATSI origin.

- The proportion of people identified as being of Aboriginal origin has increased from 1.6% to 2% over the time period.

- Levels of identification of ATSI status in other categories has been consistently less than 0.5%, however there has been a small increase in people identifying as being of ATSI origin.

- The proportion of people for whom ATSI status is not known varies over time but has reached 6%.

b)   Supported employment

Figure 4.4.2B shows the proportion of all people with a disability in supported employment services, by ATSI status.[42]

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[42] The data for Figure 4.4.2B can be found at Table 4.4.2B in Appendix C

Figure 4.4.2B: All consumers by ATSI status 1999/00 – 2005/06 (supported employment)
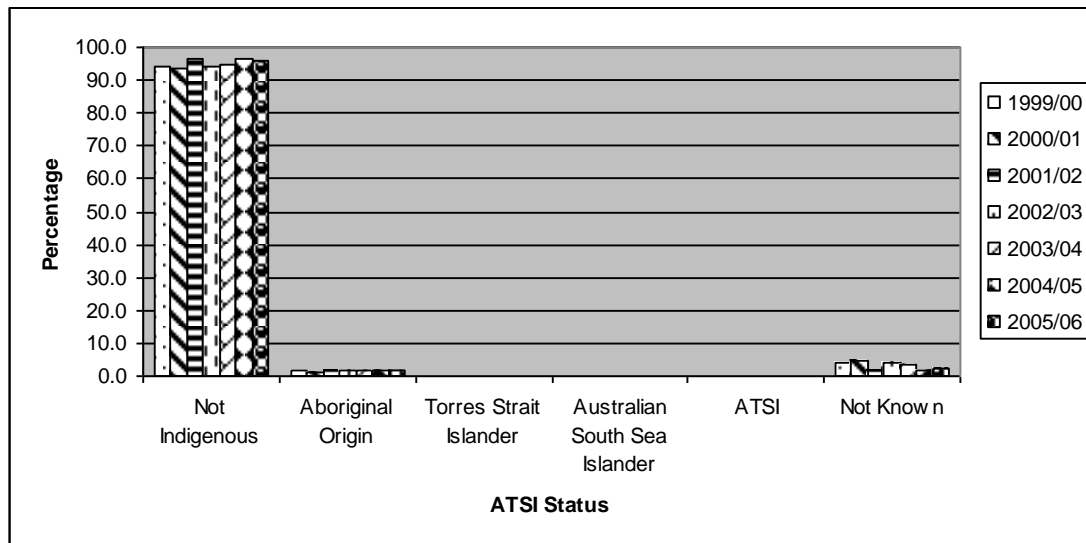
Figure 4.4.2B shows

- Over 90% of people with a disability participating in supported employment are not of ATSI origin.

- The proportion of people identified as being of Aboriginal origin remained steady at an average of 1.5%.

- Levels of identification of ATSI status in other categories has been consistently 0.2% and under.

- The proportion of people for whom ATSI status is not known varies over time but tends to be lower than in open employment, with a high of 4.1%.

c)   Community access

Figure 4.4.2C shows the proportion of all people in community access services, by ATSI status.[43]

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[43] The data for Figure 4.4.2C can be found at Table 4.4.2C in Appendix C

Figure 4.4.2C: All consumers by ATSI status 2003/04 – 2005/06 (community access)
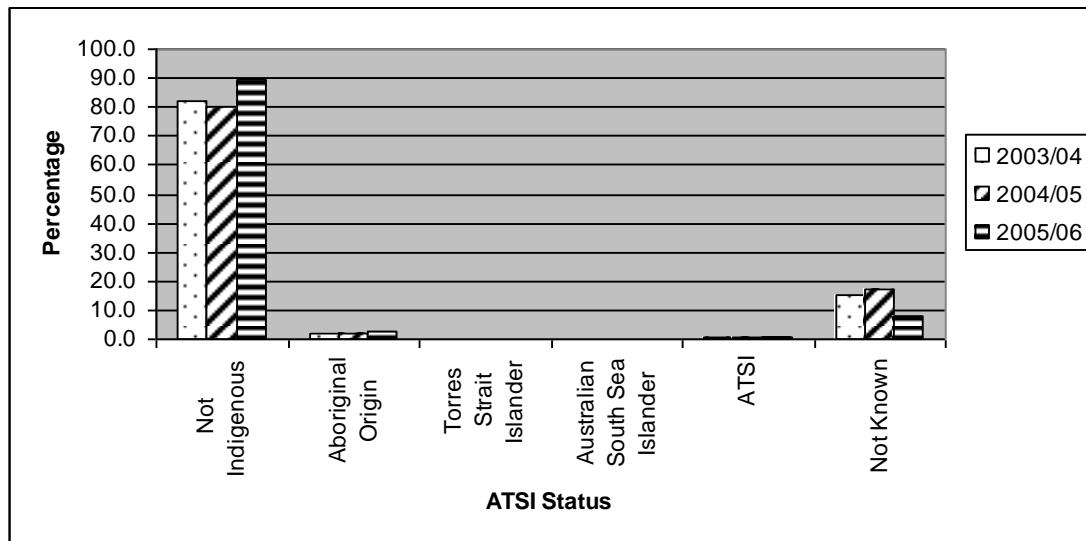
Figure 4.4.2C shows

- Lower proportions of people who are not Indigenous than for either employment service type, but rising in 2005/06 to similar levels.

- An increase in the proportion of people identified as being of Aboriginal origin and a decrease in those identified as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin over the period.

- Higher rates of people not identifying ATSI status, lowering in 2005/06. This decrease could be attributable to more people identifying as being not Indigenous.

d)   Summary

The data show similar levels of participation by people from an ATSI background across each of the service types. According to the Productivity Commission, there were high levels of access to both employment services and community access services by people with a disability from an ATSI background (Productivity Commission 2008). This is consistent with the higher prevalence of disability in this population compared with the non-ATSI population. In 2004/5, 6.0 ATSI service users per 1000 ATSI people aged 15-64 years accessed employment services compared with 4.6 service users per 1000 non-ATSI people of the same age. In the same year 2.3 ATSI service users per 1000 ATSI people aged under 65 years participated in community access services compared with 1.8 service users per 1000 non-ATSI people (Productivity Commission, 2007). This may indicate that ATSI

people with a disability were more likely to access employment services than community access services.

4.5 People with a disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

4.5.1 Issues for people from CaLD backgrounds from the sector consultations

People with a disability from a CaLD background were the least responsive and the most difficult to engage in the project. Of greatest concern for this group was a lack of culturally appropriate disability services and the interface between employment and day options services was not a priority. One of the barriers identified was a lack of cultural awareness amongst staff in CSTDA services and an absence of staff from CaLD backgrounds. This meant that people with a disability from a CaLD background were less likely to access CSTDA services. A lack of incentives, accountability, or performance measures to encourage CSTDA services to work with this group was also identified, though some measures have been introduced in NSW. There were no incentives for service providers to work with this group in employment services. Particular barriers to post-school transition planning were identified for young people with a disability from a CaLD background. It was observed that if this group is not engaged in a post-school transition process while they are at school it is difficult to engage the young person and their family.

This following sections examine data from the AGDSC and data provided by the AIHW to examine patterns and trends in the participation by people with a disability from a CaLD background in employment and community access services. The proxy for identifying people with a disability from a CaLD background is people who were born in a non-English speaking country using the variable *Country of Birth*. In addition to *Country of Birth*, data on *Language Spoken at Home* are also examined. Data are also considered from the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services on access to services by this group in 2004/05.

4.5.2 Profiles of CaLD service users

a) Open employment

Figure 4.5.2A shows the proportion of all consumers who accessed open employment, by their country of birth.[44]

Figure 4.5.2A: All consumers by country of birth 1999/00 – 2005/06 (open employment)
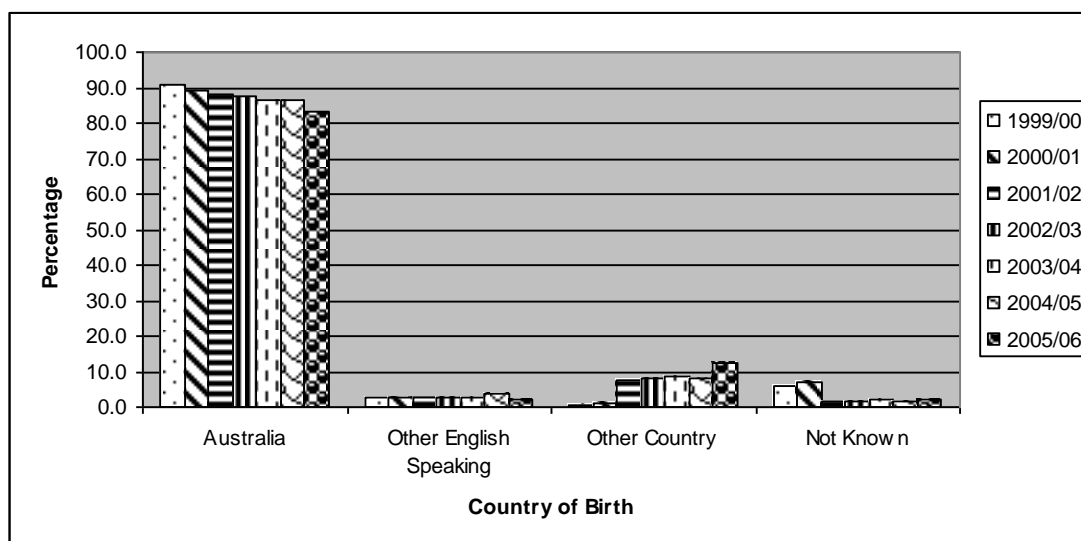
Figure 4.5.2A shows

- The large, but slightly decreasing, majority of people in open employment were born in Australia with very few people born in other countries, including English speaking countries.
- There was an increase in the percentage of people who were born in other countries in 2005/06.
- The proportion in the not known category has remained low since 2001-02.

b) Supported employment

Figure 4.5.2B shows the percentage of all people with a disability in supported employment, by country of birth.

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[44] The data for Figure 4.5.2A can be found at Table 4.5.2A in Appendix C

Figure 4.5.2B: All consumers by country of birth 1999/00 – 2005/06 (supported employment)
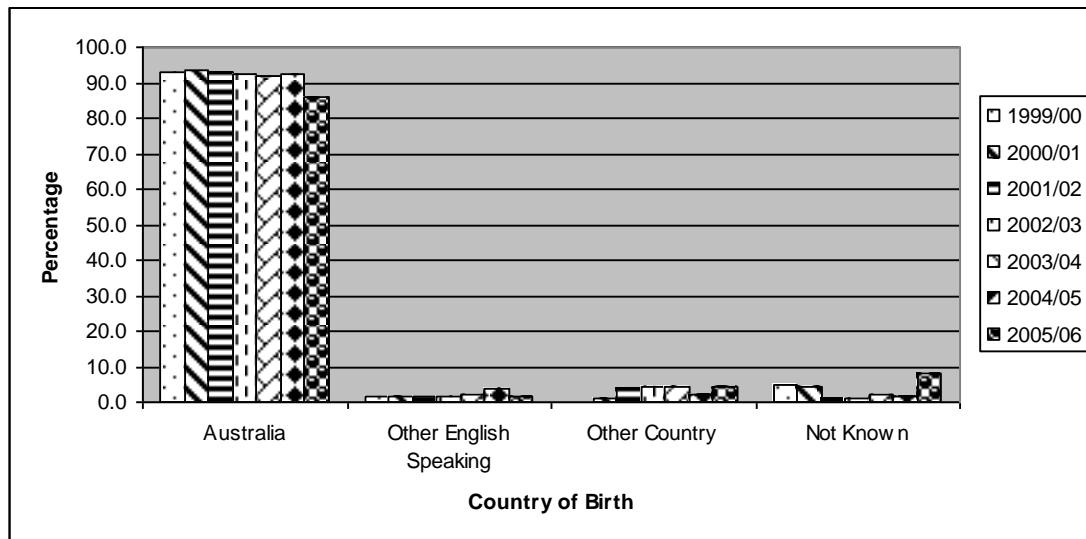
Figure 4.5.2B shows

- The large majority of people in supported employment were born in Australia with very few people born in other countries, including English speaking countries.

