

The Review of Senior Secondary Pathways into Work, Further Education and Training

Submission to the Education Council

**Children and Young People with Disability Australia
December 2019**

(Updated with additional survey responses March 2020)

Table of contents

Executive summary	1
Introduction.....	4
Address exclusion in schools	5
Develop tailored transition support for students with disability.....	8
Provide more information to students with disability and their families	11
Deliver strong outcomes for students with disability after school.....	13
Appendix A: Results from CYDA's 2019 survey and supplementary information.....	16

Authorised by:

Mary Sayers, Chief Executive Officer

Contact details:

Children and Young People with Disability Australia

E. marysayers@cyda.org.au

P. 03 9417 1025

W. www.cyda.org.au

Executive summary

As well as the usual challenges senior students often face in their school lives and transitions out of school, students with disability face a range of additional barriers. They generally do not have access to education of the same quality as students without disability, and are often segregated in special schools or excluded in mainstream schools. Students with disability are also significantly more likely to face restrictive practices such as restraint and seclusion.

During the transition out of school, people often hold lower expectations for young people with disability, and they receive little tailored information or assistance. This discrimination and inequality continues throughout people's lives, with significantly poorer outcomes for people with disability in areas including higher education, employment, health, and social participation.

Extensive evidence shows that inclusive education is a major part of improving academic and social outcomes for students with disability¹, consequently having positive impacts for their adult lives. The right to inclusive education is protected under the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disability (Article 24), of which Australia is a signatory.

CYDA conducted a national survey between November 2019 and February 2020 to collect information about the experience of senior students with disability and their families with career planning and post-school options. There were 106 young people with disability, families of students with disability and teachers who responded to the survey.

The survey had representation from all states and territories, and from metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas. The majority of the respondents were from families of young students with disability (78.3 per cent), followed by students with disability (17.9 per cent) and advocate, teachers and other school staff (3.7 per cent).

The findings from our survey support existing evidence – career planning and other post-school transition planning opportunities and support for students with disability are fragmented and generally poorer than for other students. This, along with low expectations around students' capabilities and desires contributes to poorer long-term outcomes and opportunities for young people with disability in further education, employment, and social inclusion.

CYDA welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to this review as it provides an important opportunity for the Education Council to address the systemic issues and poor education and employment outcomes facing students and young people with disability.

Key findings of CYDA's post-school transition survey:

- Senior students with disability did not receive adequate support to prepare, think about and plan for pathways after school, or when received support it was limited and poor.
- Parents were not involved in the career planning process and some felt this task fell to them.
- Only 44.5 per cent of students received career planning support in Year 11 and 12.
- Families and students with disability were receiving post school information or assistance through the NDIS, NDIS providers, disability employment services or other disability organisations who may not be specialist in providing higher education or VET options.

¹ See Cologon, K. (2019). Towards inclusive education: A necessary process of transformation, for CYDA and Alana Institute. (2017). A Summary of the Evidence on Inclusive Education. https://alana.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/A_Summary_of_the_evidence_on_inclusive_education.pdf

- The highest level of educational attainment for almost half of our respondents was Year 12, followed by around a quarter who have completed Year 9 or below, and just 5 per cent who have studied a bachelor degree
- A quarter of survey respondents who have finished school are currently undertaking volunteer work, 21.6 per cent participate in a day program, and 16.2 per cent are studying or training part-time.
- 41.5 per cent of respondents report being in the labour market – fewer than half (47.7 per cent) working in open employment and 6.7 per cent working in an Australian Disability Enterprise.
- Forty per cent of respondents currently working in open employment report they are paid pay less than full award wages.

Recommendations

Address exclusion in schools

- Develop a National Inclusive Education Plan which aims to phase out segregated education and realise inclusive education for students with disability
- Strengthen mechanisms to monitor and address exclusion in schools
- Counter the narrative of 'low expectations' for students with disability through concrete actions and monitor post-school outcomes for students with disability
- Use the Federal Government's loading for students with disability to support inclusive education.

Develop tailored support for students with disability

- Improve national consistency in post-school transition activities, building on what works best around the country
- Include young people with disability and families in every stage of developing new post-school transition activities
- Ensure post-school transition programs are well-structured, outcome-oriented and student-focused
- Start post-school planning activities for all students with disability by at least the age of 15
- Improve data collection about post-school transition programs, including their uptake, implementation and outcomes
- Review funding arrangements in all states and territories for school and post-school programs for students with disability.

Provide more information to students with disability and their families

- Improve national consistency in post-school transition activities, building on what works best around the country
- Include young people with disability and families in every stage of developing new post-school transition activities
- Ensure post-school transition programs are well-structured, outcome-oriented and student-focused
- Start post-school planning activities for all students with disability by at least the age of 15
- Improve data collection about post-school transition programs, including their uptake, implementation and outcomes
- Review funding arrangements in all states and territories for school and post-school programs for students with disability.

Deliver strong outcomes for students with disability after school

- Provide support for young people with disability for the first five years after school
- Monitor outcomes of engagement in education, training and employment for students and young people with disability
- Develop a national strategy and framework to increase participation of students and young people with disability in general 'open' labour force, higher education and VET
- Review the disadvantage young people with disability face with income support.

Introduction

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) is the national representative organisation for children and young people with disability aged 0-25 years. CYDA has an extensive national membership of over 5,000 young people with disability, families and caregivers of children with disability, with the majority of our members being families.

CYDA's purpose is to advocate systemically at the national level for the rights and interests of all children and young people with disability living in Australia. To do this, we focus on the following:

- Listening and responding to the voices and experiences of children and young people with disability
- Advocating for children and young people with disability for equal opportunities, participation and inclusion in the Australian community
- Educating national public policy-makers and the broader community about the experiences of children and young people with disability
- Informing children and young people with disability, their families and care givers about their citizenship rights and entitlements
- Celebrating the successes and achievements of children and young people with disability.

We are pleased to provide this submission to the Review of Senior Secondary Pathways into Work, Further Education and Training. The submission is informed by CYDA's research and policy work, and centres the voices of our members. It draws from the results of a national survey we conducted in November 2019 and February 2020 to explore the experiences of senior students with disability. We received 106 responses from young people with disability, families and caregivers of young people with disability, and teachers. An overview of our respondents' demographics is provided in Table 1 in Appendix A.

