
In this Disability Education and Employment News, we have information on the inaugural meeting the North Sydney Vocational Support Network (NSVSN), Enhancing the Links – Sydney and Hunter-Central Coast, and Managing Disability at Work: The things you need to know. 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:
Keneally accused of 'palming off' family in disability row – Sydney Morning Herald
14/05/2010
Louise Hall
A SYDNEY family who saved the NSW government $1 million in construction costs by sending their wheelchair-bound son to an independent school has lost $25,000 a year in teacher’s aide funding.
Davidson High School, on the northern beaches, would have required major capital works to give adequate access to Daniel Clarke, 13, who has cerebral palsy.
But when Rodney and Penny Clarke decided to send Daniel to Northern Beaches Christian School, which had disabled access, they lost government funding for a full-time teacher’s aide.
Mr Clarke said in trying to save education authorities money, the family was slugged an extra $25,000 in teacher's aide fees on top of the $7500 in school fees.

For the rest of the article go to

And

Best for struggling students to be absent – Australian
14/05/2010
Justine Ferrari and Milanda Rout
THE national literacy and numeracy tests contain a perverse incentive for students to be absent from school that day, with their performance not counted in a school's results, while students who are officially exempted are reported as failing.

All students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 are expected to sit the National Assessment Program -- Literacy and Numeracy tests, with exemptions granted only for children who have been learning English for less than 12 months or who have a severe learning difficulty or disability.

But the general manager of assessment at the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, Peter Adams, said yesterday the definition of severe learning difficulties and disabilities varied from state to state, and ACARA was working on national guidelines.

For the rest of the article go to

Gillard to track national testing turnout – Age
13/05/2010
Jewel Topsfield & Tim Lester
FEDERAL Education Minister Julia Gillard has vowed to investigate schools with unusually low numbers of students sitting the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy.

Ms Gillard told The Age she was obviously concerned by any suggestion that schools were telling low-performing students to stay at home on the day of the national tests.

She said school participation rates in the national literacy and numeracy tests would be published on the My School website.

"If there is an unusually low number of children participating in a school, that will prompt questions and it will be investigated," she said.

Ms Gillard's pledge came after claims that under-performing students were being encouraged to avoid the tests so their results would not drag down their school's average score on the My School website.

The Age yesterday reported a struggling year 7 student at Vermont Secondary College was told he did not have to sit the test, even though he does not have a significant intellectual disability.

For the rest of the article go to

Students 'not schooled in NAPLAN tests' May 11, 2010
Queensland Education Minister Geoff Wilson denies state school students have been taught how best to pass national literacy and numeracy tests.

Students across Australia will on Tuesday begin sitting three days of tests for a national snapshot of reading, language and numeracy skills.

The NAPLAN tests are going ahead after the Australian Education Union called off a planned boycott, amid fears the results would be used to create stigmatising league tables on the federal government's My School website.

For the rest of the article go to

Clearing a path to learning
JENNIE CURTIN
May 3, 2010

Degrees, disabilities, disadvantages. Two of these need be no bar to the third for students who can make the most of special services at Macquarie University, writes Jennie Curtin.

For most undergraduates working towards a degree, panic generally hits when an essay is due or when exams loom large on the horizon. For students with a disability, panic can attack at any time - and often does. It might happen when wondering how to read textbooks when you are unable to see; or how to understand a lecture when you cannot hear; or how to negotiate a website whose flashing colours and symbols may bring on a sudden seizure.

In Jim Bond's case it was severe dyslexia, which had stymied his attempts to read and write throughout his life.

Bond, now a mature age student of 50, left school at 14 after a teacher suggested to his father that it was the only useful path open to him. He has a high IQ and was keen to study but his disability magnified the usual undergraduate problems many times over.

For the rest of the article go to http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/clearing-a-path-to-learning-20100502-u1jc.html

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Employment News:
Welfare changes to target disability pensioners – The World Today/ABC Online
14/05/2010
Jason Om

SHANE MCLEOD: Changes to welfare will soon make it harder to claim the disability pension as the Government attempts to clamp down on the rising number of recipients.

People will have to prove they're unable to work before they get the pension and will be pushed into finding a job.

But disability groups say it won't be easy for all pensioners. They want the Federal Government to ensure the new system doesn't leave them worse off, as Jason Om reports.

For the rest of the article go to http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2010/s2899476.htm

Disability groups question pension changes – ABC News Online
14/05/2010
Jason Om

Disability groups want the Federal Government to ensure the new disability pension system does not leave pensioners worse off.

For the rest of the article go to http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/14/2899881.htm

Wayne Swan defends move on disability pensions – Australian
13/05/2010
Patricia Karvelas

WAYNE Swan has defended the government's plan to force thousands of those applying for the disability pension to find a job or go on to the dole until they can prove they are not employable.

The Treasurer said the change was not a crackdown and would not hurt disabled people.

And Families Minister Jenny Macklin said the new Disability Support Pension assessments were intended to help people with disabilities return to the workforce.

Mr Swan said: "There is a measure here for new people coming on to the disability support pension about how they are assessed and it's not primarily, or in any way, a punitive measure.

"This is an area of policy that I've spent a lot of time of my public life concentrating on . . . in some ways there is no area of policy where we have failed more than when it comes to a very significant number of people who are on disability support pensions and don't necessarily have a pathway not just to employment but maybe to some other form of activity in life."