- The proportional decrease in 2005/06 in the born in Australia category was accompanied by an increase in the proportion of not known.

c) Community access

Figure 4.5.2C shows the percentage of all people with a disability in community access, by country of birth. For these data, levels of "English Proficiency" (EP) of countries is calculated across four levels, with *EP Group 1* being most proficient.[45]

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[45] The data for Figure 4.5.2C can be found at Table 4.5.2C in Appendix C. Consistent with the ABS standards for statistics on cultural and language diversity, the NMDS reports on country of birth according to the English Proficiency (EP) of the country. EP Group 1 represents those countries most proficient in English and EP Group 4 the countries lease proficient in English. These categories are not directly comparable with those reported by the AGDSC.

Figure 4.5.2C: All consumers by country of birth 2003/04 – 2005/06 (community access)
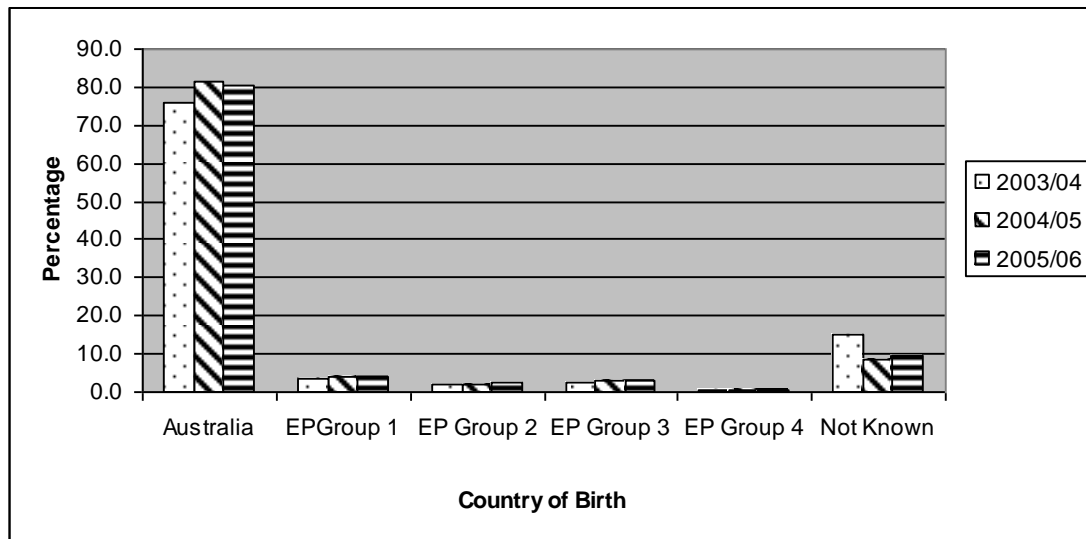
Figure 4.5.2C shows

- The large majority of people participating in community access were born in Australia.

- The proportion of people born in Australia is lower for community access than for either open or supported employment.

- The proportion of people for whom country of birth is not known is higher than for either open or supported employment.

- Participation in community access tends to decrease somewhat as English proficiency decreases.

d)   Summary

There were very low levels of proportions of participating service users with a disability who were are not born in Australia, including those born in other English speaking countries and countries with high levels of English proficiency.   Figure 4.5.2B shows the percentage of all consumers accessing employment services, by their main language spoken at home.[46] These data confirmed the country of birth data.

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[46] The data for Figure 4.5.2D can be found at Table 4.5.2D in Appendix C. The AGDSC does not report on Main Language Spoken at Home by employment service type.

Figure 4.5.2D: All employment consumers by main language spoken at home 1999/00 – 2005/06
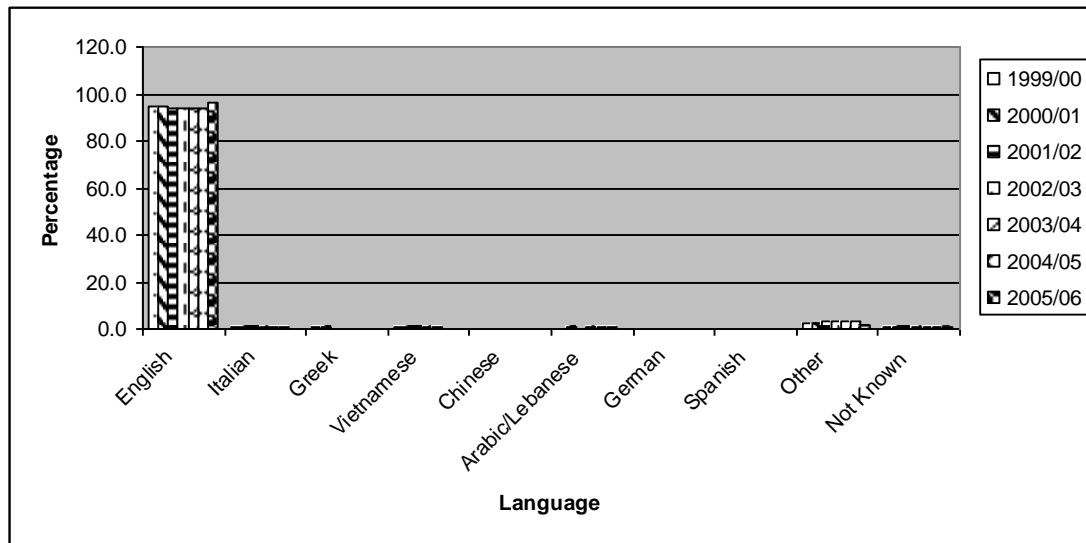
As an indicator of equity of access, the Report on Australian Government Services (Productivity Commission, 2007) compared the number per 1000 service users from special needs groups who accessed services with all service users who accessed services. Special needs groups included people not born in Australia, people identified as Indigenous, and people living in outer regional and remote/very remote locations. Equity of access meant that the proportion of service users per 1000 from a special needs group should not vary significantly from the proportion of service users per 1000 people from all people who used a service. A lower rate of service users per 1000 for a special needs group may represent reduced access. On this basis, the Productivity Commission found that people born in a non-English speaking country had reduced access to employment services in 2004-05. Only 1.4 per 1000 service users with a disability born in a non-English speaking country used employment services, compared to 5.3 per 1000 service users who were born in English speaking countries. No data were provided for community access services.

5 The interface between employment and day options for people with a disability

5.1 The concept and importance of the interface

The concept of *interface* is germane to this research project. This Chapter of the report provides a discussion on the meaning of "interface" that is drawn from the Project brief, the "To Take Part" and other reports, and from what we have learned from the Project itself. Dictionary definitions of the term "interface" refer to the boundary or the point of contact or connection between things. With the addition of the term "seamless", which is often used by policy makers and service providers, the meaning of a "seamless interface" may be a contradiction in terms. By definition, a boundary cannot be seamless. Seamlessness would assume that a boundary does not exist. A boundary may also be a barrier and this latter term seems more apt for this research project. It is also pertinent to reflect on whether it is actually meaningful to describe a complex system such as the disability sector as "seamless".

The "To Take Part" report refers to the interface as "cooperation and coordination" between Commonwealth and State and Territory programs.

The Project's *Contractor's Obligations and Work to be Performed*" refers to the term interface in the following terms.

- "the seamless delivery of services across the employment/day options interface";
- "coordination of services between and within levels of government";
- "opportunity…to move between or flexible combine employment and day options services";
- "service linkages and appropriate service options relating to the…interface".

5.2 Factors that enable and facilitate movement across the interface between employment and day options for people with a disability

Through the methodologies of this project, we have identified six key factors that address barriers and facilitate access to employment and day options for people with a disability.

a)   "Drivers" that provide strong rationales for people with a disability to cross the interface and for policymakers and service providers to facilitate that

movement. Two key drivers introduced in Chapter 1 relate to aspirations. The first is the aspiration for people with a disability to achieve their potential both developmentally and in terms of community participation. This is the "developmental aspiration" and has been a driver in the disability sector for many decades. The second key driver is the aspiration to reduce and minimise social outlays in terms of income benefits in particular and to increase employment participation. This is the "economic aspiration". The aspirations are potentially more effective when they work together and are potentially dysfunctional if they work at odds or are out of balance.

b) Accountable mechanisms of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and joint action between the key stakeholders that form the interface. The mechanisms reflect shared objectives. They are inclusive of all key stakeholders, but particularly governments and service providers.

c) "Pathways" and linkages that enable movement between employment and day options and enable access to multiple services. These pathways should be clear, unambiguous, and as straightforward as possible.

d) Information on pathways and other relevant information that facilitates easy transition across the interface that are available, accessible, and comprehensible to stakeholders, especially the primary stakeholders, i.e., people with a disability and their families and carers.

e) Policies, funding mechanisms, and services that acknowledge actual and potential barriers, minimise them, and contain strategies to overcome then.

f) At the local level, service workers who can guide and support individual families and people with a disability across the complex barriers.

A service system and its elements can be described in these terms and their quality and performance assessed against these criteria.

5.3 Comments on the interface issue from the disability sector consultations

Reference to interface issues has been made in previous chapters of this report. Here, the focus is on the disability sector consultations.

There is little perceived movement of people with a disability between employment and day options. State and Territory day options services across all jurisdictions cannot meet demands and most jurisdictions utilise processes to determine relative need and operate demand policy and management systems. In this context, it is

much less likely that a person with a disability who has a service such as employment will be offered a day options place unless there is a relative crisis. Most jurisdictions have given some priority to school leavers for access to day options.

One of the potential risks of the employment reforms for business services was that people with low productivity levels would be exited from employment. To manage this risk the Commonwealth implemented Targeted Support for people with productivity levels of less than 15%, providing a safety net for people to either remain in employment or transition to a day option. Perceptions were that very few people took up the option to move to a day service.

A common, striking observation made in some consultations was that very few face-to-face meetings between policy makers and service providers occurred across day options, business services, and open employment. Some providers who attended consultations remarked that this was the first time they had met for many years. This was also true within large disability service providers where one section of the service seemed to know little about the operations of another section. In terms of interface, this reflects a substantial degree of discontinuity and disconnection in the disability sector.

Issues about the interface between employment and day options services are described under the following headings.

a)   Access to day options is restricted by limited availability of places

b)   There is limited interface between levels of government and within government agencies constitutes a major barrier

c)   There is little perceived movement between day options and employment

d)   The role of day options services is unclear and under review on some jurisdictions

a)   Access to day options is restricted by limited availability of places

Access to day options in many jurisdictions required a critical level of need resulting in many people with high support needs being unable to participate. There was a lack of sufficient funding and places available in day options. Funding limited the hours of support that were available.

…in the past, school leavers with very significant disability were nominating employment as their preferred outcome, but at least in part, say part

employment, part (day options). But now you'll have lots of students with very moderate disabilities who are nominating only (day options) as an outcome. The pressure on (day options) means that only people with significant needs get funded....

..in (STATE), about $12,000 per person is the level of support for people in (DAY OPTIONS) and that's (for consumers) coming out of the school system that's providing $30,000 per person. There's a significant gap in resources and therefore the amount of hours of support that people can receive.

(STAFF)..are the ones who do the negotiations with services, families…and then putting the funding requests into State office…We don't have many places that come up – people actually have to die…It might be two or three years until they get something.

…it's difficult for us (business service) to access those sorts of services because the attitude is 'they're already getting a service…then, let's try to get someone a place in either day options or a business service for someone with no service.

I think the real worry is that the federal model for employment is entitlement, whereas the state model, they don't have any funding. It is lucky if you get it. There is going to be no transition. There is very little transition. The way I see it is there is day options for people who can't achieve, or supposedly can't, there are people in sheltered workshops who are supposed to show signs that they are employable, and then there is employment.

So we are not in the situation where we can provide day services to people when they opt out of business services because we don't have the funding to do so. … – you have got families who are quite distraught because they are stuck between a rock and a hard place. They have got family members who for one reason or another don't wish to or are unable to stay at business services and they have got nowhere to go during the day. They don't have the capacity to look after themselves safely during the day and we don't have the capacity to pick them up without funding.

b)   Limited interface between levels of government and within government agencies constitutes a major barrier

Interface issues between levels of government and within government agencies was a major barrier to cooperation, collaboration, and communication.

DEWR doesn't interface with DEST at all. So you've got one Commonwealth Government Department talking about education and training and skilling up the nation not talking to…the Department that supports people through employment assistance.