Address exclusion in schools

Recommendations

- Develop a National Inclusive Education Plan which aims to phase out segregated education and realise inclusive education for students with disability
- Strengthen mechanisms to monitor and address exclusion in schools
- Counter the narrative of 'low expectations' for students with disability through concrete actions and monitor post-school outcomes for students with disability
- Use the Federal Government's loading for students with disability to support inclusive education

Phase out the ongoing segregation of students with disability in Australian schools

Improving post-school outcomes for young people with disability, and supporting wellbeing throughout their lives, begins with positive and inclusive experiences in schools. People with disability in Australia are less likely to finish school and more likely to leave before the age of 16, and less than a third of people with disability aged 20 or over have completed Year 12-level schooling – compared with 62 per cent of people without a disability.² High rates of school disengagement, lack of tailored support, and continuing segregating in schools contribute to poorer post-school opportunities and outcomes for young people with disability.

Evidence shows that inclusive education “has positive benefits for everyone”³ – students with and without disabilities, as well as teachers and the broader school community – but a range of barriers prevent it from being implemented, and in many places the rate of segregated schooling is actually increasing.⁴

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) emphasises that no form of segregation constitutes inclusive education,⁵ but many students with disability in Australia currently experience segregated education programs, including attending special schools, participating in special units in mainstream schools, or having no appropriate option except home-schooling. More students with disability are attending special schools over mainstream schools than a decade ago.⁶ For example, recent data shows that there are 15,521 students enrolled in 108 special schools across Victoria, with enrolment rates in special schools increasing by 53 per cent since 2010.⁷

Just over half of the respondents to CYDA's recent post-school survey (59.4 per cent) are attending mainstream schools, with around 43.4 per cent segregated in either special schools, through dual enrolment (mainstream and a special school), or being home-schooled (see Table 2 in Appendix A). Additionally, half of the students who reported attending a mainstream school (49.9 per cent) are

² Australia Institute of Health and Welfare (2019). <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/education-and-skills>

³ Cologon, K. (2019). *Towards inclusive education: A necessary process of transformation*, for CYDA, p.5.

⁴ Cologon (2019); Shaw, A. (2017). Inclusion: the role of special and mainstream schools. *British Journal of Special Education*, 44(3), 292-312.

⁵ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General comment No. 4 (2016) Article 24: Right to inclusive education

⁶ Australia Institute of Health and Welfare (2019). <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/education-and-skills>

⁷ Victoria Department of Education. (2019). Summary Statistics Victorian Schools July 2019. <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/factsandfigures.aspx>

separated in special units or a combination of regular class and a special unit (Table 3, Appendix A).

Further data collected by CYDA through our 2019 National Education Survey⁸ showed that:

- 12.5 per cent of the 505 respondents report were refused enrolment
- 16.6 per cent do not attend school full-time
- 14 per cent have been suspended
- 1 in 4 have been subject to abuse by being restrained or secluded.

These negative experiences in school years, and lack of appropriate transition support contributes to lower school completion rates for young people with disability. Recent research from the University of Melbourne finds that at least 50,000 children and young people of school age are disengaged from the Australia education system, including students with disability, and to date there has been no national response to this issue.⁹ CYDA recommends urgent investigation of the factors underpinning this disengagement, and the development of a national strategy to keep senior students with disability in school.

CYDA's submission¹⁰ to the Disability Royal Commission makes extensive recommendations about addressing the violence, abuse and neglect of students with disability, along with recommendations to realise inclusive education as defined by the CPRD which Australia has endorsed, but not realised.

Address low expectations for students and young people with disability

Low expectations for young people with disability from schools, communities, and government and policy approaches also undermines inclusion and can affect post-school planning and outcomes. This is reflected by responses to our recent survey, in which 70 per cent of students with disability and their families reported facing specific challenges because they experience disability:

"Everyone just said I'd never get a job, even though I wanted to" - young person with disability over 25 years old, regional NSW

"Yes, I was told not to bother applying for postgraduate study due to my disability by a disability support officer." - young person with disability aged 19-20 years old, metropolitan QLD

"Yes, more difficult to know of suitable work options. Hard to get work placements that are not lip service" - family of a young person with disability aged 21-22 years old, metropolitan VIC

"Low expectations of students. Teachers told parents at an assembly that "most [students] would not "go onto university." Situation even worse for those with both visible and invisible disabilities. My application for special consideration as part of HSC exams was denied by the school, without adequate explanation" - young person with Disability aged over 25 years old, metropolitan VIC

A further example of low expectations is the lack of encouragement for students with disability to choose subjects that will lead to an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score. Roughly 70 per cent of students with disability responding to our survey report they were not encouraged to

⁸ CYDA. *Time for change: The state of play for inclusion of students with disability*. Results from the 2019 CYDA National Education Survey. https://www.cyda.org.au/education_issues

⁹ The University of Melbourne. (2019). Those who disappear: The Australian education problem nobody wants to talk about <https://education.unimelb.edu.au/mgse-industry-reports/report-1-those-who-disappear>

¹⁰ CYDA (2019) Education of children and young people with disability Submission No 1., Submission to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability <https://www.cyda.org.au/cdasubmissions>

complete or to choose subjects to lead a good ATAR score for higher education (Table 4 in Appendix A).

Boost investment from governments for students with disability

To date, there is little prioritisation or commitment shown by governments across the country for inclusive education, despite commitments through the UN CRPD. For example, the 2019 Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration,¹¹ which aims to improve outcomes for all young Australians and promote excellence and equity in the Australian education system, and has been recently endorsed by all Australian Education Ministers, only includes one mention of the word 'disability.' The Australia Coalition for Inclusive Education (ACIE), of which CYDA is a member, has expressed strong disappointment with the lack of recognition for the needs of children and young people with disability in this plan,¹² which means the systemic barriers to implementing inclusive education remain unresolved.

A review of the Federal Government's approach to funding loading for students with disability is due to report by the end of 2019. The current approach, implemented following the Gonski reforms, provides additional resourcing for students with disability requiring educational adjustments.¹³ It is critical that future approaches to funding and loading for students with disability support the implementation of inclusive education, rather than maintaining segregated approaches. This could include modifying mainstream environments where more resources are needed, as well as providing tailored individual support.

