Welcome back for another year.

In this edition of the Disability Education and Employment News, we have information on the Gregory and Dolores Farrell and the ParaQuad NSW Scholarships for 2009. There is information on the Westpac 2010 graduate intake which Disability WORKS Australia (DWA) has been asked to assist with and a list of all currently known disability education and employment related conferences for 2009.

Plus further information on other Resources, Conferences and Workshops, News articles and other information for the Disability Education, Training and Employment Sectors.

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Education News:
Disabled students pursue neglect claims
Miki Perkins
January 28, 2009

THE State Government and the Catholic Education Office are being dragged through the courts in at least 18 separate cases by disabled students who claim they have been neglected at school and lag far behind their peers. At least 17 students, through their parents, are battling the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development or the Catholic Education Office in jurisdictions including the Federal Court, the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.
One family has launched action against both the Government and the Catholic system. The high volume of cases is unprecedented and evidence that the Department of Education's program for students with a disability is inadequate, advocates said.

Access Law anti-discrimination consultant Julie Phillips said a large number of cases had been lodged in the past 18 months.

They relate to an alleged lack of support for students with disabilities in primary and secondary schools and should cause great concern in the community, she said.

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**Uni degrees boost pay 31pc: study**

BY EMMA MACDONALD EDUCATION REPORTER

20/01/2009 6:36:00 AM

A university bachelor degree increases earnings by an average 31 per cent, compared with just 5 per cent for a TAFE certificate, a new study shows.

The Australian Council of Educational Research will issue the analysis of how education affects social mobility today. The study finds social background plays only a small role in accounting for differences in occupational status and earnings at age 24 indicating education is a bigger factor enhancing social mobility.

Post-school education and training lead to higher status occupations and significantly higher earnings for young Australians, compared with those who did not undertake post-school study or training. Yet the analysis found a major discrepancy between the financial benefits of different forms of post-secondary education and training.

A bachelor degree had the largest impact, increasing earnings by about 31 per cent on average. Apprenticeships increased earnings by about 23 per cent, a TAFE diploma increased earnings by about 14 per cent, and a university diploma by about 17 per cent.

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**Elite students exploit uni entry scheme**

Anna Patty Education Editor

January 12, 2009

STUDENTS from exclusive private schools appear to be exploiting a special consideration scheme to gain bonus points for university entry, claiming health disadvantages at much higher rates than their public school counterparts.

A former Universities Admissions Centre assessor says the upsurge in claims has been so noticeable that "there appears to be an outbreak of anxiety and depression in some private schools". At least one Sydney medical clinic is promoting a service that, for about $600, will give students a completed application form for special consideration by the Board of Studies and the Universities Admissions Centre.

Universities can award students up to 10 bonus points above their Universities Admission Index if the centre accepts their application for special consideration under various categories including financial hardship, disrupted schooling, refugee status, illness and disability. The extra points can make all the difference in helping some students get into the course of their choice.

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**Minister to rethink HSC special provisions**

Anna Patty Education Editor

January 1, 2009

THE NSW Minister for Education will meet high school principals and the Board of Studies in the new year to consider reviewing contentious special provisions for Higher School Certificate students.

The Herald has highlighted a disproportionate number of students from elite private schools granted "special consideration" in HSC examinations, raising questions about whether they have gained an unfair advantage.

Up to 30 per cent of students at some private schools were given special provisions in this year's HSC, compared with an average 6.6 per cent of public high school students.
New law will aid kids with dyslexia
- MONICA HEARY
1/01/2009 4:00:00 AM

EXPERTS, politicians and parents are tempering joy with reality following a new law they hope will help those with reading difficulties.

The new law has taken away the stigma of the word "disability" from those with the reading difficulty of dyslexia. They hope this opens the way for such children to benefit from the $9 million being spent to train 80 new special education teachers to start work at 265 NSW schools in 2009.

An international expert and Macquarie University academic Max Coltheart said that seven in 100 Australians had dyslexia.

No specific Sutherland Shire schools are on the list to receive the extra help. In St George, the infants' schools at Arncliffe West, Bardwell Park and Hurstville Grove were listed.