There were always so many discussions around funding…So we, as an organisation tried to interface the Commonwealth and State funding but never the twain shall meet because…there was an issue with case-based funding being introduced. We were starting to get it together with the Commonwealth and State and then CBF came in and it was like there was so much more focus on employment to get the cream of the crop and get them out – because it was so time-focused, there was no training, no work-on, no pre-employment transition or post-employment support….The high support people with some extra support in finding open employment…they would have been able to transition to work and have some balance of day program as well because they needed the social connectedness…some kind of balance with their five days…but mum and dad are both working…(and) were asking for…five days…

"…it (a mechanism for State and Commonwealth collaboration) continues to feature very strongly on our CSTDA work plan that we should be doing these things…and I don't know how to while you've got all those silos in place. I don't know how you can have partnership, collaboration, and innovation.

c)   There is little perceived movement between day options and employment

There is little perceived movement between employment and day options including within agencies that operate multiple services. While there were not necessarily any rules that impeded clients accessing employment and day options, in practice it was seen that if the person had the capacity for employment, the pressure on day options places meant that someone else would likely have a higher entitlement to that funded day option place. There was overwhelming agreement during consultations that transition between day options and employment was a rare event. On a number of

occasions within the consultations, even within large services that provided both employment and day options, the manager of one section knew very little about the operation of the other.

There used to be applications for employment, (day options), and a mixed option and I'd be really surprised if there are many mixed applications and really surprised if they're funded because the pressure on the (day options) stream is such that if a person can do employment, they're probably not going to be getting (day options).

As a general rule, however, our experience is that for most individuals, the opportunity to move between services (from day options to employment) does not occur. The lack of individual review specifically in (day options) services is a potential barrier.

I manage the open and supported employment service and we have a day service as well, so we can internally move people around…but I've been with the organisation for 18 years and can only recall one event, one incident when we managed to get a supported employment employee out of our business service into the day service because of ageing and loss of productivity and so on without a hassle with (the department)…We have transferred many more workers back into day services, but it's always been a hassle an it can take months.

We (multiple services agency) haven't progressed the interface between day options and employment to any great extent though we've had some extent with people moving both backwards and forwards. So people in business services getting a bit older moving into day options programs. We've not had anyone going from day options to open employment as yet. We've got a couple in day options doing business services type work and we hope they can progress into business services employment.

Despite the fact that the decision (under targeted support) was supposed to be made by the individual it appears that service providers were involved in these decisions. There were significant risks to business services in targeted support. In particular for every individual that went to a day option the service would lose over $3,000 funding that they would not be able to replace by backfilling places.

There were perceptions by business services and State Governments that the ongoing funding of this measure (targeted support) was not secure.

I don't think there were very many reasons to celebrate that targeted support package. You know everyone was saying $99m over four years or whatever it happened to be, but what it actually needed was proper recurrent support in recognition that the service user population was ageing.

d)   The role of day options services is unclear and under review in some jurisdictions

Day options services in some jurisdictions are under review as their purposes and roles have become unclear. Day options appeared to serve a wide variety of functions ranging from activities that simply take people with a disability into community settings, through to structured programs that have a vocational focus. They also served important respite functions for families. Other programs attempted a wide variety of activities that may not have been coherent. Some programs ran congregate activities and others were more individualised. Needs for identification and evaluation of outcomes were raised in consultations.

You need to have a critical look at day options because it's a very sensitive area…They need to step up the quality measures so you know what your clients need and what they're capable of and every person needs to be connected to a learning plan that measures in some way against their support…There is a disability act that has standards, but unless you're enforcing it in some way.

Not a (policy) framework as such. We have service agreements with individual organisations that identifies our expectations in terms of outcomes for clients. They're in the process of being reviewed…A meaningful day placement is very broad and you can interpret that the way you choose and with staff ratios, I believe very few people are actually getting their needs met.

And a day options element is simply letting the family have a break throughout the week. Most parents have jobs or there's ageing parents who send their son or daughter off to a day service. It gives them a chance to recharge the batteries. So there's a lot of issues and it's hard for a day service to clearly define their responsibilities.

…we need to get back to the idea of what are the outcomes (of day options). There's always the danger of once someone is deemed to be suited to (day options) within a blink or two, the possibilities of gaining skills and moving on to more valued and rewarding employment quelled.

6 Examples of successful programs that enhance community participation and the employment/day options interface

6.1 Some broad characteristics of innovation and "better practice"

This project has identified a small number of key, broad characteristics of innovation and "better practice" that enhance the employment participation of people with a disability who have high support needs. They provide a broad framework within which the project has identified a number of examples of innovation and better practice, all but one of which are Australian.

1. Person-centredness

Services are person-centred, highly individualised, and based on the needs of consumers. Within service systems, person-centredness is reflected in three lines of policy and practice. First, over the past 15-20 years, most Australian jurisdictions have introduced individualised "packages" of funding support, although it is notable that block funding of day options programs remains common, particularly for older, centre-based programs. Second, person-centredness is reflected in various individualised planning processes, often called "person-centred planning". Third, most jurisdictions have introduced service workers, part of whose role is to work with individual families and people with a disability. In principle, person-centred services increase the possibility that the individual needs of a person with a disability will be addressed.

2. Policy and practice coherence

There is an effective interface between elements of policy, funding, and service delivery that enable and facilitate access to appropriate services, including multiple services and opportunity to move between services. Specifically, this refers to mechanisms of policy, funding, and practice that establish appropriate linkages between policy makers and service providers in order to facilitate cooperation and collaboration. Associated with this characteristics, are intentional communication and collaborations between key stakeholders at all levels across governments and service providers with clear objectives and measurable outcomes around minimising barriers and disincentives, and facilitating access to, appropriate day options and employment services.

3.   Clarity of purposes and outcomes

Services have clearly stated outcomes and quality assurance processes that are underpinned by an evidence base. To this end, services maintain transparent and appropriate data collection and evaluations of outcomes.

4.   Strategies to transfer innovation and "better practice"

Two key strategies to enhance transference of innovation are the development, implementation, and evaluation of pilots or models of "better practice", and the development and dissemination of the evidence base for "better practice" through research strategies. These strategies also contribute to sustainability if, in fact, they lead to further action at the level of policy, funding, and practice.

5.   Coordination of planning and service access at the local level

Leading edge disability services have acknowledged the complexity of the service system and the difficulty of access for people with a disability and their families by the development of various forms of service planning and coordination at the local level. In various Australian jurisdictions, these take the form of Local Area Coordinators (established in WA in 1990), Service Coordinators, and Case Managers.

6.   Effective identification and address of barriers to access and participation

Service models have identified and implemented specific strategies to address barriers to participation and effective outcomes for consumers.

In addition to these broad characteristics, the areas of transition from school to work and from work to retirement have substantial and well-developed, evidence-based principles. These are described below.

This chapter describes a small set of examples of innovation or better practice in the following areas.

1.   The transition from education to working life
2.   The transition to retirement
3.   Local area network development
4.   Access of people with a disability who have high support needs to employment
5.   Data collection to support better practice

6.2 The transition from education to working life

6.2.1 "Better practice" in the transition from school to employment

The metaphor of travel is often used in describing and researching transitions.

> *We talk of students' origins and destinations, and the itineraries that link them. We describe tracks and streams, royal roads and alternative routes, one-way streets and dead-ends, and ladders and bridges. We apply terms such as 'parking lot' to schemes where there is little progress. The pathways approach … presents systems as networks of interconnected pathways, which may vary in the way that the pathways are structured and in the nature of their interconnections (Raffe, 1998, p. 375, cited in OECD, 2000).*

Transition pathways rely on the interface between a number of stakeholders including governments, schools, employers, young people and their parents, specialist employment agencies, and further education. The key challenge is the development of effective linkages between these groups.

The following nine general principles were drawn from some of the voluminous research and policy literature on the nature of the transition of young people with a disability from school to employment, including literature on the transition of non-disabled youth (Lamb and McKenzie, 2001; McDonald et al., 2000; OECD, 2000; Quintini, Martin, & Martin, 2007; Stewart, Antie, Healy, Law, and Young, 2007).

1. The transition of non-disabled young people into the labour market is often prolonged and discontinuous rather than smooth and quick. School leavers tend to combine schooling with part-time work and/or job search and often intersperse spells of inactivity with spells of work or job search). In examining the pathways of students with reported disability, an Australian study identified seven major destinations at the end of seven years post-school (Lamb & McKenzie, 2001). This is strongly supportive of the importance of a flexible interface between schools, employers, and post-school education. It also provides a point of comparison with school leavers with a disability for whom this diversity may be unattainable, particularly if they are channelled into a service options from which they are unable to move beyond.

2. Effective relationships exist between the key stakeholders including young people and their families, schools, employers, and programs that support

vocational destinations. These relationships could be supported by effective institutional frameworks that are based on sound policy and strong commitments from key stakeholders. Greater involvement of the social partners, as well as the public authorities at all levels, can help to enhance the effectiveness of programmes.

3. Well organised transition pathways exist that combine school- and work-based learning and have strong interface between secondary education and VET with well-defined destinations. Work experience is combined with education during the transition period in order to facilitate vocational outcomes. Apprenticeships and traineeships, including those that are school-based, represent a particularly effective example.

4. Accessible information and guidance regarding pathways, careers, and vocational opportunities is provided.

5. Programmes that integrate and combine services and offer a comprehensive "package" seem to be more successful. This principle underpins the effectiveness of services that reflect a broad concept of *vocational outcomes* in which attention is paid to career planning and social needs, and would seem to be particularly appropriate for young people at risk, including those with a disability. The concept of *vocation* encompasses much more than the attainment of a job.

6. Job-search assistance programmes are often found to be the most cost effective for non-disabled youth. This principle reflects one of the key components of specialist disability employment supports.

7. Long unemployment experiences at labour force entry may have persistent negative effects on employment probabilities and wages later in life. Prolonged post-school education that is not based on employment destinations also results in similar poor outcomes.

8. Safety nets are provided that recognise and address barriers to vocational outcomes and identify and support students who "fall through the cracks".

Stewart, Antie, Healy, Law, and Young, 2007 identified the following specific principles that should apply to transition services and support for young people with a disability:

a) Being person first, family-centred, culturally sensitive.

b) Adhering to a life span philosophy.

c) Being collaborative and interdependent.

d) Valuing citizenship: participation, contribution and belonging.

e)   Promoting individualised choices and options.

f)   Having an orientation to emerging adults and their future.

g)   Focusing on strengths and needs, not a medical condition.

Finally:

> *Although institutional frameworks differ, all effective transition systems appear to have one thing in common: underlying them are societies that assume responsibility for young people's transition from education to work. (OECD, 2000, p. 150)*

6.2.2 "Better Pathways". The South Australian Social Inclusion Board, Department of the Premier and Cabinet

In 2006 the SA Government released a report on the delivery of day options services in SA (Department of Families & Communities, 2006). It acknowledged the need for better transition planning and support, improved assessment, pathways with greater linkages between service areas, more equitable funding, and improved monitoring for quality. Following this report the Social Inclusion Board (SIB), established within the Department of Premier and Cabinet to address social issues by improving linkages between social and economic policy, carried out an extensive process of consultation on ways to improve the pathways from school to further education, training, employment, and day options for young people with a disability aged from 15 to 24. This initiative is unusual and innovative in the Australian context because of its auspice within the highest levels of government and also because it has brought together major stakeholder groups, including State and Commonwealth Government agencies to participate in the planning process. In this way it has endeavoured to overcome the barriers created by the silos that operate at government levels and disability services in Australia.

The SIB used a range of consultative mechanisms including a Senior Officers Group with representation across State and Commonwealth Government agencies, a number of expert panels to examine day options, education, and employment assistance, and carried out processes of consultation that included interviews, focus groups, public forums, and surveys.

In August 2006, the SIB released a discussion paper seeking input on improving the post-school transition for young people with a disability (Social Inclusion Unit, 2006). It concluded that day options in SA were targeted to those with an intellectual

disability (ID) and/or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) with moderate to very high support needs who are over 16 years. The report identified further transition services for students with severe and multiple disabilities funded by the Department of Education and Children's Services (described below).

The SIB's consultation paper identified a gap in service delivery for people who do not have an ID or ASD, particularly those with an acquired brain injury (ABI) and/or physical disability, who were not eligible to receive day options services, as well as those with low and minimal support requirements who were not a focus for CSTDA services. It suggested a need for alternative programs for these groups.