¹¹ Australian Government Department of Education. (2019). Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration December 2019. <https://docs-edu.govcms.gov.au/documents/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration>

¹² Australia Coalition for Inclusive Education ACIE. (2019). Media Release: New national education policy ignores students with disability – again. <https://acie.org.au/2019/12/12/new-national-education-policy-ignores-students-with-disability-again/>

¹³ National School Resourcing Board. (2019). *Terms of reference: Review of the loading for students with disability*. https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/swd-terms_of_reference-final-web.pdf

Develop tailored transition support for students with disability

Recommendations

- Improve national consistency in post-school transition activities, building on what works best around the country
- Include young people with disability and families in every stage of developing new post-school transition activities
- Ensure post-school transition programs are well-structured, outcome-oriented and student-focused
- Start post-school planning activities for all students with disability by at least the age of 15
- Improve data collection about post-school transition programs, including their uptake, implementation and outcomes
- Review funding arrangements in all states and territories for school and post-school programs for students with disability.

Attend to the lack of appropriate support for students' career-planning

In 2015, CYDA released a report into the experiences of young people with disability during their post-school transitions. The report found that, while the transition from school is a critical period and young people have a variety of options, “many young people with disability however have extremely poor post school transition experiences...[which] is impacting negatively on life outcomes, where there is low participation in employment and tertiary study, and social exclusion remains high. While there are pockets of good post school transition practice, generally programs and preparation for this transition are fragmented with minimal coordination and guidance regarding what should occur during this time.”¹⁴

Sadly, the situation at the end of 2019 remains very similar to that outlined in the above report.

As shown in Figure 1 (see Appendix A), a significant majority of our 2019 survey respondents reported that their school did not provide support or appropriate information about career planning (80 per cent, 85 respondents), and more than half reported that they did not receive adequate support to think about and plan for their future (54 per cent, 43 respondents) or that they did not find the assistance and information available through their school to be useful (50.5 per cent).

Additionally, almost two thirds of respondents felt that the school did not have high expectations of the student with disability regarding employment or further education after school (60 per cent).

Students report they have received a variety of different forms of support for career planning at school (Table 5 in Appendix A). Work experience was highlighted as the most common form of support provided to students, with almost half of students reporting they have been involved in this. The next most common forms of support are individual career counselling, and advice and participation in career-related activities – however only around 30 per cent of respondents report being involved in each of these.

Fewer than one in five students report receiving assistance in understanding their strengths and skills for post-school transition; practical assistance such as resume-writing; or assistance to plan any study or training. Additionally, parents report feeling a significant degree of responsibility for the

¹⁴ CYDA. (2015). *Post School Transition: The Experiences of Students with Disability*, p.6.

career-planning process, and note that the support provided is generally not tailored to students with disability, and therefore options are limited.

Comments from young people and families illustrate the limited support available in many places:

“Very little assist [ance] was given due to lack of options and lack of funding to individually support my son” - family of a young person with disability 19-20 years old, metropolitan VIC

“Career counselling available was of extremely poor quality and not suited to the current issues for school-leavers. Huge disconnect between a regional public high school in a low-SES area about post-school life and particularly on scholarships to universities and open days, etc.” - young person with disability over 25 years old, metropolitan VIC

“Only Work-Related Skills subject for VCAL no other assistance” - family of a young person with disability 17-18 years old, regional VIC

“My daughter attended TAFE one 1/2 day a week and school 4 days on a life skills curriculum with a 2 hour a week extended work experience placement external to the school. I coordinated this program for my daughter. This is not normally available in NSW schools.” - Family of a young person with disability 19-20 years old, regional NSW

“Support for assessment for NDIS SLES program” - family of a young person with disability 19-20 years old, metropolitan ACT.

Around three quarters of our survey respondents agreed that much more needs to be done to support post-school planning and to help students to achieve their goals (72.6 per cent).

Suggestions for further investment include assistance with life skills, more teacher support, tailored work experience with interest and abilities, more community integration for students and more information for families.

Address inconsistencies around the country

The provision of current school programs for senior students with disability varies in every state and territory, which means the system is fragmented and inconsistent. Additionally, many families report they are not aware of these programs, for a number of reasons, including the student not finishing school or not being provided appropriate support and opportunities to develop skills due to lower expectations and exclusion. Table 6 provides an overview of the relevant programs in each state and territory (see Appendix A).

Although there are a range of benefits provided by the programs outlined in Table 6, there is a high level of variance across the country, particularly in terms of what is offered and the level of resourcing provided; and a number of programs are not tailored to senior students with disability. The age for career-planning also varies significantly across states and territories, with some starting for students in Year 7 (e.g. Victoria) and others not until Years 10 or 11.

Start career planning earlier

Around 80 per cent of our survey respondents report that they have received a form of career planning at school (78.3 per cent, 83 respondents). Almost 30 per cent of these students report they started receiving career-planning support in Year 12, with around 40 per cent receiving support in

either Year 10 or 11 (see Table 7 in Appendix A). Fewer than 7 per cent of respondents report receiving support in Year 9. These results confirm the discrepancies for career planning in different states and late start that is often provided.

“Year 12, yes, but it was very limited - one session with a teacher to talk about what we were thinking of doing. Many people were pushed earlier into trades at TAFE, rather than focusing on them getting into university. Students with disabilities that impacted on their results, who stayed until year 11 and 12 were pressured into segregated 'life skills' classes, meaning they did not receive their HSC (this happened to my brother, even though he has ASD, but was completely capable of completing the HSC)” - young person with Disability aged over 25 years old, metropolitan VIC

“Begin the process a lot earlier than end of year 11. Presume competence. Inform, encourage and support families to be involved in the process. Give them all the options and assist in making these happen. Education department to work with NDIS to understand, support and fund real transitions” - family of a student with disability aged 17-18 years old, metropolitan NSW.

Students with disability need extra support for the transition from secondary school to any career pathway and it is beneficial to start the career planning earlier. A number of studies have confirmed that post-school transition planning for young people with disability needs to include five key areas:¹⁵

1. Student-focused planning
2. Student development
3. Family involvement
4. Program structure
5. Interagency collaboration.