The new teachers are to be spread across 40 nominated communities of schools, a Department of Education spokeswoman said.

``[After their induction] they will also start their 110 hours of training in the areas of autism, language and communication needs, behaviour, motor co-ordination and curriculum access and outcomes planning," the spokeswoman said.

Apart from helping children with dyslexia the new law aims to help children with autism, mental health problems, those with significant learning difficulties and those with a disability.

The Department of Education spokeswoman said that Sutherland Shire students with additional learning needs were supported by the department's $134 million learning assistance program.

``Students with additional, special needs in regular classes are supported by the $87 million integration, funding support program," she said.

A spokesman for Education Minister Verity Firth said that the number of teacher hours would be divided among the 265 schools.

The teachers will work across the schools with groups of local schools sharing teachers, she said.


Disabled student takes state to court
Miki Perkins
December 31, 2008

A VICTORIAN teenager with multiple disabilities is suing the Education Department for discrimination, claiming it failed to provide him with a full-time education.

Alex Walker, 13, and his mother, Paige Walker, have launched legal action against the State of Victoria, claiming he was not allowed to attend school full-time, was banned from school excursions and forced to return home for lunch because funding was not available for a teaching aide.


School scores fail uni test on picking best
Andrew Trounson | December 15, 2008

UNIVERSITIES are looking for broader ways to assess prospective students amid suggestions the tertiary sector needs to drop its reliance on a single school score.

University vice-chancellors are concerned that school results are too narrow and are failing to identify talented students who fail to make the grade, especially from among the disadvantaged attending under-resourced state schools.

As thousands of Victorian and NSW students wait for their results today and Wednesday, respectively, Australian Secondary Principals Association president Andrew Blair wants to dump the whole idea of having schools produce a single entry score.

Instead, Mr Blair said it should be left up to universities to assess students using a range of criteria, including a more rounded view of a student's school performance.

"If I had my way, I would dissociate secondary education from tertiary selection. I would leave it up to the tertiary sector with portfolios of support from schools," Mr Blair told The Australian.
Universities are using an increasing range of selection criteria, primarily to try to identify talent from among disadvantaged groups.

"My feeling is that we will eventually, for equity reasons, want to break away from a lock-step with (school scores) and move into something a bit more holistic," Macquarie University vice-chancellor Steven Schwartz said.

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**Employment News:**

**Wheelchair taxi patrons left to pick up the cab**

Paul Bibby
January 14, 2009

THOUSANDS of people with disabilities are being held back from community life and the workforce because they cannot access public transport or afford to catch a taxi under the State Government's outdated subsidy scheme. Figures from the Ministry of Transport reveal that only 36 per cent of CityRail stations were wheelchair-accessible in June and only 30 per cent of bus services in the Sydney metropolitan and outer metropolitan areas were listed as accessible.

Disability advocates say this has forced thousands of people - particularly those living in rural areas and Sydney's outer suburbs - to rely on wheelchair-accessible taxis to get around.

The Government has not increased its taxi transport subsidy since 1999, despite advice from its own inquiry into disability services and the examples set by the governments of South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria.

For the past 10 years the subsidy has remained at 50 per cent of a taxi fare, up to a maximum of $30 for each trip, even though taxi fares in NSW have increased by about 55 per cent in that time.

The South Australian and West Australian governments increased their subsidies to 75 per cent of a fare over the same period and two months ago the Victorian Government doubled its cap to $60 a trip.

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**Welfare News:**

**Dole must not be first option**

Jessica Brown | January 29, 2009

THE bad news keeps on coming, and economists agree: unemployment is going up and more of us are headed for the dole queue.

In December about 500,000 people were looking for work - an unemployment rate of 4.4 per cent - but if the direst predictions of 8 to 9 per cent unemployment materialise, the number of jobless could double.

For a country of just over 20million people, this is a considerable number to support on the public purse. More than $5 billion was spent on assistance to the unemployed in 2007-08, and the latest estimates have this year's figure increasing by another $2 billion.