The SIB has an ongoing *Better Pathways* project focusing on transition issues for young people with a disability. Recently, a draft report *Choices, Challenges and Connections* (Social Inclusion Board, 2008) has been circulated within South Australian Government agencies that identified a number of action areas and recommended the establishment of an across-government implementation group. This will also be innovative in the Australian context where high level, focused, across-government activity in this area is very uncommon.

6.2.3 The Lighthouse Initiative, Personnel Employment School to Work Program, and the SA Disability Transition Program

As a response to the "Bridging Pathways" strategy (ANTA, 2000), the Enterprise Career Education Foundation (funded by the then Commonwealth Department of Education, Training, and Youth Affairs) established the *Lighthouse Initiative*. The purpose of the initiative was to address the lack of clear pathways to the VET system and to employment for students with a disability leaving school (Barnett, 2004; Harrison & Barnett, undated). The Initiative was intentional about building partnerships between schools, employers, and disability employment agencies. It had three additional features that corresponded to the evidence base of better practice in transition programs.

1. Intervention occurring prior to years 11 and 12 in order to prevent students with a disability leaving school early.

2. Provision of school-based VET programs and supported, structured workplace learning.

3. Creation of pathways from school programs to employment, including school-based apprenticeships.

(Barnett, 2004, p. 102)

Three projects were funded, one in South Australia, a second in New South Wales, and a third in Tasmania. Positive outcomes were achieved early in the program. For example, in 2000-2001, the South Australian program had 22 of its 45 participants gain employment and participants achieved outcomes in a number of VET programs.

The Initiative had DEN agencies undertake a number of key roles (Harrison & Barnett, undated).

1. Transfer knowledge of the labour market to secondary school teachers through training.
2. Manage the interface between schools and the labour market.
3. Support students and their families.
4. Provide a link between students, schools, and workplaces.

The Adelaide-based *Personnel Employment (PE) School to Work Program* is the only surviving Lighthouse Initiative project. The Program now operates within the South Australian State Disability Transition Program (SDTP) which is funded by the SA Department of Education and Children's Services to provide transition assistance to students with a disability during their final year of school. PE is contracted to provide program coordination and case management. The program targets students with an intellectual disability.

An independent evaluation of the SDTP (Pearson and Associates, 2007) established that it has been successful in retaining students with a disability at school, and in achieving VET, employment, and further education objectives. The program has supported 355 students over six years with 44% achieving an employment outcome. The SDTP achieved lower employment outcome rates than NCVER VET data suggested, but this is likely to be a reflection of the high support needs of students in the SDTP program.

Four critical success factors were identified in the evaluation.

1. Individualised case management and support by workers experienced in disability and the labour market.
2. Employment preparation training and career guidance.
3. Access to industry-specific VET and structured workplace learning opportunities.
4. Connections to DENs to provide job search and on-the-job support.

PE believes that a critical success factor for the project has been the identification of a DEN provider as the lead agency because the DEN providers are the key stakeholders with an employment outcome focus. PE's focus has been on people with high support needs and over time additional partners have been introduced to build capacity to work with particular groups such as young people with a physical disability. PE operates a "Local Community Partnership Model" which creates partnerships between industries and schools.

Additional success factors identified by PE included

- The engagement of teachers because of their important relationship with parents. Without the availability of systemic destination surveys of school leavers, the program provides teachers with valuable feedback on outcomes for their former students.
- Engagement with schools enables an understanding of school education culture with the opportunity also to influence school curriculum.
- PE's relationship with schools reflects a commitment to maintain this pathway in the long term. They believe that central agencies often underestimate the importance of trust in relationships in the creation of positive outcomes.

The program is available to any student with adjusted/negotiated curriculum plans. PE has referred some students who have been referred to their uncapped stream back to school. This has enabled the students to complete their education and to participate in the school to work program.

While the PE support model is very successful, one lesson learned is that it takes too long to gain secure employment for school leavers. A possible reason identified was that school leavers did not have the needed social skills and basic knowledge of the workplace. In response, PE sought to influence the school curriculum and the time taken from client registration to secure employment was shortened from 18 months to 11 months.

The project recruits 100 school leavers annually into the DEN sector, with ten agencies now participating in the program. Most referrals go through the capped stream but some job seekers move into the uncapped DEN stream.

The South Australian Government has recognised that increased employment of people with a disability will result in reduced demand for day options programs and so plan to increase their investment in skill formation and improving the VET system to be more responsive to people with a disability. They have also committed to doubling the employment of people with a disability within the Government by 2014. Employment in government services is highly valued due to higher wages, hours, and greater security of tenure. PE reported that South Australian DEWR is also supporting work in this area as they recognise the value in a strongly performing DEN sector. They are also supporting efforts towards the development of technical assistance.

6.2.4 The SWEAT Project – EDGE Employment Solutions

The Supported Work Experience into Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SWEAT) Project is provided by EDGE Employment Solutions in Western Australia. The Project was initially supported by the WA Department of Education and Training and is now jointly funded by the DEEWR (through a National Disability Coordination Officer who is director of the Project and an EDGE employee) and EDGE itself. Although the Project does not specifically target people with high support needs, it has characteristics that would be appropriate for such a group.

The SWEAT Project illustrates a number of better practice features. It is an example of a transition program designed to intervene relatively early for school students with a disability and provide a pathway to employment. The Project has a clear vocational focus, utilises traineeships and apprenticeships as outcomes, and targets seven specific industries that are known to have skills shortages. It represents a productive collaboration between schools, the DEEWR, and a DEN provider. The pathway to employment involves

- Referral of Year 11 students with a disability by the school to EDGE.
- Selection of students by EDGE.
- Participation in the SWEAT Project.
- Consideration in Year 12 for a school based traineeship.
- Registration with EDGE as a job, traineeship, or apprenticeship seeker.

The program is a career development strategy to enable students to have supported work experience in industries that offer apprenticeships and traineeships. It consists of placement in an industry workplace for up to 15 weeks for a day a week with support from EDGE.

Information provided by the Project director indicated that since the Project's inception in 2006, 59 students with a disability have registered with the Project, 47 have been placed in a supported work experience program, 32 students have completed the program to date, and 26 are registered with a DEN.

6.2.5 NSW Transition to Work Program

Transition to Work (TTW) is a two year program funded by the New South Wales Department of Ageing, Disability & Home Care (DADHC) to prepare young people with a disability for employment. TTW is targeted at school leavers who might not be immediately ready to pursue employment but who are likely to benefit from further skills development and qualification. School leavers with a disability are streamed to TTW according to a school-based functional assessment. TTW has an employment focus and is primarily delivered by service providers who have expertise in employment. Outcome data to date indicates that 52% of participants have exited from TTW to an employment or education outcome - 18.4% of participants transitioned to open employment and 13.4% to supported employment. While post-school transition programs have existed in other jurisdictions, none appear to have had the success of the TTW program in achieving education and employment outcomes. The success factors of this program appear to be that it has a clear purpose and focus on education or employment transitional outcomes. Other success factors include that the program is delivered by providers with experience in employment for people with a disability and the targeted streaming of school leavers to the program according to their likelihood to achieve employment.

6.3 *Transition to retirement*

There are a number of reasons why retirement for people with a disability who are ageing is an important policy and practice issue. It is one that crosses the interface between employment, day options, and accommodation services, and also the interface between government agencies at all levels. The profile of people with a disability in business services and day options indicates an ageing population with increasing numbers likely to achieve a "retirement" age over the next 5-10 years. The commercial imperatives for business services create a particular problem as service users age and their capacity declines. If service users have high support needs, this decline in capacity is more likely to accelerate as service users age. The nature and availability of appropriate day options for these groups is another issue. People with a disability who are ageing and in supported accommodation may require day options because of staffing limitations in the accommodation setting and/or may need

a different form of day option. Access to day options funded by other government agencies such as the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing may not be accessible. Finally, ageing carers present substantial needs for respite.

This section provides information on the knowledge/research base for these issues and outlines some attempts to develop responses that, in this context, represent innovation.

6.3.1 Research reports

Bigby and her colleagues have carried out substantial research on people with a lifelong disability who are ageing (Bigby, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006a, 2006b; Bigby & Balandin, 2005; Fyffe, Bigby, & McCubbery, 2007). A major report for the National Disability Administrators that explored day support service options for older adults with a disability was produced by Bigby, Fyffe, Balandin, Gordon, and McCubbery (2001).

The report concluded

- "Lifestyle support" rather than day programs for older persons with a disability is appropriate in order to support a flexible response to the needs of individuals. This concept reflects a changing paradigm of day services away from placement in a day centre to a support system focused on the home that enables older people to follow lifestyle choices and pursuits.

- "Reframing concepts of transition and retirement (towards) flexible, continuing support….as a part of lifestyle planning".

- Rigid program barriers and perceptions of "double dipping" create obstacles to packaging aged care and disability services. These barriers include difficulty in accessing HACC services and the limitations placed on people who receive supported accommodation with limited staff support. Flexible staff roles can potentially provide support in both day and accommodation support services.

- Additional barriers to accessing the aged care system include appropriateness of programs, accessibility, and lack of adequately trained staff.

- Key concepts in addressing ageing and disability issues were identified as "healthy ageing" which relates to the Commonwealth Government's healthy ageing policies, "ageing in place" which reflects the support of people in their

homes, and "successful ageing" which promotes autonomy, competence, and engagement with life.

The report made three key recommendations.

1. Policy and service development responsibility for older people with a disability should be located with State/Territory programs. This development should

   - Ensure access for all such people who seek it.

   - Develop principles to guide service delivery that include defined key outcomes, and individualised and flexible planning and support that crosses program boundaries and encourages cooperation between aged care and disability services.

   - Explore, trial, and implement community and service development tasks.

   - Promote understanding of healthy ageing for older persons with a disability.

   - Develop demonstration projects that promote joint funding across levels of government, partnerships across agencies, and the lead role of the disability sector.

2. Improve databases to predict unmet need that include questions on the age of onset of the disabling condition.

3. Develop the role of aged care by

   - Promoting the lead role of aged care in developing services that are accessible and responsive to people with a disability who have age-related needs.

   - Provide appropriate training to aged care workers.

   - Promote positive information about older people with a disability.

More recently, in Bigby's submission to the Senate Community Affairs Committee (Bigby, 2006b), the following points were made, *inter alia*

   - The unmet demand for accommodation support for people with a disability is driving an "inappropriate response" to the needs of older people in order to shift costs from State disability services to Commonwealth aged care.

   - Older people with a lifelong disability have different needs compared to older people who acquire a disability later in life because of relatively earlier ageing; age-related health needs that are superimposed on disability-related needs; different life experiences that are associated with the lifelong disability; and the higher likelihood of a person with a lifelong disability ageing within an accommodation service system rather than at home.

- This makes it necessary for access to both disability-related support and ageing-related support and for these supports to be properly coordinated.

- Current policy and program assumptions are "that a person is either disabled or aged, but cannot be both" and this is reflected in CSTDA funding and administrative arrangements.

- Reference was made to

  o Innovative Pool projects which demonstrated the success of partnerships between disability and aged care services in an AIHW report that is yet to be released.

  o A Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2005 by key national peak bodies stating a commitment to working together on these issues.

  o Three National Disability Administrators' funded research projects on ageing issues, the reports from which received limited circulation and from which no policy directions have ensued.

6.3.2 Projects

There are many project initiatives across Australian jurisdictions that are exploring issues of ageing and disability, including conferences (e.g., *NDS 2007 Ageing and Disability Conference* in Adelaide in April, 2007) and pilot projects, some of which are substantial, e.g., *DALI* in NSW (Burke, 2005). The projects are notable for collaborative approaches and partnerships between stakeholder groups and for the exploration of innovative ways of supporting people with a disability who are ageing.

The *Planning for Retirement* project was auspiced by ACROD (SA) Ageing/Disability Subcommittee (Albrecht, 2006) and was supported by an extensive Steering Committee and Project Partners Group with representatives from a wide range of stakeholder agencies. The project recommended that Planning for Retirement be adopted as best practice across all Australian Government jurisdictions, funded through the CSTDA, and implemented nationally as a life-course retirement planning system.

The system has six steps: Lifelong Planning for Retirement which incorporates financial, health maintenance, and lifestyle planning; Retirement Recognition Assessment; Retirement Reason; Retirement Planning; Retirement Transition; and Retirement Lifestyle.