CYDA recommends taking a unified approach across the country and introducing career-planning activities that include the five key areas for all students with disability by the age of 15 years. To build the skills of the students it will be important to include practical subjects as well as work experience or exposure to different work industries where students have expressed interest.

It is critical that young people with disability, and families, are involved in the development of any new transition planning activities or programs from the beginning and throughout the development and implementation process.

“Working with young people in defining the problems and issues that affect them can lead to new understandings about the source of such problems as well as potential responses. Young people’s involvement also helps to build credibility and rapport for the project and ensure that their values and attitudes are accounted for.

Pragmatically, a Participatory Design approach helps us to develop interventions that are engaging to young people and therefore are more likely to be used, increasing the overall reach and impact of the intervention.”

-Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre, 2012¹⁶

¹⁵ CYDA. (2015). Post School Transition. The experiences of students with disability. <https://www.cyda.org.au/cda-issue-papers>

¹⁶ Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre. (2012). *Participatory Design of evidence-based online youth mental health promotion, intervention and treatment*. A Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre

Collect relevant data

CYDA's examination of the programs outlined in Table 6 also found that the programs are 'process-oriented' rather than 'outcome-oriented.' Along with a significant lack of data in this area, this makes it very difficult to measure and evaluate program appropriateness and effectiveness. Improved data collection around program uptake, implementation and outcomes is strongly recommended.

Provide more information to students with disability and their families

Recommendations

- Develop 'high-expectations' information resources for families and students with disability about post-school options, application process, funding and subsidies available
- Create a strategy for information and linkages between schools and outside stakeholders such as universities, TAFEs, and disability organisations
- Ensure relevant organisations are involved in career-planning where appropriate
- Ensure students with disability receive the transition support as their non-disabled peers

Improve support for parents and family members

Parents, family members and other adults play an important role in post-school planning for all students. For students with disability, family can be particularly important as there are so many barriers to accessing other forms of support. CYDA's 2015 report found that "families and caregivers of children with disability are often expected to take on the responsibility for their child's post school transition. Consultations with families revealed how they are often the ones required to do extensive research to identify the various post school options and supports available."¹⁷

Over 40 per cent of respondents to our 2019-2020 survey report that they have not been involved in their child's career-planning process, with a further 18 per cent reporting 'very little' involvement (see Table 8 in Appendix A).

Engaging parents and other relevant adults effectively in career-planning conversations is essential, and further information resources for families would be welcome. Schools must ensure support for both parents/families and students with disability during all stages of career planning process.

"I contacted the school to request my child have work experience opportunities. Attended a transition meeting yesterday. It was more a data collection with an emphasis on families to source and choose after school options. We live in a different geographical location than the school and I was refused contact details for local transition teacher. It was stressed that it is up to the family to research and find organisations" - family of a young student with disability aged 17-18 years old, metropolitan NSW.

innovative methodologies guide.

https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/476330/Young_and_Well_CRC_IM_PD_Guide.pdf

¹⁷ CYDA. (2015). *Post School Transition. The experiences of students with disability*, p.38.

“His learning support teacher did everything, the careers advisor was hopeless and didn't see him as TAFE worthy.” - Family of a young person with disability aged 23-25 years old, regional QLD.

“Not much was done. The school was used to relying on the FFYA DHS program to drive the process but that program had ended due to NDIS arriving. No program within the special school setting was in place to replace FFYA and initiate individual planning for post school.” - Family of a young person with disability aged 19-20 years old, metropolitan VIC.

Provide relevant information to organisations in students' lives

Students with disability may receive assistance and information about their post-school options from other avenues and organisations in their lives, but there is a risk that certain options (such as supported employment) may be privileged and that others may not be promoted (such as VET or higher education).

Overall, around 78 per cent of students responding to our survey reported receiving assistance or information to assist with life after school from sources other than school (82 respondents). Of these, the most common assistance was from NDIS providers or disability providers, followed by disability employment service providers (see Table 9 in Appendix A). Other responses include assistance from relevant government departments, NDIS plan managers, the NDIS School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) program, and specialist employment support.

In line with evidence that shows the importance of interagency collaboration during post-school planning,¹⁸ CYDA recommends relevant organisations be included in planning activities, and that independent advice is also provided and promoted.

Ensure students with disability receive the same post-school transition support as their non-disabled peers

In fully inclusive schools, students with disability should be included in high expectations career and educational planning in the same way as their non-disabled peers. This includes ensuring all the options that are available to their non-disabled peers are promoted to students with disability. Overcoming the barriers to post-school options and employment for students with disability will require intensive effort. While segregated education exists, an examination of the post school transition support provided to these students need to be undertaken to address low expectations and ensure they are provided with the full suite of options.

¹⁸ CYDA. (2015). *Post School Transition. The experiences of students with disability.*

Deliver strong outcomes for students with disability after school

Recommendations

- Provide support for young people with disability for the first five years after school
- Monitor outcomes of engagement in education, training and employment for students and young people with disability
- Develop a national strategy and framework to increase participation of students and young people with disability in general 'open' labour force, higher education and VET
- Review the disadvantage young people with disability face with income support.

Deliver employment outcomes for young people with disability

Inclusion begins at school. School systems that promote segregation and exclusion contribute to continued educational, economic and social exclusion for people with disability throughout their lives. Early school leaving and the disengagement of students with disability in post-school pathways also an impact on the Australian economy, with direct fiscal and social costs, such as higher reliance on welfare and government health programs, reduced tax payments and productivity losses.¹⁹ In order to improve post-school outcomes for students with disability, it will be important for the current review to take into account the attitudinal, structural and systemic issues facing these students and young people.