However, it is worth remembering that government spending on the unemployed makes up a relatively small portion of our welfare bill. In 2006-07, at a time when unemployment was low and still dropping, 17 per cent of working-age Australians received income support. Many of these worked in part-time jobs, but nevertheless the figures make it clear: regardless of the official employment rate, we are already a nation addicted to government support.

In the 2006-07 financial year, nearly 150,000 people received Parenting Payment (Partnered), the payment available to parents whose partners are not in the labour force. Nearly 400,000 received Parenting Payment (Single), the payment for single mums or dads whose children have not reached school age. Nearly 70,000 collected Youth Allowance, an income support payment for people aged 16-20 and not working. More than 700,000 were on the Disability Support Pension.

For the rest of the article go to
Widespread rorting of uni student allowance
Stephanie Peatling
January 13, 2009
MORE than a third of university students receiving the main form of government financial assistance live in households with incomes of at least $100,000, according to government figures.
Nearly half live with families on incomes of $80,000 or above, prompting critics of the Youth Allowance to say it is being rorted and not going to the students who need the aid.
There was "strong evidence" that the allowance was "quite poorly targeted and inequitable", the authors of the Bradley review into higher education told the Federal Government.
Although the payment was designed to help students from low socio-economic backgrounds attend university, only 32 per cent of students living at home and receiving the payment lived in households with annual incomes of less than $50,000.
The Government is considering a significant tightening of the payment to bring it in line with the Family Benefit payment. The change would mean some 27,000 students now receiving it would be ineligible.

Conferences and Workshops:
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES
IASSID 2nd Asia Pacific Conference
Singapore - June 24 to 27, 2009
Furama Riverfront Hotel
Theme: “Creating Possibilities for an Inclusive Society”.
For further information go to: www.iassid.org

NATIONAL CONFERENCES
NDS NSW two-day conferences
Monday 16 & Tuesday 17 February 2009
Senior government representatives, politicians, academics and advocates have participated in our events and witnessed our journey. Many of these collaborators continue working with non-government disability organisations to co-create a quality service environment which grows from strength to strength, with the singular goal of enhancing the lives of people with disability, their families and carers.
The NDS NSW 2009 conference will showcase the indomitable will of disability organisations and our collaborators in the provision of responsive, innovative disability services.
Enquiries: Gabrielle Jones, State Planning Coordinator, National Disability Services NSW
Phone 02 9256 3103
Email gabrielle.jones@nds.org.au

2009 BIG Skills Conference - register now
The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations will host a conference on 2-5 March 2009 which will address the best way to meet future skills needs in a globally competitive world.
The BIG Skills Conference is the first major conference on skills and training hosted at the Federal level in recent times, and it has the support of many organisations and individuals involved in tertiary education and training. It is timely to reinvigorate further education and identify how skills and training can help address the big challenges of productivity, participation and social inclusion.

The conference will be forward looking and it will bring together major national and international players to debate issues, think differently and stimulate change in the Australian tertiary sector.

The conference aims to:

- Challenge conventional wisdom and get people to think differently about skills for the future in Australia and the region;
- Compare what works and what needs to be improved by sharing good national and international practice, and learning from experience and evaluation;
- Link national and international research and policy to help inform future decision making;
- Enable national and international networking to increase connections and collaborations on skills training; and
- Provide opportunities for professional development and learning.


**NDS 2009 Workforce & OHS Conference**

Building workforce capacity: satisfaction, safety & skills

2009 NDS National Workforce and OHS Conference

4–5 May 2009, Hobart

Nothing is more pivotal to the quality of disability services than the quality of the workforce. It is concerning, therefore, that workforce issues now pose some of the most significant challenges for service providers. Disability workers are required in sufficient numbers, and need to be satisfied, safe and well skilled—recruitment, retention and training practices must be well targeted and successful. Current tight labour market conditions are posing one set of challenges for providers; others arise from the need to deliver new service models—often in the uncontrolled environments of the home and community—under complex legislation, regulation and funding arrangements.