Further recommendations for CSTDA jurisdictions included an implementation project, the development of retirement lifestyle packages, initiatives to enhance healthy lifestyle practices and community leisure options, the development of partner groups, and additional data collection through the Disability Services Census. The report also recommended measures to enhance ageing in place and the adoption of a case management approach.

Appendix One of the report identified two service delivery models that demonstrate linkages between older people with a disability and community activities, namely, *Interlink Packages* through Helping Hand Aged Care and the *Community Links* program auspiced by Baptist Community Services. Both programs are HACC funded.

Recent contact with service providers who participated in this work indicated that there has been no further development in response to the report at this time.

An AIHW report (Hales, Ross, & Ryan, 2006) evaluated nine pilot projects established across five Australian jurisdictions through an initiative by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. The pilots focused on people with a disability who were living in CSTDA-funded accommodation services and who may also have been receiving additional CSTDA services.

The evaluation concluded
- Quality of life for participants in the pilots was enhanced with additional benefits to their households.
- Admission to residential aged care was avoided or delayed.
- Transfer of knowledge and skills across the aged care/disability sectors occurred.
- A coordinated, whole-of-government strategy for addressing the needs of this and other target groups is needed.

A number of "unresolved issues at the interface of disability and aged care programs" were identified, including
- Ageing-related needs are defined differently in different sectors and strongly affected by policy/program barriers.
- Clarification of the role of specialist disability services and aged care services in enabling persons with a disability who are ageing to remain in the

community is needed. This issue is related to the access of this group to appropriate day options.

This pilot does not appear to have resulted in any policy or practice outcomes. Nor does it appear to have involved government agencies other than DHA in its development and implementation.

It is apparent that there is nearly a decade of systematic work in Australia around the needs of people with a disability who are ageing and their needs in related areas. Although some resources have been allocated to research and pilot programs, there is little evidence that this work has resulted in policy or practice development, or in greater cooperation and collaboration between government agencies. There appears to be little incentive for this to occur.

6.4 Local area network development

During the consultations, we heard of many examples of local initiatives that focused on network development aimed at collaboration, partnerships, and coordination of services. Often, these were in regional or rural areas where flexibility and collaboration and the development of local solutions were not unusual. In addition, most jurisdictional government disability agencies had developed service workers who operated at local levels and provided support to families and people with a disability. These workers often had a broad role that incorporated community and network development. Examples include Local Area Coordination that originated in WA in 1990 and has been adopted more or less by other jurisdictions, case managers, and service coordinators. In our view, these local workers play a major support role and develop many innovative options at the grass roots level, often in spite of systemic barriers.

6.4.1 Coordination of services at the local level

Local Community Partnerships (LCPs) are part of the Career Advice Australia (CAA) initiative to support young people to achieve a successful transition from school to further education, training, and employment. LCPs are localised partnerships between employers, schools, young people, and their families and other government and community organisations to assist in the transition. LCPs include career and transition programs, structured workplace learning, career and transition support programs, and adopt a school programs. Several LCPs with a focus on young people with a disability exist across Australia.

South West VET Link is a LCP in the south west of WA. In 2006, the program formed the Focus Group for Training and Employment for Young People with Disabilities, a group of local stakeholders including the local DEN provider, the local NDCO, and local schools. The group has produced a promotional DVD showcasing success stories of young people with a disability in employment titled *What's it Really Like?* and a directory of local services for young people with a disability. In 2009, a new project called *School to Work Bridge* will commence to overcome the gap between students with a disability leaving school and commencing with an employment service. The project will encourage agencies to collaborate to provide workplace readiness training to students during the last year of school.

In the Northern Territory a number of localised post-school transition networks have been established across the Territory by the Department of Employment, Education and Training. These networks bring together a number of stakeholders seen as being essential to the post-school transition of young people with a disability. Representatives include Vocational Education and Training, disability employment services, providers of accommodation, respite and community access services, as well as legal services.

6.4.2 Local area coordination

Since 1990, the Disability Services Commission (DSC) in Western Australia has provided a Local Area Co-ordination (LAC) program which has as one of its main aims the development of a positive and useful partnership with people with disabilities, their families, friends and communities. LACs work alongside people with the aim of helping them to lead typical lives in their local communities. For people aged 18-65 a typical life includes work or other valued work-like roles so LACs would be typically encouraging people to seek out such roles.

While employment roles may come through formal channels such as responding to advertisements, gaining support from a specialised employment agency, or approaching a segregated employment service, LACs would also be encouraging people to consider the family or community networks which are typical routes to employment for many people in the community.

People are encouraged to think big and to follow the pattern of typical family expectations. For example, when a family typically chooses private enterprise and perhaps their own small business ventures as the means of gaining employment,

then they are encouraged to consider this as an option for the person who has a disability. This thinking has led to ventures such as a chocolate making business, a florist service, and various craft making small businesses. In another situation where a family may have a strong involvement in the community service area, they might support their family member to get involved in volunteer work-like roles which might include delivering meals-on-wheels or offering a shopping service to those who are unable to leave their home.

The role of the LAC in each case is to encourage families to think about what is typical, perhaps to assist with some of the initial co-ordination of the activity and then assist the person or his/her family to ensure that the job or role is sustained.

6.5 Access of people with a disability who have high support needs to employment

6.5.1 High support needs group/network

Several years ago a network of DEN providers specialising in the support of people with an intellectual disability with high support needs, the High Support Needs Network, was established. Recently this network has developed a partnership with the National Council of Intellectual Disability (NCID) with the goal of maximising open employment opportunities for people with an intellectual disability by demonstrating evidence based best practice in achieving employment outcomes for this group. To be part of this collaboration, service providers must have at least 50% of their services users with an intellectual disability and they must be prepared to share their Health Check performance data publicly. There are currently nine DEN providers participating in this collaboration, including Personnel Employment and JobSupport. NCID and the High Support Needs Network intend to publish the Health Check data from participating DEN providers to enable service users to make informed choices about employment assistance and to enable members of the network to compare themselves against other providers working with the target group. The purpose of sharing this data is to identify providers that are performing well and to identify what they are doing that might be leading to that performance. Participating DEN providers are actively sharing their knowledge of best practice and changing their service practices accordingly. The collaboration is already reporting observable impacts on performance by some of the participating DENs.

NCID and the High Support Needs Network have also collaborated on joint submissions to Government with key recommendations including the removal of the

Examples of successful programs that enhance community participation and the
employment/day options interface
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cap on DEN providers and the development of Technical Assistance Units to support evidence based practice in the provision of employment assistance and support to people with a disability. It is understood that the NCID/High Support Needs Network partnership would seek to play an active role in supporting and participating in research with the proposed Technical Assistance Units to focus on developing evidence based practice in relation to people with an intellectual disability. The collaboration is already drawing on research from existing units internationally.

It is quite early days for this partnership but we believe that it is worth monitoring, particularly in terms of the potential research and development through the proposed Technical Assistance Units and the impact of access to performance data on service provider choice and service development.

6.5.2 People with high support needs, post secondary education and employment: The Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL)

The AACL program to promote post secondary education and employment for young people with a disability and high support needs is a leading example of successful efforts by NGOs, government, post secondary education providers, and employers to promote social inclusion. It represents an approach that fosters utilisation of family and other informal networks to achieve employment outcomes, and the goodwill of mainstream students to support people with a disability. The program also reflected the advantages of locating work experience programs in post secondary education locations.

Postsecondary education as a means of gaining later employment has been reported in the international literature, but with few examples of data on employment outcomes being provided. For post-school outcomes on employment in the USA, in the 1999-2000 school year 29.4% of students with a disability dropped out of secondary school compared to 10% of their non-disabled peers and students with a disability experienced a post school employment rate of 32% compared with over 80% for non-disabled school leavers in the same age range (Hart, Mele-McCArthy, Pasternack, Zimbrich, & Parker, 2004). The National Longitudinal Study in the USA (Wagner, Newman, Cemeto, Garza & Levine, 2005) found that in 2003, one in five students with a disability attended postsecondary education, around half the rate of the non-disabled population. This was an increase on the rate reported in 1992 when 14% of students with an intellectual disability and 4% of those with a multiple

disability attended post secondary education (reported by Neubert, Moon, Grigal and Redd, 2001). When students received support services from the school system, they often moved onto work in sheltered programs or were enrolled in adult day programs (Neubert, Moon, Grigal and Redd, 2001). Other models have direct involvement in the postsecondary system without the school link and a more integrative experience is reported than when the school continues involvement. However, when the students with disabilities were engaged in postsecondary education, many were still segregated and doing non-mainstream courses. For example, Hart, Mele-McCarthy, Pasternack, Zimbrich & Parker (2004) surveyed 25 programs across the United States and found eight inclusive programs, four totally segregated programs, and 13 mixed programs. Positive stories of inclusion in postsecondary education have been reported, including both the engagement of people with disabilities as teachers on faculty and as engaged in research (Hall, Kleiner & Kearns 2000; Boxall, Carson & Docherty, 2004).

Uditsky and Hughson (undated) described how a group of parents developed a list of positive assumptions of what was achievable from an inclusive postsecondary education experience. These assumptions included the possibility of a multiplicity of relationships, normative and challenging expectations, and improved employment opportunities. Subsequently, in 1987 Uditsky and others commenced a program with eight students. The program was funded by the Alberta Social Services and affiliated with the developmental disabilities department at the University of Alberta where the inclusion occurred. The program commenced with inclusion in a university due to the perceived advantages in esteem, resources, and the presence of a student community.

Students with a disability had high support needs and came from a range of backgrounds including segregated education at school through to full institutionalisation with little or no education. The program had zero exclusion policies and included people who would normally be excluded from community participation. Support was provided by university students in addition to paid program staff. While employment during and after postsecondary education was a goal, employment success was not mentioned in this early report.

Later reports (Hughson, Moodie & Uditsky, 2006; Alberta, 2006) described the AACL program and outcomes in more detail. The program, called the AACL Education Network, primarily consisted of a steering group to oversee the program and some

paid staff. In Alberta in 2006, the majority of postsecondary institutions (four universities, six colleges and one technical college) included people with intellectual disabilities in their program, with a total of 60 students included at that time. The stated intention was to have all postsecondary institutions in Alberta included in the program.

All programs of study were individualized around each person's interests and all classes were fully inclusive with no use of segregated or congregated classes. Students typically attended for 3-5 years depending on the college or university and whether the studies were full time or part time. Most were enrolled as 'auditing' students and paid tuition fees with access to all student services. Course material was modified by faculty staff, other students, or facilitators and students participated in evaluations and course work to the degree possible. Students with a disability participated in field trips and practicums, and engaged in career planning with facilitators with the aim of gaining work after graduation. It was reported that there was never a difficulty in gaining the support of mainstream students, with many students volunteering for this role. Similarly, faculty and university or college administrations were very positive with the main concern from faculty being their ability to teach the students rather than any questioning of the students' right to be in the class. Students participated in the graduation ceremonies and were awarded certificates by the institutions (Hughson, Moodie & Uditsky, 2006; AACL, 2007).

The range of courses undertaken was very broad, ranging from Law to Dance Jazz, Russian to Equestrian, Kinesiology to Police and Security. Over 40 different courses of study were involved across the institutions. Apart from the studies undertaken, students participated in a wide variety of campus activities such as student union committees, bands and choral groups, archeological digs, and figure skating.

Reported outcomes from the program were very positive. (Hughson, Moodie & Uditsky, 2006). Mainstream students reported very positively on the program, appreciating the relationships that they built up, some long-term, and the inclusive experience. Families reported major positive changes in attitudes and self esteem in their family members with a disability and faculty members reported that their understanding of disability had changed and the quality of their teaching had improved.

Over 70% of students had paid employment during the summer vacations. While the program helped to facilitate this, much of the responsibility for gaining employment rested with the individual and his or her family. Typically, employment was not encouraged in the first year of study and was more common in the third and fourth years. One of the larger programs at a postsecondary centre designated a full time position to helping find jobs for students and this program reported the highest rate of success at finding paid work during the summer. Some other programs encouraged students to return to summer jobs for successive years which in some cases led to volunteer positions becoming paid, or part time jobs becoming full time. The approaches to employment emphasised the networking and personal connections, with facilitators and family being willing to use their own personal contacts for employment. It was found that using work experience and volunteer placements to explore personal and career related interests often led to paid employment in areas of interest or study (Hughson, Moodie & Uditsky, 2006).