Compared with other OECD²⁰ countries, Australia has one of the lowest employment participation rates for people with disability²¹. Only nine per cent of people with disability report they have the same employment opportunities as other people,²² and complaints about discrimination in employment make up a significant proportion of all disability discrimination complaints made to Australian anti-discrimination agencies.²³

The youth unemployment rate in Australia remains stubbornly high at 11.2 per cent for people in the labour force aged 15 to 24 years – more than twice Australia's overall unemployment rate of five per cent.²⁴ Unemployment for young people with disability is not well measured, but is likely to be considerably higher as Australia has one of the lowest employment participation rates for people with disability.²⁵

According to the NDIS Employment Outcomes Report 2018, only 41 per cent of 15 to 24 year-olds have a paid job in open employment at full award wages, with a further 14 per cent in open employment at less than full award wages, and 35 per cent working in an Australia Disability Enterprise.²⁶ There is little evidence to date that the NDIS has improved employment outcomes for many people with disability, with an NDIS Participant Employment Taskforce established in early

¹⁹ Lamb, S. and Huo, S. Counting the costs of lost opportunity in Australian education. Mitchell Institute report No. 02/2017. Mitchell Institute, Melbourne. Available from: www.mitchellinstitute.org.au

²⁰ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), <http://www.oecd.org/>

²¹ See Price Waterhouse Coopers (2011) [Disability Expectations: Investing in a better life, a stronger Australia.](#)

²² National CRPD Survey (2019) Findings. <https://dpoa.org.au/crpd-shadow-report-consultation-survey-results/>

²³ Australian Human Rights Commission (2016) [Willing to Work: National Inquiry into Employment Discrimination Against Older Australians and Australians with Disability](#), AHRC, Sydney. (2015)

²⁴ Brotherhood of St Laurence, Youth Unemployment Monitor, March 2019

http://library.bsl.org.au/jspui/bitstream/1/11134/2/BSL_Smashing_the_avocado_debate_youth_unemployment_hotspots_Mar2019.pdf

²⁵ See: Price Waterhouse Coopers (2011) [Disability Expectations: Investing in a better life, a stronger Australia.](#)

²⁶ NDIA. (2018). NDIS Employment Outcomes 30 June 2018. <https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/data-and-insights/reports-and-analyses/employment-outcomes-participants-their-families-and-carers>

2019²⁷ – for 15 to 24 year-olds this has increased from 15 to 18 per cent since the Scheme started. This means young people with disability are also likely to rely heavily on income support such as the Disability Support Pension, Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance.

Like segregated education, segregated employment in Australian Disability Employment ‘sheltered workshops’ constitutes a form of neglect of people’s rights. This is a topic we will be investigating further in our next submission to the Disability Royal Commission and be making extensive recommendations.

Survey respondents who are no longer at school were asked about the activities they are currently undertaking. Almost 30 per cent are currently working in some capacity (ranging from full-time to casual), 22.9 per cent are undertaking volunteer work, 21.6 per cent participate in day programs, and 16.2 per cent are studying or training part time (Table 10, Appendix A). However, less than half of the respondents who are currently in the labour force are working in open employment (Table 11, Appendix A). Additionally, 40 per cent of our survey respondents who are currently in work report that they are paid less than a full award wage (Table 12, Appendix A).

“Currently in open employment. However, after graduating from my degree, I spent about 1 year in unemployment and on Centrelink, with Job Active reporting requirements. I believe disability discrimination was a barrier to employment. Due to my disability type (mental health) did not even bother trying to go through DSP, went onto Newstart and was tormented by Centrelink staff and Job Active providers, making me more unwell, and destroying my confidence. However, have been in work since.” - Young person with disability over 25 years old, metropolitan VIC

Review income support programs for young people with disability

Nearly half of young people with disability aged 15 to 24 years (49 per cent) rely on income support payments, compared to 14 per cent of people aged 15 to 24 years without a disability.²⁸ Changes to the eligibility criteria for the Disability Support Pension (DSP) since 2012 mean that many young people must instead apply for Newstart or Youth Allowance, which provide a significantly lower rate of pay than the DSP.^{29,30,31}

A total of 54.7 per cent of CYDA survey respondents receive income support payments, with DSP the most common of these. A significant portion of survey respondents do not receive any income support payments (Table 13, Appendix A).

As at June 2019, data shows that approximately 10.5 per cent of all recipients of Newstart and Youth Allowance – 31,798 people – are people with a partial capacity to work from illness or

²⁷ Federal Department of Social Services. (2019). NDIS Participant Employment Terms of Reference. <https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers-programs-services-for-people-with-disability-employment-for-people-with-disability/ndis-participant-employment-taskforce-terms-of-reference>

²⁸ Brotherhood of St Laurence, Youth Unemployment Monitor, March 2019 http://library.bsl.org.au/jspui/bitstream/1/11134/2/BSL_Smashing_the_avocado_debate_youth_unemployment_hotspots_Mar2019.pdf

²⁹ Department of Human Services. (2019). Newstart Allowance Payments. <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/newstart-allowance/how-much-you-can-get>

³⁰ Department of Human Services. (2019). Youth Allowance Payments. <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/youth-allowance-students-and-australian-apprentices/how-much-you-can-get>

³¹ Department of Human Services. (2019). Disability Support Pension Payments. <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/disability-support-pension/how-much-you-can-get/payment-rates>

disability, however, this public data is not broken down by age. Data obtained by CYDA from the Department of Social Services shows that:

- The number of Newstart recipients aged between 20 and 25 years with partial capacity to work has increased by 258 per cent in the decade from 2009, growing from 5,308 in 2009 to 19,017 in 2019
- The number of Youth Allowance recipients under 19 years old with partial capacity to work has increased by 121.8 per cent, from 2,299 in 2009 to 5,100 in 2019
- The number of Youth Allowance recipients aged between 20 and 25 years with partial capacity to work has increased by 720.6 per cent, from 936 in 2009 to 7,681 in 2019
- The number of DSP recipients under 19 years old has decreased by 24.8 per cent, from 18,414 in 2009 to 13,843 in 2019
- The number of DSP recipients aged between 20 and 25 years has increased slightly, by 10.9 per cent, from 36,128 in 2009 compared to 40,092 in 2019.

These data are highlighted in Figures 2 and 3 in Appendix A.

Because of the barriers young people with disability face in employment, the disadvantage they face with income support and being forced to live in abject poverty needs to be addressed. The income support for young people with disability needs to be reviewed, to ensure they are assisted to find work appropriately.