The 2009 NDS National Workforce and OHS Conference will seek to equip service providers with knowledge and strategies to assist them to respond to the needs and lifestyle preferences of people with disability within today’s labour market conditions and regulatory frameworks. It will offer presentations and discussions appealing to a broad cross section of staff from disability service providers—particularly CEOs, senior managers, and HR and OHS staff—but is designed to be also of interest to people from the general community services sector, government departments and academic institutions.

For further information go to: [www.nds.org.au](http://www.nds.org.au)

For expressions of interest into exhibition and sponsorship opportunities, please contact sarah.maguire@nds.org.au or phone 02 6283 3200.

**2009 AFDO Conference**

Thursday 28th and Friday 29th May 2009

Jasper Hotel, Melbourne

The conference committee is now in the process of developing a program for the conference. We'd like your feedback by no later than 9:00am Monday 15th May on what you see as the three most critical areas of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Let us know if you have further details regarding why you think a particular article is important, or which aspect of it should be discussed. To respond, please reply by email info@afdo.org.au

More information about the conference will be made available to you directly and to the public via [www.afdo.org.au](http://www.afdo.org.au) when we have it.

**Towards A National Disability Studies Agenda**

Disability Studies Conference, Australia UNSW Sydney

June 26-27 2009

The Disability Studies and Research Centre (DSRC) invites offers of papers for presentation at a Disability Studies Conference to be held at the University of New South Wales, from 26-27th June 2009.

Established in 2008, the DSRC is a national inter-disciplinary research centre which promotes the critical social perspective of disability in education and research to maximise Australia’s capacity to ensure an equitable, participatory and accessible society for people with disability. Its forerunner was the Disability Studies and Research
Institute (DSaRI). Recent research by DSRC and DSaRI includes disability and human rights, international development, accessible information, financing of disability services, specialist service design and delivery, housing and supported accommodation, bioethics, employment and income-support. The centre is aligned with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Law at UNSW.

The overarching aim of the conference will be to bring together, for the first time, people from the disability studies academia, students and members of the disability community to discuss in the context of the new United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities developments towards a national disability studies agenda. The possibilities, realities and practical challenges of this will be discussed by two keynote speakers and taken up in contributed papers.


Asia Pacific Autism Conference 2009 (APAC 09)

Connecting Today: Inspiring Tomorrow
20 - 22 August 2009, Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, Sydney 2009

APAC 09 is co-hosted by Autism Spectrum Australia and the Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum

APAC 09 will bring together people with an autism spectrum disorder, families and carers, educators, researchers, service providers and practitioners from across Australia and the Asia Pacific region.

Anyone with an interest in autism spectrum disorders may participate in APAC 09. The Conference Organising Committee particularly invites papers and participation from:

· academics and researchers
· people with an autism spectrum disorder
· families, carers and advocates
· autism spectrum support organisations
· clinicians, therapists and case managers
· teachers and educators
· accommodation, support and community participation services
· employment services
· recreation and leisure services
· policy makers

The Call for Papers will broadly cover the following four streams:
Stream 1: Epidemiology, Causes and Diagnosis
Stream 2: Life Span
Stream 3: Family life, family functioning and family resilience
Stream 4: Autism across Australia and the Asia Pacific Region

For more information on the Call for Papers or to submit a paper, please visit www.apac09.org and go to the Program tab.

Two-Day ADHD Conference

ADDults with ADHD will be holding their 2009 annual conference during ‘ADHD Week’ On Friday 18th and Saturday 19th September 2009.

More information closer to the date.

For a list of all current national and international conferences and workshops click here.

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Calls for Expressions of Interest and Input:

Like to work for someone who offers you more than just a job?
Talk to DWA about graduate careers at Westpac.

Disability WORKS Australia (DWA) has again been asked by Westpac to assist in recruiting and supporting applicants
with disabilities/medical conditions for their 2010 graduate intake. There are genuine opportunities for graduates or near graduates to jobs with a financial institution. Any accommodations required as part of the recruitment program will be organized and also applicants received support during the recruitment process. DWA applicants can have graduated in 2007, 2008, 2009, or expect to graduate in 2010. Additionally interested 2006 graduates should also contact DWA.