The students employed during their postsecondary education worked from 5 to 36 hours per week with most students reporting that they worked 12-16 hours per week at paid employment. Hourly wages ranged from $5.90 to $13.00 per hour with most students being supported naturally in the workplaces by their co-workers, although some were supported by paid facilitators in the early stages of employment. Types of jobs were similar to other university or college students, with most being in retail. Anecdotal information indicated that most had gained jobs through the networks gained at university/college, and those doing a specific course of study had more success in gaining employment than those doing general studies. A third of students and most of the alumni mentioned when interviewed that paid employment was a benefit of having attended postsecondary education (Hughson, Moodie & Uditsky, 2006).

After graduation, 70% of cohorts were reported as going on to full or part time open employment. Wages ranged from $5.90-$13.00 per hour and hours ranged from 4-35 hours per week. Average wage and hours figures for the group and average length of time in a job were not provided, although examples of employment ranging from 2-8 years were reported. Success in gaining permanent employment was related to support of family in working out problems such as transportation and supporting them in their work, initiatives of alumni and family in using university networks to find work and having prior work or volunteer experience.

6.6 Data collection to support better practice

6.6.1 A small interface study using the NMDS

The NMDS statistical linkage key that was introduced in 1999 provided a means of identifying individual CSTDA service users and may have the potential to be used for longitudinal studies. AIHW has indicated that the linkage key has not yet been used for that purpose. This small study attempted to use the NMDS retrospectively to follow a cohort of people with a disability who used CSTDA employment and day options services over the period 2003-04 to 2005-06 when full year data was available for both service types. The aim was to examine movement between service types by cohort members.

With the help of AIHW, data was provided on the 2003-04 cohort of people with a disability who used employment services and/or community access (CA) services and who were still using those CSTDA services in 2005-06. Thus the final cohort did not include service users who had exited CSTDA employment and CA services during the time period. Using the statistical linkage key, the services used by the cohort were tracked through to 2005-06. Following normal practice, AIHW calculated the age of cohort members as at June 30, 2004, that is, at the end of the year in which the cohort was established.

In 2003-04, a total of 113,234 people with a disability aged 15 years and over used CSTDA funded employment and community access services. A total of 42,619 (37.6%) service users exited those services between 2003-04 and 2005-06 and did not return to either CSTDA employment or community access services. This created a final cohort size in 2005-06 of 70,615 (62.4% of the original 2003-04 group of service users) for this analysis. Table H shows the number of service users in age categories who exited employment and community access services between 2003-04 and 2005-06 and did not return to those services. Service users may have been using other CSTDA services.

Table H: Service users who have exited employment and community access services between 2003-04 and 2005-06 and no longer receive either service type

AGE	Employment	Community Access	Total
15-19	3593	1479	5072
20-24	4938	1803	6741
25-29	3485	1060	4545
30-34	3269	1353	4622
35-39	2894	1027	3921
40-44	2965	1096	4061
45-49	2575	922	3497
50-54	2075	872	2947
55-59	1494	824	2318
60-64	636	596	1232
65+	142	2804	2946
Not Stated	0	717	717
Total	28066	14553	42619

There is no benchmark against which the exit rate of 37.6% of service users can be evaluated; however it is a large proportion. Without exit reasons and destination data on the cohort or a sample of the cohort, it is not possible to evaluate the reasons or outcomes associated with exiting.

High numbers of service users exited employment services in the early age categories. It is not possible to determine from these data the extent to which this reflected successful employment outcomes.

The largest group of service users who exited community access services were aged over 65 years. Again, without relevant data, it is not possible to know why they exited or what happened to them.

Table I describes movement of service users across various service types. Numbers of service users and percentages of the total cohort are provided.

Table I: Movement between services 2003-04 and 2006-06

Service Type	Service Users
Community Access (CA) across years	25289 (35.8%)
Employment across years	33089 (46.9%
Community Access to Open Employment (OE)	2379 (3.4%)
Open Employment to Community Access	1909 (2.7%)
Community Access to Supported Employment (SE)	2966 (4.2%)
Supported Employment to Community Access	2481 (3.5%)
Open Employment to Supported Employment	1535 (2.2%)
Supported Employment to Open Employment	967 (1.4%)
Total	70615

A total of 58,378 (82.7%) service users in the cohort remained in either employment or CA over the three year period. Estimates of people who used multiple services resulted in a total of 9832 (13.9%) consumers who used multiple services over the time period. The movement from one service type to another occurred with 2405 (3.4%) consumers. It is difficult to assess the value of a level of movement between services and multiple service use of 17.3% without considering other factors that relate to service user outcomes.

Table J shows movement between service types in age groups.

Table J: Movement between open employment and community access by age

AGE	CA to OE	OE to CA	CA to SE	SE to OE	OE to SE	SE to OE	SE to CA
15-19	496	288	270	106	188	106	104
20-24	622	482	511	221	382	221	316
25-29	341	323	369	167	232	167	295
30-34	278	238	368	156	207	156	318
35-39	199	183	386	128	169	128	352
40-44	175	154	344	78	164	78	322
45-49	118	117	325	57	102	57	327
50-54	75	68	212	35	65	35	218
55-59	38	48	124	13	24	13	134
60-64	8	5	46	6	2	6	73
65+	1	3	11	0	0	0	22
Total	2379	1909	2966	967	1535	967	2481

Figure 6.6.1D shows movement between services from 2003-04 to 2005-06 from the starting point of each of the three service types. These data refer only to service users who moved from one service type to another. Multiple service users are included. Service users who remained in either employment or day options over the three years are not included. Percentages shown refer to the proportion of service users in the initial service type.

Figure 6.6.1D: Movement between service types 2003-04 to 2005-06

Community Access 5346	**Supported Employment** 2966 55.5%
	Open Employment 2379 44.5%
Supported Employment 3448	**Community Access** 2481 72.0%
	Open Employment 967 28.0%
Open Employment 3444	**Community Access** 1909 55.4%
	Supported Employment 1535 44.6%
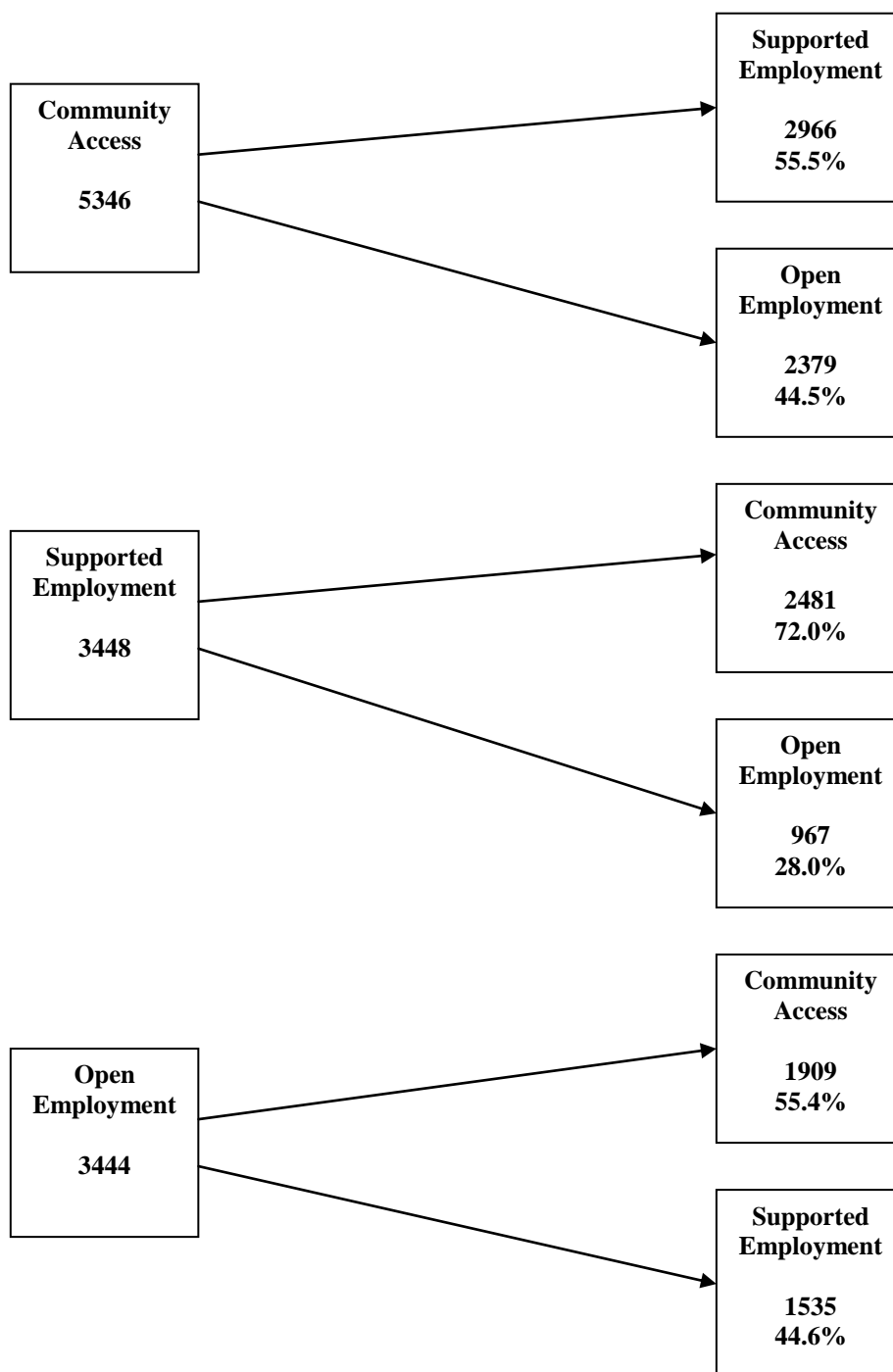
The NMDS has considerable potential for use in longitudinal studies through mapping of pathways and trajectories through the service system. Prospective studies could also incorporate outcomes both in the form of destinations and more qualitative measures of impacts on service users and families.

7 Discussion and findings

7.1 Introduction

The last 25 years have seen remarkable developments in disability policy and practice in Australia. This has occurred particularly in the area of employment where there has been a major movement of disability employment and practice into the mainstream labour market. This has brought disability employment policy into a broader, national Australian Government employment policy framework that is of a higher order and influence than disability policy alone. These developments have placed Australia at the forefront of this policy area amongst OECD countries with which comparisons may be valid and new territory is being traversed. These changes legitimately can be described as major reform that has largely been at the initiative of the Australian Government.

A significant shift of emphasis in disability employment policy has occurred that is intrinsic to this reform. Policies to promote participation of people with a disability in employment have historically been located primarily within rights and welfare models that focused on benefits to the individual. This approach is strongly reflected in the DSA (1986) upon which every jurisdiction has based its own disability enabling legislation. We have identified this as a *developmental aspirational rationale*. Now, much more account must be taken of an economic model that more assertively prioritises economic benefits for the individual, and for the nation from both increased employment participation and decreased government funded income support. Economically driven policy, based upon what we have identified as the *economic aspirational rationale*, emphasises efficiency and effectiveness and this is reflected in a managed, performance oriented, data based approach to the governance of disability employment practice by Commonwealth agencies. These reforms have delivered many benefits. They also carry with them the risk of disadvantage to some vulnerable groups of people who are unable to participate at the desired level because of particular personal characteristics such as severe impairments which are related to the need for ongoing support, or because of systemic barriers.

CSTDA funded day options services reflect the policies and practices of eight independent jurisdictions rather than a coordinated, national approach. There are major commonalities across the jurisdictions in terms of issues and strategies, however it is not possible to identify a cross-jurisdictional systemic approach to the provision of day options, although there is plenty of evidence of cross-jurisdictional

communication and learning that has contributed to those commonalities. Rather than reform as such, it is more accurate to identify changes that have occurred at the level of jurisdictions as *developments.* Many jurisdictions are examining school transition and day options policies and practices. There is movement towards identifying clearer outcomes and also a greater emphasis on pre-vocational and employment outcomes, although there is limited evidence that this is being done in collaboration with Commonwealth agencies that have responsibility under the CSTDA for employment.

There is a fundamental and widely acknowledged nexus between disability employment and day options services in Australia. Changes in employment policy and practice influence both the participation by people with a disability in day options, particularly if they have high support needs, and also influence the focus and content of those programs. If access to employment by particular groups such as people with high support needs or young people with a disability changes, the impact will be felt in day options. The availability of day options places, which evidence suggests is a major access and participation issue in those services, will influence both participation and content of employment programs. There is evidence that ongoing changes in policy and practice in each of these service types has influenced the other.