Access to further education

Students with disability continue to face significant barriers to accessing and participating in higher education. Within the 15-65 year age group, only 17 per cent of people with disability have a bachelor degree or higher, compared to 30 per cent for individuals without disability. People with disability are more likely to have attained a certificate-level qualification (28.4 per cent) than those without disability (22.5 per cent).³²

The impact of exclusion and poor post-school planning opportunities on students' further education is highlighted by our survey respondents. Almost half of our respondents have completed Year 12 but have not completed further education, and around 21 per cent have completed Year 10 or 11 as their highest educational attainment to date (Table 14 in Appendix A). 13 per cent have completed some form of higher degree or certificate.

Improving participation rates for students with disability in employment, education and training will require reviewing funding approaches to further education and post-school options. A recent paper from the Mitchell Institute recommends addressing the different funding arrangements for universities and the VET sector, and reforming the Australia Qualifications Framework (AQF) to removing inappropriate hierarchies in the descriptions of VET and higher education. It also recommends including micro-credentials as a recognised short-term learning program in the AQF structure.³³ CYDA agrees that a new, more cohesive approach to funding the tertiary education sector is required, and urges the consideration of appropriate funding and support for students with disability as part of this.

³² Australia Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training. (2019). Higher Education Statistics <https://www.adcet.edu.au/inclusive-teaching/understanding-disability/Higher-Education-Statistics/>

³³ Dawkins, P., Hurley, P., & Noonan, P. (2019). Rethinking and revitalising tertiary education in Australia. Mitchell Institute, Melbourne. <http://www.mitchellinstitute.org.au/papers/rethinking-and-revitalising-tertiary-education/>

Appendix A: Results from CYDA’s 2019 survey and supplementary information

CYDA conducted a national survey between November 2019 and February 2020 ‘*Pathways for young people with disability after school*’ to collect information about the experience of senior students with disability and their families with career planning and post-school options.

In total, 106 people had responded to the survey at the time of writing this submission. This included representation from all states and territories, and from metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas. The majority of the respondents were from families of young students with disability (78.3 per cent), followed by students with disability (17.9 per cent) and advocate, teachers and other school staff (3.7 per cent).

Key findings are presented below in support of our submission.

Introduction

Respondents’ demographic data

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of senior students with disability (n=106)

Demographic characteristic	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	71	66.9%
Female	31	29.2%
Prefer not to say or not specified	4	3.7%
Language and cultural background		
English speaking background	93	87.7%
Non-English-speaking background	13	12.2%
Aboriginal	4	3.7%
State / territory		
VIC	34	32%
NSW	32	30.1%
QLD	16	15%
WA	4	3.7%
SA	7	6.6%
ACT	9	8.4%
TAS	3	2.8%
NT	1	0.9%
Location		
Metropolitan area	66	62.2%

Demographic characteristic	Number	Percentage
Regional area	27	25.4%
Rural	11	10.3%
Remote	1	0.9%
Age of senior student with disability		
15-16 years	20	18.8%
17-18 years	26	24.5%
19-20 years	22	20.7%
21-22 years	10	9.4%
23-25 years	15	14.1%
Over 25	13	12.2%
Type of school		
Government	66	62.2%
Non-government (e.g. faith-based, private school)	30	28.3%
Distance education or e-learning	4	3.7%
Other	7	6.6%

Address exclusion in schools

Ongoing segregation in Australian schools

Table 2. School setting of survey respondents (n=101)

School setting	Number	Percentage
Mainstream school	60	59.4%
Special school	24	23.7%
Dual enrolment	5	4.9%
Other	15	14.8%

Table 3. Type of class of survey respondents were/are enrolled (n=86)

Type of class	Number	Percentage
Regular class	51	59.3%
Special unit	22	25.5%
Other (combination of both)	21	24.4%

Low expectations for students and young people with disability

Table 4. Students with disability who completed ATAR score of survey respondents (n=101)

Students with disability who completed ATAR score	Number	Percentage
No	71	70.2%
Yes	21	20.7%
Don't know	8	7.9%

Develop tailored transition support for students with disability

Lack of appropriate support for students' career-planning

Figure 1. Respondents' level of agreement with statements around the transition support they received

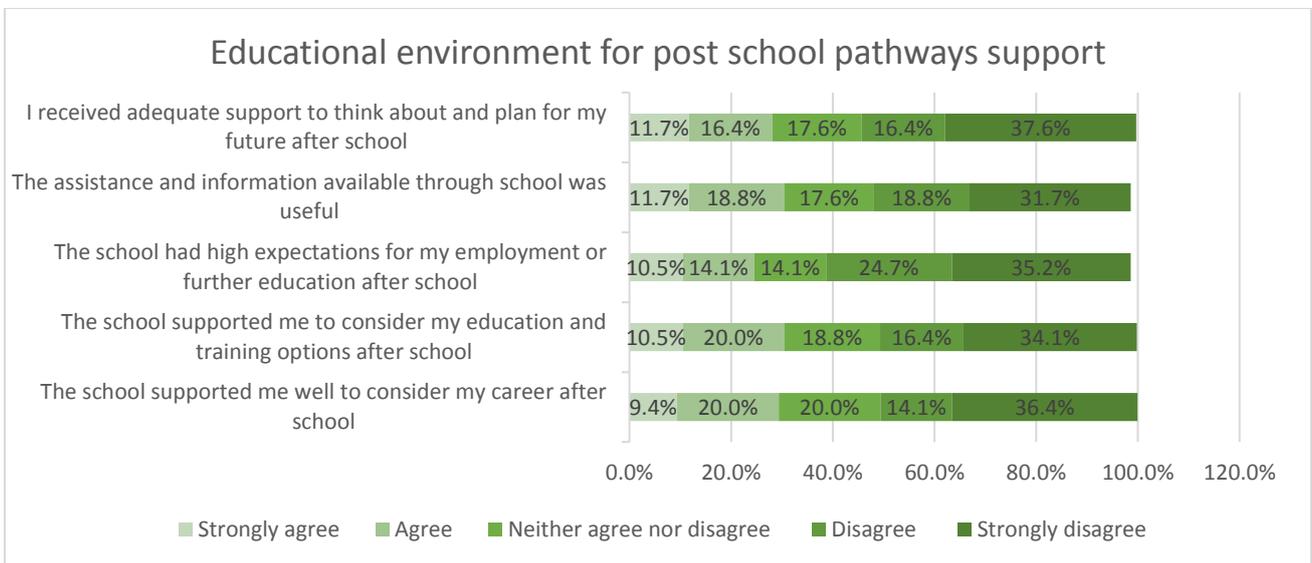


Table 5. Career-planning support reported by students (n=82)