Westpac is committed to providing a flexible working environment where people are respected, valued and encouraged to become the best they can be. As an equal opportunity employer they encourage applications from men and women of all ages, including those with disabilities.

In 2010, Westpac has over 130 graduate positions available with applications open from 20 February – 29 March 2009. Disability Works Australia (DWA) has formed a partnership with Westpac to support graduates with a medical condition or disability during the recruitment process to ensure your particular needs are met.

Contact DWA on 1800 356 670 or email national@dwa.org.au to register your interest and find out more. For more info on Westpac graduate programs and for application forms visit www.westpac.com.au/graduates

Scholarships:

**Gregory and Dolores Farrell Scholarship**

The Gregory and Dolores Farrell Scholarship, which is administered by Northcott Disability Services, is offered to assist students with a physical disability and who use a wheelchair for mobility with the costs of undertaking university studies.

Four scholarships, up to the value of $5,000.00 each, are available for 2009. Enclosed is a copy of the information pamphlet and application form for the Gregory and Dolores Farrell Scholarship.

The closing date for applications is **13th February, 2009**. Completed application forms must be returned to The Gregory and Dolores Farrell Scholarship, C/- Northcott Disability Services, PO Box 4055, Parramatta, NSW 2124, by that date.


**The ParaQuad NSW - Golden Stave Foundation Scholarships**

The Golden Stave Foundation Scholarship are available starting at $1000 each, for people with spinal injury, to be used for primary and high school education- course fees, equipment to assist with studies, transport and accommodation in relation to study. The scholarships can also be used for Sport & recreation activities- training and/or equipment that will provide future income prospects. For more information click here, [http://www.paraquad.org.au/CommunityServices/Scholarships/GoldenStave.aspx](http://www.paraquad.org.au/CommunityServices/Scholarships/GoldenStave.aspx)

Applications must be received at ParaQuad by close of business **Wednesday, 18 February 2009**

**The ParaQuad NSW Scholarships**

There are three ParaQuad NSW Scholarships each up to the value of $5,000, for students in NSW who have a spinal cord injury. The scholarships can provide funds for course fees, transport & accommodation in relation to study, assistance such as carers, scribes and tutors, hardware and tools assistance, computer system, textbooks and training etc. For more information click here, [http://www.paraquad.org.au/CommunityServices/Scholarships/ParaQuadNSWScholarships.aspx%20](http://www.paraquad.org.au/CommunityServices/Scholarships/ParaQuadNSWScholarships.aspx%20)

Applications must be received at ParaQuad by close of business **Wednesday, 18 February 2009**

For a list of other scholarships go to [http://www.adcet.edu.au/Student_Resources/Scholarships_and_Benefits.chpx](http://www.adcet.edu.au/Student_Resources/Scholarships_and_Benefits.chpx)

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Publication:

**Recognising non-formal and informal learning: Participant insights and perspectives**

Larry Smith, Berwyn Clayton
Recognition of prior learning has been a longstanding major policy initiative within the education and training landscape. This report provides insights into how people become aware of their recognition options and explores factors that encourage or inhibit access to recognition of prior learning. This may assist practitioners offering recognition of prior learning services to make changes which could enhance the experience for those people wishing to pursue this pathway.


**What has been happening to vocational education and training diplomas and advanced diplomas?**

Tom Karmel

Recent trends in the provision of vocational education and training (VET) diplomas and advanced diplomas are outlined in this paper. The paper also looks at how people with diplomas and advanced diplomas are faring in the labour market. The picture is rather mixed, suggesting that those with diplomas and advanced diplomas fare, on average, better than those with other VET qualifications or no post-school qualifications.


For a list of Publication click here.

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If you have any comments, suggestions or articles, resources, scholarships, workshops, conferences, Events or any other information that is Disability Education, Training or Employment related and you wish to promote it send an e-mail to thart@med.usyd.edu.au

The Disability News Archive can be found at http://www.cdds.med.usyd.edu.au/ndco/DisabilityNews/

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