This nexus is made more complex by the context of employment and day options services. The complexity arises from many factors.

There are two relevant levels of governments in Australia, the Commonwealth and the State/Territories Governments, all of which do not necessarily agree on, or share a line of policy priority or funding. The CSTDA, which provides a mechanism for a shared and collaborative policy framework for disability services, has become a challenging setting for cooperation and collaboration between governments. For understandable reasons, the CSTDA is well overdue for a fourth agreement. A common perception of the CSTDA in its current form is that it is not effective in addressing the interface issues between Australian governments. Within each level of government there are many government agencies that influence disability policy and practice. At the Commonwealth level, recent changes to the machinery of government may provide a significant opportunity to address interface issues. At the level of States and Territories, government agencies include disability specific agencies, only one of which exists independently of other, larger organisations,

health/human service agencies where services may be located, agencies of education and training, and agencies of community services. Across jurisdictions, there are considerable differences in the extent to which these agencies collaborate through formal linkages and mechanisms. Within jurisdictions, some show clear leadership in facilitating "joined up" approaches, and others reflect very limited communication across agencies. Finally, at the level of service provision, a wide range of employment and day options agencies exist, most in the non-government sector and some in the private sector. To achieve a "seamless" interface and to address barriers effectively between employment and day options for people with a disability is challenging and cannot be achieved without purposeful leadership based on strong collaboration.

The interface between day options, supported employment, and open employment is further complicated by the nature of the outcomes of these three service types. Open employment services have clear employment related outcomes that mean service users at some point in time will "graduate" from those services, most likely into employment-related destinations. With the current predominant models, both day options and supported employment provide services to people with a disability who remain in those services. Only a relatively small number of service users "graduate" into open employment or exit for other reasons. Service users in both supported employment and day options are an ageing population who tend to remain in those services because of a lack of a "retirement" option. These services do not have clear destinations for service users and effectively are providing lifelong support. Each year, school leavers with a disability who do not access open employment services or VET swell the numbers of service users who seek day options. So do VET leavers who do not achieve employment outcomes. One implication of this situation is that jurisdictions face an ever-increasing demand for day options services.

Although there is a pressing need for purposeful mechanisms and strategies to be in place to address issues at the interface between employment and day options, there is limited evidence that these exist at the present time. It is more accurate to describe the *separate* reform and development of disability employment and disability day options services in Australia. At the same time, it is the case that there are examples of specific innovation occurring at the interface that largely reflect leadership and initiative at local levels rather than being systemic.

7.2 The impacts of employment reforms on people with a disability

"To take part" commented on the low employment participation rates for people with a disability and high support needs as reported in the 1998 ABS Disability Ageing and Carers Survey. They remain low. The 2003 ABS Survey (ABS, 2003) described an employment participation rate of people with a disability of 53% compared to 81% for the general Australian population. The participation rate for people with a profound level of core activity limitation decreased from 19% in 1998 to 15% in 2003. The unemployment rate for people with a disability in 2003 was 8.6% compared to 5% for the general population.

7.2.1 Profile of people with high support needs who participate in employment services

Responses within the disability sector raised concerns about policy reforms and some of their impacts. A major concern was the perception that high expectations for people with a disability who have high support needs have been accorded less emphasis and the importance and influence of developmental aspirational rationales has been downplayed. A narrow focus on employment outcomes was seen to have sidelined a broader concept of social participation, social inclusion, and the provision of ongoing support. These changes were perceived to have contributed to an altered profile of service user participation in employment services to the disadvantage of service users with high support needs and people with an intellectual disability. Positive responses to the employment reforms included acknowledgment of the benefits from individual outcomes based funding, the growth in employment programs, and the greater diversity of access to employment that reflected improved equity for some groups.

In this section, we address the following perceived changed profile of service users in employment services that were raised in the disability sector consultations.

a) A lower proportion of people with an intellectual disability in employment.

b) A lower proportion of people with high support needs in employment and an increased proportion of people with low support needs.

c) A more diverse group of employment consumers.

d) A larger proportion of employment consumers who have very low motivation to work.

The profile of service users by disability type has remained relatively unchanged in supported employment apart from a small decline in intellectual disability and a small increase in psychiatric disability in 2005/06.

There has been a clear reducing trend of over 20% in the proportion of service users with an intellectual disability participating in open employment between 1999/00 and 2005/06. At the same time, there has been an increase in numbers of service users with an intellectual disability of 14.6%. The proportion of service users with a psychiatric disability showed a small upwards trend until 2005-06 when there was a substantial increase. Proportions of service users with autism and specific learning/ADD also showed an increasing trend.

Data from 2000 and 2001 compared to subsequent years clearly reflected the changed definition of high support needs in the dataset. Since 2001, both employment service types showed a trend of increasing proportions of people with the high support needs in the category of Working with a small decline in open employment in 2005/06. The increasing proportional trend in other Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) is clearer with supported employment than open employment.

These data do indicate some specific trends in profile changes of participation in employment services. Interpretations of these changes reflect different perspectives. With intellectual disability, the proportional change is marked and apparently continuing with a very small numerical increase in this group in 2005-06, although over the entire time period, there has been a numerical increase. The profile changes do reflect enhanced access by disability types other than intellectual disability to employment services, particularly people with a psychiatric disability.

The perceptions of greater diversity and lower work motivation in service users in employment services is plausible given the changing profile towards greater proportions and numbers of people with a psychiatric disability. This group is likely to be more challenging to employment service providers than people with an intellectual disability.

As reported in "To take part", this analysis also showed that levels of support need continued to increase from open employment, to supported employment, to day options.

In regard to CSTDA funded employment services, the AIHW (2007) unmet demand report concluded that there was a decrease of 21,200 people from the high support needs group in the workforce between 1998 and 2003. This is reflected in the ABS population based data. Most of the decrease was in the age group of people over 50 years. There was, however, a net gain of 554 people between 2003-04 and 2004-05 through an increase of 789 in open employment and a decrease of 497 in supported employment.

The Productivity Commission (2007), reflecting on the Government's aim of targeting people of greatest need, concluded that people with high support needs have greater access to day options than supported employment, and greater access to supported employment than open employment. However, using the proportion of estimated potential population comparison, employment services performed better than day options for people accessing services by severity of core limitation.

The age profile of consumers of employment services indicates some clear trends. In both employment service types, there has been a trend of declining proportions of younger people with a disability which is greater in open employment. In addition, there is a large increase in the age group 20-24 compared to the age group 16-19 (almost a doubling proportionally) in participation in both open and supported employment. We have suggested that this may reflect policies and practices in transition from school to work including age at leaving school and access to, and exit from, VET programs, and discuss further below how the transition area needs a higher priority from both levels of government, particularly in regard to joint activities. In both service types, there is an increasing trend in the proportions of service users over age 40, with a small proportion remaining in supported employment over age 65 years. Supported employment has an older age profile than open employment that indicates a growing issue regarding post-employment options.

7.2.2 Characteristics of employment

This section describes the outcomes of participation in employment for people with a disability that are addressed by the dataset. Although these are described as "characteristics of employment", it is also the case that these characteristics can be considered to be indicators of employment quality *from the perspective of workers*. For example, it is common for workers to assess the quality of their employment according to their waged income, their total hours of work, and whether their employment is permanent or casual. Of course there are considerable individual

differences in what is considered to be better or worse conditions of employment, however, some general observations are valid. There is a view that some work characteristics valued by most workers may be less desirable for people with a disability. For example: "While the trend towards casual employment might reflect patterns occurring in mainstream employment, there is some evidence that casual employment presents a risk for people with a disability of moving out of the labour force." (AGPC, 2006, p. 100) In addition, the DEN is notable for its retreat from a small set of low level employment outcomes (such as collecting trolleys from supermarket car parks or basic sheltered workshop activity) towards valued, award waged employment as a strategy to achieve improved quality of employment outcomes.

The data examined here do indicate the paucity of information that is gathered routinely on employment outcomes from the perspective of people with a disability. Greater efforts should be made to collect information directly from people with a disability or their families regarding satisfaction with employment and employment services.

The main source of income in open employment between 2000 and 2005 (data are not presented separately for the two employment service types in 2006) was the DSP with a proportional increase from around 45% of service users on the DSP in 2003 to around 55% in 2004 and 2005. Paid employment showed a downwards trend from 2000-2003 (with no separated data for 2004 or 2005) and New Start Allowance/Youth Allowance showed an upwards trend from 2000 to 2005 to nearly 20% of service users. Over 95% of supported employment service users were on the DSP in 2005.

There has been a clear proportional trend of decreasing weekly hours in employment for service users in both service types. There was an increase in the proportion of people working more than 40 hours in open employment although this remained a small proportion of the total group.

Weekly wages for service users in both employment service types showed a trend towards increased wages with a larger proportion of service users in open employment receiving higher wages.

In both employment service types, there have been substantial shifts in the basis of employment for service users. In both, there has been a reducing trend in the proportion of service users in full time permanent employment. Until 1996 when there was a sharp reversal of trend, in open employment, there has been a reduction of service users in part time permanent employment. The overall direction in open employment is towards the casualisation of employment.

7.3 The impacts of developments in day options on people with a disability

7.3.1 Profile of people with high support needs who participate in day options services

The data on community access services showed a remarkably static picture. Whole of year data indicated an increase in total numbers in community access from 44,370 to 45,380 (2.3%) between 2003/04 and 2005/06.

In terms of age, both snapshot data and whole of year data indicated small variations in the distribution of proportions of service users. In the youngest group (15-24 years), snapshot data numbers, although relatively small, increased from 3579 to 4644 (29.7%) between 1999 and 2002, and whole of year data indicated a *decrease* from 10,165 to 9,504 (6.5%) between 2003/04 and 2005/06. In whole of year data, the 25-44 age group increased by 2.8%, the 45-64 age group increased by 14.8%, and the over 65 years age group increased by 4.6%. The age profile indicated a decline in numbers of young people with a disability accessing community access between 2003/04 and 2005/06 and an increase in the older group over age 45 years.

High levels of unspecified primary disability type of up to 20% in whole of year data limit the validity of these data. Intellectual disability remained the largest single disability type, with a declining proportional trend. There was a substantial increase in psychiatric disability up from 4.7% in 2004/05 to 20.6% in 2005/06.

Levels of support need also had a high unreported rate, limiting the validity of these data. Unremarkably, there were higher levels of high support need in the Working category than ADL categories and levels of support need were higher than in either employment service type.

The AIHW unmet demand report (AIHW, 2007) estimated conservatively that in 2005, there were 3,700 people with unmet demand for day options services although

they estimated that there was an increase of 25,300 people with a disability who had severe or profound core activity limitations who were not in the labour force. The Australian Productivity Commission (2007) estimated that only 5.3% of the potential population of people with a disability used day options services in 2004/05.

These data, along with responses from the disability sector, suggest very limited access to day options services.

7.3.2 Findings from the analysis of jurisdictional day options services

As discussed in Chapter 3 of this report, there are strong commonalities across Australian jurisdictions in the issues they are addressing in regard to day options and in some of the strategies that are being adopted. Each jurisdiction has prioritised school leavers for participation in day options services and each jurisdiction has one or two identified day options programs specifically for that group. This means that clear pathways existed in most jurisdictions between school and day options for school leavers with a disability, whereas clear pathways for school leavers from school to employment services are less clear in most cases. Exceptions were in some jurisdictions where some DEN providers had developed specific initiatives to create these pathways. There was evidence in some jurisdictions that some business services have formed linkages with specific schools to create a pathway for school leavers from school to business services. This was limited by availability of places.

The static nature of day options programs in most jurisdictions is reflected in those jurisdictions that developed time limited transition services from school to day options programs and then established additional programs to deal with the substantial proportion of service users who did not exit from those programs.

Two major developments in some jurisdictions are the review of day options policies and programs in order to promote clearer purposes and outcomes for those programs and purposeful development of employment-related services.

There is little evidence of strategies in jurisdictions to deal with the ageing issue in day options or supported employment, although initiatives have been taken by some business service providers as they address the needs of this group of service users.