Type of support	Number	Percentage
Individual career counselling and advice	24	29.2%
Opportunity to participate in career related activities (e.g. workshops, seminars, information sessions)	22	26.8%
Individual assistance with planning any study or training post-school (e.g. university, TAFE, traineeships or apprenticeships)	16	19.5%
Assistance in understanding your strengths and skills for your post-school transition	17	20.7%
The opportunity to undertake work experience and assistance to organise this	35	42.6%

Type of support	Number	Percentage
Information about upcoming University or TAFE information sessions or expos	17	20.7%
Practical assistance such as resume writing, assisting with job applications, assistance with applications to university or TAFE	13	15.8%
Other	27	32.9%

Inconsistencies around the country

Table 6. Current school programs to support pathways after school

State / territory	Program	Purpose
Australian Capital Territory	Pathways Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Website assisting young people with their transitions and career planning however not specific for students with disability
New South Wales	School to Work Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The School to Work Program is for all students in NSW public schools with a secondary enrolment and actively supports their informed, planned and quality transitions through school and particularly from school for each student. It also includes collaboration with primary schools to coordinate career related learning as student's transition from Year 6 to Year 7.
Northern Territory	Transition from School Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide support for students with a disability when they leave school to go to further education, employment or community access programs. The transition process can begin in Year 9 or 14 years of age.
Queensland	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Education and Training (SET) plans My Future, My life 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> SET Plans are completed with all students during Year 10. My Future, My life is an Initiative designed to help students with disability achieve the goals they have set for themselves in their SET plans. This early intervention strategy has been developed to provide practical assistance to young people with disability in their final years of school to begin their transition from school. My Future, My Life is run by a non-government organisation
South Australia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Better pathways program Transition Centres The Transition Program 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provides coaching and mentoring services to students with disability. The program assists students to create, pursue and achieve their vocational goals. This is done through one-on-one support with a dedicated worker. The Transition centres offers a range of courses for secondary students with disability to develop their employability skills. It is also a consultative service for teachers and leaders in the school to facilitate the planning and successful transition to post school options. This 12 month training program is designed to assist final year students with disability and learning difficulties to make a smooth transition from school to future pathways

Tasmania	My Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An online resource that guide all students from Kindergarten to Year 12. It supports students to identify their personal interests, values, strengths and aspirations, and teaches them how to use this knowledge to make decisions about their future learning, work and life opportunities. • My Education 7–12 is an online tool, ME Online. This tool will connect your child to resources, materials and data that will assist them in developing a life and career plan.
Victoria	Transforming career education. Career Education Funding CEF replaced Managed individual pathways (MIPs) funding in 2019.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports schools to provide career education activities for all students in Years 7 to 12. • Additional funding is provided to schools with Student Family Occupation (SFO) densities greater than a threshold value to support young people at risk of disengaging or not making a successful transition to further education, training or secure employment. • PSD: Program for students with disability.
Western Australia	Transition Planning Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist young people with a disability make a smooth transition to adult life. Transition planning activities are from 8 to year 12.

Starting planning earlier

Table 7. Year when student with disability start receiving career planning support (n=83)

Year level when student with disability start receiving career planning	Number	Percentage
Year 9	6	7.2%
Year 10	19	22.8%
Year 11	15	18%
Year 12	22	26.5%

Provide more information to students with disability and their families

Improve support for parents and family members

Table 8. Parent involvement in career planning process of their child (n=66)

Parent involvement in career planning process	Number	Percentage
Not involvement	27	40.9%
Very little involvement	12	18.1%
Involved in planning meeting with DHS and not school (program before NDIS)	3	5.5%
Involvement in transition meetings, expos, open days meeting with providers	14	21.2%
Parents did the career planning	3	4.5%
Parent involved in subject selection meetings with school staff	1	1.5%
School provided parents with formal feedback on potential ATAR and engagement with Coordinator	1	1.5%
Learning support teacher helped and helped student and parent but not the career teacher	1	1.5%
Parent involved in two planning meetings in a year	1	1.5%
School offered insurance for work experience	1	1.5%
Info session about tertiary study.	1	1.5%

Provide relevant information to organisations in students' lives

Table 9. Source of assistance or information available other than school (n=82)

Assistance or information available out of school for post school pathways	Number	Percentage
Disability Employment Services	27	32.9%
JobActive Employment Service	2	2.4%
Support by education or training provider to participate and maintain enrolment	12	14.6%
Online and web searches	12	14.6%
Community Service organisation	13	15.8%
NDIS provider or disability provider	32	39%
Advocacy organisation	5	6%
Other	30	36.5%

Deliver strong outcomes for students with disability after school

Employment outcomes for young people with disability

Table 10. Current post school activities of survey respondents (n=74)

Current post school activities	Number	Percentage
Currently in a day program	16	21.6%
Currently working full-time in an ongoing permanent position	1	1.3%
Currently working full-time in a fixed or short term position	1	1.3%
Currently working part-time in an ongoing permanent position	9	12.1%
Currently working part-time in a fixed term or short term position	3	4%
Currently working in a casual position	8	10.8%
Currently looking for work	10	13.5%
Currently not looking for work	9	12.1%
Currently studying/training part-time	12	16.2%
Currently studying/training full-time	10	13.5%
Currently undertaking a traineeship or apprenticeship	2	2.7%

Currently undertaking voluntary work	17	22.9%
Other	24	32.4%

Table 11. Type of employment of survey respondents. (n=44)

Type of Employment	No	Percentage
Working in the general labour market	21	47.7%
Working in an Australian Disability Enterprise ADE	5	6.7%
Other	21	47.7%

Table 12. Type of award wages of survey respondents (n=45)