The case study of the WA CAP demand management system for access to some CSTDA services illustrates the value of transparency in data regarding service access and unmet demand. Data in other jurisdictions was very difficult to access. The case study supported some of the conclusions from the description and analysis of jurisdictional day options services and indicated, through quantification of unmet demand, the substantial number of people with a disability and their families who were unable to access day options or employment services. The case study also identified the squeeze faced by jurisdictional governments as they addressed the needs of school leavers with a disability and the growing demand from older people with a disability who required day options.

A clear conclusion to this analysis points to the need for strong, purposeful leadership at the jurisdictional and Australian Government levels to address these issues through meaningful and accountable collaboration and cooperation.

7.4 Issues for specific stakeholder groups

Of the specific stakeholder groups, the Productivity Commission (2007) indicated that in 2004-05, ATSAI participation rates were similar to the general disabled population, with high levels of access to day options that are consistent with the prevalence of disability in that group. People from the CaLD group had reduced uptake of employment services in 2004-05 – 1.4% compared with 5.3% of people with a disability who wee born in an English speaking country. In regard to people from rural and remote areas, there were slight differences in access, with inner regional communities doing relatively well. Distribution of service outlets was consistent with the geographical distribution of service users.

During the disability sector consultations, there was a general perception of a lack of priority for these special groups nationally and in some jurisdictions, especially for the CaLD group. Each group was struggling in situations where day-to-day barriers existed for them, even without the added disadvantage of having a disability. Notably, there was an expressed need for workers who were experienced and from an appropriate background in disability services for people from ATSI and CaLD groups.

7.5 The interface between employment and day options

The "To take part" report identified three specific measures required to enhance the interface between employment and day options services.

- Simplify pathways between day options and employment services, particularly for people with a disability who have high support needs.

- Address the willingness of individuals to try employment by enabling re-entry to day options if employment is not successful.

- Develop cross jurisdictional approaches to service provision to promote access to mixed options.

In addition, the brief for this research project emphasised the importance of strengthening across government linkages and the interface between employment and day options programs. In this report we have identified a number of factors that will facilitate the development of the interface. There are a number of remaining barriers to address that continue to severely limit the effectiveness of the achievement of a "seamless" transition between employment and day options services.

During the disability sector consultations, from both service providers and jurisdictional government representatives, the strong view was expressed that there was little movement between employment and day options and limited access to multiple services. Two related reasons were commonly put forward. The first was the limitations on availability of places in day options and supported employment. The second reason related to the perception of the risks associated with movement from day options or supported employment to open employment on the part of people with a disability and their families. The high demand for day options places mean that a vacated place will be filled and movement back might not be possible. Risks, real and perceived, detracted from a willingness to change.

Interface issues were particularly impactful for young people transitioning from school to adult life where effective linkages between schools, VET, and post school agencies was crucial. There is some evidence from the data of a reduction in the proportion of younger people accessing open employment services that may be more related to the perceptions of families than the availability of places. Over and again we were informed during consultations that families were choosing non-employment options for their sons and daughters with a disability rather than the riskier employment option. For people in day options, pathways to employment were perceived to be difficult to traverse, especially when they might require "giving up" an existing service and having to wait for the possibility of employment. The link

between eligibility for income support with assessment of work capacity means that there is at least a perceived risk of loss of benefits. Day options also promised a wider variety of experiences and more time in the program than open employment.

As discussed previously in this report, development in day options has tended to be jurisdiction-specific with little evidence of systematic cross jurisdictional approaches to address interface issues. Jurisdictions have focused on school leavers and have developed, in many instances, effective pathways between school and day options. Rather than a systematic, cross-jurisdictional approach to the interface between school and open employment, initiatives and innovations, some of which were described above, tended to be localised. Some of these examples reflected effective linkages, collaborations, and initiatives on the part of the (then) DEST, local departments of education, and individual DEN providers.

Actual movement between services and access to multiple services was illustrated in the small cohort study described above where a substantial proportion (82.7%) of the cohort remained in the original service over the three years the cohort was retrospectively followed. A total of 13.9% of the cohort used multiple services over that time and 3.4% moved from one service to another. It is not possible to evaluate these results without some form of standard or benchmark, however the proportion of service providers who crossed services does not suggest an easy interface. Prospective, longitudinal studies rather than cross-sectional, retrospective studies would provide very useful information on the interface issues.

The priority accorded school leavers by jurisdictions has impacted on the availability of places in day options for older people with a disability with day options places in some jurisdictions not being allocated to the older group. The implication here is that people with a disability who do not succeed in employment or for other reasons such as age or health issues need to leave employment, may find the pathway to day options is closed. This is an issue of unknown size and impact that requires more detailed examination and address.

AIHW (2007) reported on interface issues especially in the transition between employment and day options. Different government departments administering programs and the perception of cost shifting between levels of government were identified as barriers. Access of people with a disability to both CSTDA services and HACC programs occurred but was variable across regions. The Aged Care

Innovative Pool Disability Aged Care Pilot was a good example of addressing interface issues for people with a disability who were ageing, however it was apparently a unilateral initiative on the part of DHA and appear to have had no positive impact on policy and practice. There was evidence of developments in the disability/ageing area at the initiative of individual service providers, particularly supported employment and accommodation service providers who were facing issues of ageing service users.

7.6 Innovation and better practice

In Australia, the most impressive innovations that address interface issues are in school to post school transitions. They address school to work and school to day options interfaces but do not address the day options and employment interface. These innovations have some effective characteristics.

- They have well developed or developing linkages between schools, education agencies, and employment service providers.
- They may have high level priority and support within government.
- The role and persistence of leaders in the DEN has been a critical element of these particular innovations.
- The interface between school and day options has resulted in developments of post school options programs that have forged linkages between schools and disability agencies in various jurisdictions.
- The innovations have developed pathways from school to post school services and provided detailed information through various media.
- At local levels, disability workers and/or DEN representatives provide connections between families and services.
- Some of these services receive funding from more than one government source.

Transition from school to adult life for people with a disability is a critical area of development in Australia and it is positive that priority is being accorded to this area. Research evidence strongly supports the importance of what is effectively a strategy of early intervention for all school leavers, including those who have disabilities. For people with a disability in particular, the immediate post school options that are chosen may lock them into a situation that does not facilitate their development and potential and present an ongoing economic cost. This is exemplified in the lack of movement of people with a disability from day options to employment. The implications for both the developmental and economic aspirational rationales are

clear. The potential of a truly "joined up" approach at the Commonwealth level with recent machinery of government changes is highly relevant. Commonwealth involvement in transition from school to adult life for young people with a disability is a sound investment.

Some examples of innovation and best practice tended to be localised and driven by particular individuals. One of the most effective ways to "systematise" best practice is to ensure that models of purchasing services are "enabling", that is they provide the incentives and flexibility for providers to test new ways of working. This approach requires considerable flexibility on the part of policy makers and funders and this is more difficult to achieve when program specifications are required to be overly proscriptive and are rigidly regulated, or where a purchaser-provider model requires uniformity.

Innovation can be facilitated by research and development, and by the use of pilot or demonstration projects. The evidence in relation to interface issues in Australia is that these activities have not been very effective. Limited sustainability of these activities suggests a lack of inbuilt implementation strategies that require a response on the part of agencies that auspice the work. In regard to interface issues, sponsoring of opportunities for innovators to share and disseminate their work will also facilitate innovation.

7.7 Data issues

Throughout this report we have drawn attention to various issues regarding the quality of available disability data in Australia, both from reports and from data limitations that are often specified by the data sources. There is agreement by key stakeholders that the issue of consistent and transparent data should be addressed and we can only concur.

Consideration should be given to commissioning strategic longitudinal studies with the aim of obtaining a clearer picture of the pathways followed by people with a disability who have high support needs at specific transitional times. Longitudinal studies provide useful information on how policies and practices impact on primary stakeholders, particularly around the quality of outcomes. The outcomes for service users who exit from CSTDA services and their destinations over time are largely unknown in the Australian literature. The small indicative study described in this report provided additional data on a specific cohort of people with a disability who

were using employment and/or day options services in 2003/04. Using the statistical linkage key in the NMDS, it was possible to generate preliminary data through following this cohort from 2003/04 to 2005/06. The study noted that 42,619 (37.6%) of CSTDA service users who were in employment and/or day options exited these services over the three year period – 65.8% exited from employment and 34.2% from day options. A relatively high number exited employment from the early age categories and a large group (nearly 20%) exited from day options in the over 65 years category. This is a large group and raises the issue of destination and outcomes for people who exit from CSTDA services, about which one can only speculate.

7.8   Future considerations

The following considerations reflect our findings from the research project which focuses on the Australian disability context in 2007. We are mindful that the national context of disability is changing since the 2007 Federal election and there may be new structures and developments that could address some of the considerations listed below. We are particularly aware of the potential that now exists for enhanced communication and collaboration across levels of government and within the Commonwealth government. Machinery of government changes, the National Disability Strategy and the National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy in particular represent opportunities for such collaboration.

7.8.1   The aspirational rationale

The aspirational rationale that asserts the capacities, potential, and rights of people with a disability is vital to both employment and day options services for people with a disability. Policy makers, funders, and service providers should continue to ensure this rationale is acknowledged and take seriously the need to respond if the rationale is perceived to be at risk. This represents a fundamental safeguard to positive outcomes for people with a disability.

7.8.2   Linkages

Across government linkages, both between levels of government and within commonwealth and jurisdictional departments, remain underdeveloped regarding many issues at the interface between employment and day options. Joint planning, cooperation, and collaboration that reflect understanding of the interrelationship between employment and day options is necessary. The CSTDA remains the principal mechanism for this to occur between the Commonwealth and jurisdictions. More effective multilateral and bilateral agreements to promote coordination of policy

and services and strengthening of accountability through CSTDA requirements to report on outcomes should be considered.

7.8.3   Pathways and barriers

Whereas the pathways from school to day options and, in some jurisdictions, from school to employment, are well defined and accessible, generally pathways between supported and open employment, and between day options and employment are poorly defined and difficult to access. Acknowledgment of, and agreement about, the nature of barriers at these interfaces and the development of specific policies to address them are necessary.

7.8.4   Transition

Particular consideration in policy and planning should be given to people with a disability who are in transitional situations where "joined up" mechanisms of policy development and practice, and effective linkages and pathways are critical. Three groups are particularly relevant.

- Young people with a disability transitioning from school to post school options including VET, day options, and employment.
- People with a disability whose needs are changing who wish to transition between options.
- Older people with a disability who wish to "retire" from employment.

7.8.5   The DEN

The role of the DEN in school to work transition is potentially very significant but still largely dependent upon localised initiatives. Consideration should be given to multilateral support to build on existing initiatives and to develop new initiatives.

7.8.6   Quality of employment outcomes

Quality should be an acknowledged factor in employment outcomes for people with a disability. The characteristics of employment are equally relevant for all workers. Quality measurement should include consultation with people who use services – still relatively unusual in Australian disability services.

7.8.7   Specific stakeholder groups

ATSI and CaLD groups should be given higher priority to promote their participation in both employment and day options. Consideration should be given across all jurisdictions to increasing the employment of ATSI and CaLD disability workers in order to keep cultural issues to the fore, particularly in regard to day options programs content.

7.8.8 Research dissemination and implementation

In order to enhance take-up of findings of research and pilot studies, government auspicing bodies should build into their protocols clear strategies and mechanisms that consider dissemination, implementation, and systemisation of findings. A related strategy would facilitate projects that have committed, multilateral support from relevant agencies. Some areas of practice in disability services have a strong evidence base (transition from school to adult life is a prime example) and additional strategies would build that evidence base into normal practice, evaluate policies and services using the evidence base, and focus increasingly on outcomes for people with a disability.

7.8.9 Longitudinal studies

To balance the predominant reliance on cross-sectional data to monitor employment and day options services, consideration should be given to commissioning longitudinal studies that will provide an added perspective regarding outcomes and impacts of policies and practices. Investigating post-school trajectories and identifying destinations of people with a disability who leave CSTDA funded services are clear priorities.

7.8.10 Data

Issues of data availability, quality, and interpretation remain problematic. Agreement on the impact of reforms is difficult to achieve with disagreement on the accuracy and/or the appropriateness of available data. Governments do gather their own data for their own planning purposes, however some of these data are not available for external or independent analysis. An important initiative could be the establishment of a multilateral group, including representation from the disability sector, in order to develop an enhanced, transparent database. This should incorporate qualitative data as well as quantitative.

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