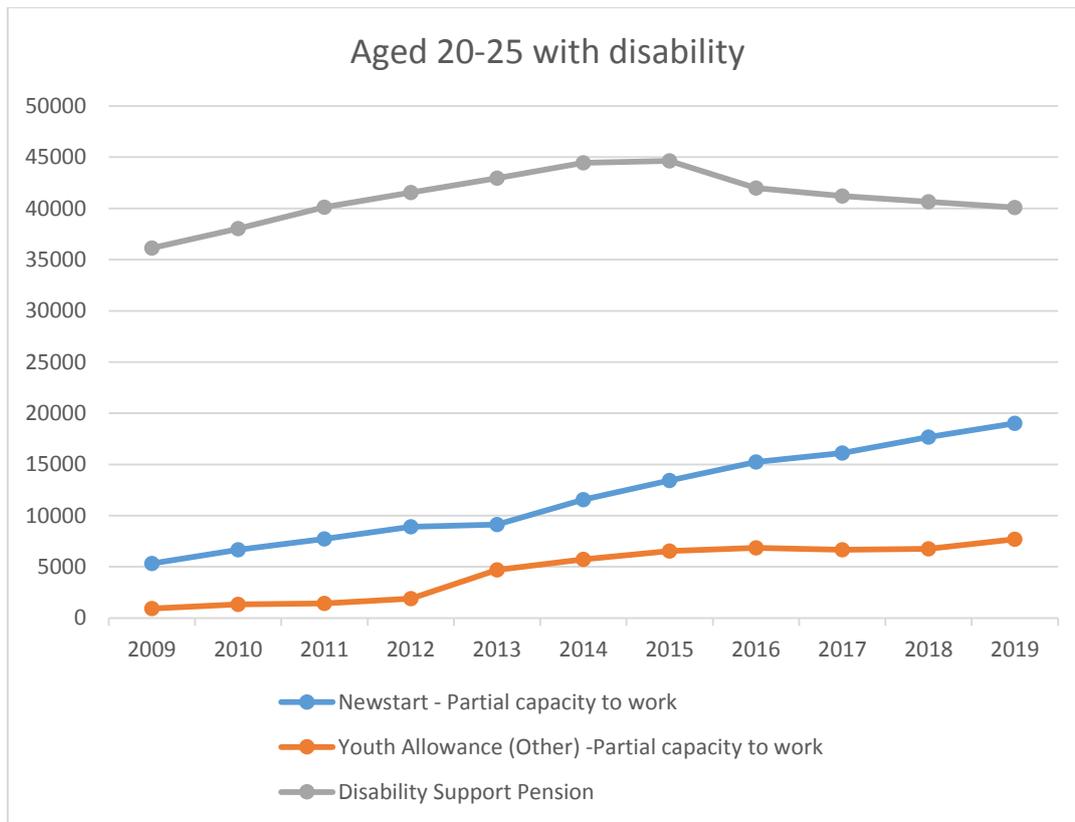
Type of award wages	No	Percentage
Receiving full award wages	17	37.7%
Receiving less than full award wages	18	40%
Don't know	10	22.2%

Income support programs

Table 13. Survey respondents receiving income support payments (n=80)

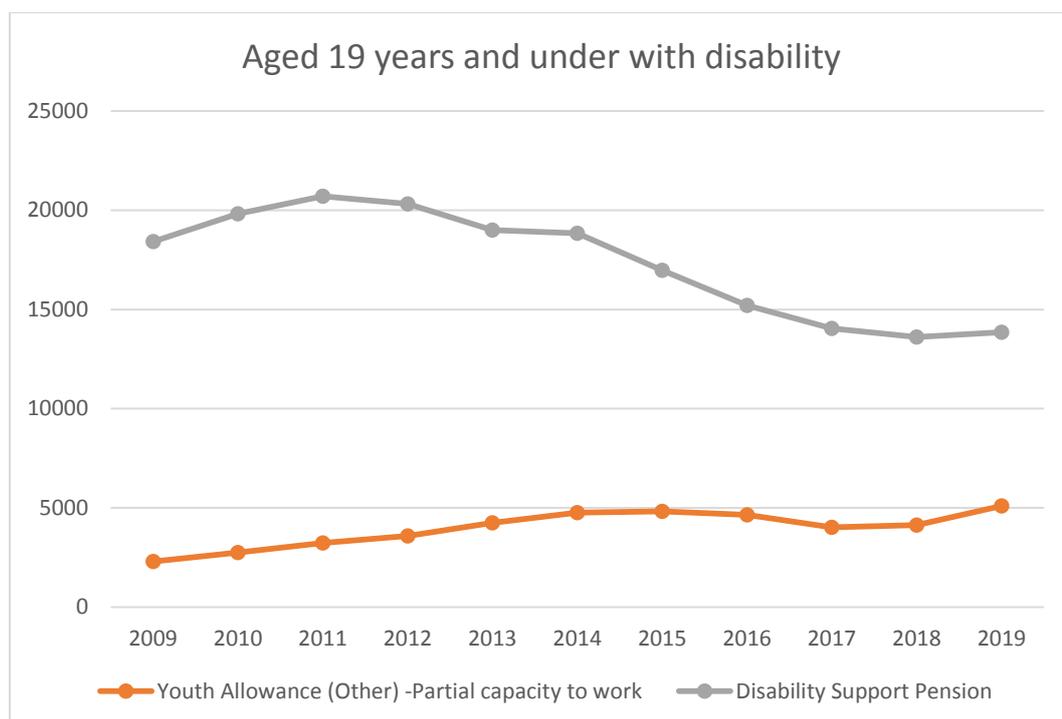
Type of income support payments	No	Percentage
Not receiving income support	22	27.5%
Disability Support Pension (DSP)	49	61.2%
Newstart Allowance	4	5%
Other: Youth Allowance	5	6.2%

Figure 2. Trends from 2009 to 2019 of Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance with partial capacity to work and Disability Support Pension recipients aged 20 to 25 years



Source: Department of Social Services data provided to CYDA

Figure 3. Trends from 2009 to 2019 of Youth Allowance with partial capacity to work and Disability Support Pension recipients aged 19 years and under



Source: Department of Social Services data provided to CYDA

Access to further education

Table 14. Highest level of education of survey respondents (n=98)

Highest level of education	Number	Percentage
Postgraduate Degree	0	0
Graduate Diploma	1	1%
Graduate Certificate	1	1%
Bachelor Degree	5	5.1%
Advanced Diploma and Diploma	0	0
Certificate III / IV	6	6.1%
Year 12	45	45.9%
Year 11	12	12.2%
Year 10	9	9.1%
Year 9 or below	23	23.4%