For the rest of the article go to
Labor turns the screw on the disabled May 12, 2010
Strugglers have been forgotten in this "boring" Labor budget, except for people with disabilities - and their life will become harder.
The Rudd Labor is plunging in where the Howard government feared to tread in cracking down on those applying for the Disability Support Pension. Howard's welfare-to-work initiative failed to make a scintilla of difference to the growth in numbers on the disability pension, which had reached more than 777,000 by last December.
For the rest of the article go to http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/politics/labor-turns-the-screw-on-the-disabled-20100511-uv58.html?autostart=1

Welfare News:
No gold medals for government that neglects the mentally ill – Australian
17/05/2010
Ian Hickie
AUSTRALIA does not win gold medals for health care. In fact, the World Health Report ranks us at number 32, way below Britain and other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries.
We do poorly because of high out-of-pocket costs, a lack of equity and poor access, particularly in primary care, mental health and oral health.
Now it is clear the focus of the Rudd government's $7.3 billion new investments is refunding of our acute hospital networks, it is unlikely that we will be winning any gold medals in health in the near future.
In distinct contrast to the past 10 years of genuine reform in Britain and other European countries, very few substantial changes in the way we do business have been achieved.
We now have five layers of bureaucracy (national, state, local hospitals, private health and "Medicare local").

Outdated welfare system hits carers – Sydney Morning Herald
16/05/2010
Stephanie Peatling
Carers are losing nearly $200 a week when the person they are looking after dies, forcing them on to lower unemployment benefits.
Nearly 5 per cent of carers - or about 6300 people - face this problem each year in an anomaly of the welfare system highlighted by the Henry review of taxation.
Older women, who are most likely to be carers, are also spending longer on welfare, with the number receiving the disability support pension surging by 63 per cent.
"The face of poverty in the future will be old, grey and female," said the director of Welfare Rights Centre Maree O'Halloran.
"On current trends it will be a pretty bleak future for older Australian women. They will outnumber old men on the disability pension and will spend decades on pensions with inadequate superannuation, without the protection of home ownership, have higher health costs related to their disability and be increasingly single."
For the rest of the article go to http://www.smh.com.au/national/outdated-welfare-system-hits-carers-20100515-v5e1.html

Labor turns the screw on the disabled May 12, 2010
It needs to make it easier, not harder, for people on disability pensions to find part-time work.
Strugglers have been forgotten in this "boring" Labor budget, except for people with disabilities - and their life will
become harder.
The Rudd Labor is plunging in where the Howard government feared to tread in cracking down on those applying for the Disability Support Pension. Howard's welfare-to-work initiative failed to make a scintilla of difference to the growth in numbers on the disability pension, which had reached more than 777,000 by last December.

As harsh as it seemed to many at the time, the change in the eligibility rules for the pension from an incapacity to work 15 hours a week to an incapacity to work 30 hours a week proved insufficient to curb the inexorable growth. The sick, broken, mentally ill and disabled poured forth and still managed to qualify at the same rate as before.


Tough new rules for support pension eligibility
MISHA SCHUBERT
May 12, 2010
MORE than 25,000 Australians with disabilities will be denied the disability support pension (DSP) and pushed on to the dole over the next three years under tough new rules for "borderline" cases.

In moves to cut the dramatic growth rate in the DSP and compel more people to work if they can, new applicants deemed to have some capacity for work would be rejected on their first application for the pension. Instead they would be placed on the dole - leaving them up to $116 a week worse off - and forced to do training courses for up to 18 months in a bid to make them job-ready.

But they would still be free to reapply for the DSP at any time while in training, if they can make a case that they are still unable to work 15 hours a week or more.

The changes will come into effect from January 1, 2012 - at the same time as new impairment tables announced in last year's budget.


Government Denies Budget Fails on Social Inclusion Agenda
Posted: Wednesday, May 12, 2010 - 12:30
Senator Ursula Stephens, the Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion has denied that the Federal Budget fails to deliver on its social inclusion agenda.

Senator Stephens says tax concessions and spending on health provide a fundamental contribution to the government’s social inclusion agenda affecting large numbers of marginalised people in the community.

Sen. Stephens says the tax concessions will help with cost of living pressures and allow working families to continue to be engaged in their communities.

Under the Budget, a worker earning $20,000 a year will pay $750 less in income tax in 2010-11, a worker earning $50,000 will pay $1750 less in income tax, and a worker earning $80,000 will pay $1550 less in income tax in 2010-11.


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International News:
City Pushes Shift for Special Education
By JENNIFER MEDINA
Published: April 28, 2010
The city schools chancellor, Joel I. Klein, left, and Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg.

This fall, more than 250 schools will be asked to accept more students with disabilities rather than send them to schools that have specific programs for special education, as has been the case for decades. By September 2011, principals at each of the system’s 1,500 schools will be expected to enroll all but the most severely disabled students; those students will continue to be served by schools tailored exclusively to them.

The shift echoes one of the central philosophies of the administration, giving principals more responsibility and control
over their schools. It is also an effort to bring New York more in line with the nationwide trend of allowing special education students to benefit from regular classroom settings.

For the rest of the article go to http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/29/education/29schools.html?hpw

Making it Work
As part of our Journey to Work project we are launching an online forum to give people with disabilities a space to share their experiences of school, training and employment.

We created the Making It Work wiki (http://makingitwork.wikispaces.com) to encourage discussion around the barriers that the disabled community faces in education and employment.

Wikis are a great way to connect people, talk online and share personal experiences. The Making It Work wiki is free to use but if you want to contribute to the discussion you’ll need sign-in online. See below for more information about wikis and signing in if you’re unsure about what to do.

If you’re more a reader than a talker, see the case studies about other people’s journeys to work as well as the full text of the recently released Journey to Work report.

We have used a wiki so that staff are able to participate in the discussion and it is more accessible than other online forums such as Facebook.

Please pass this on to anyone you think would be interested in the discussion – clients, contacts in other organisations, friends and family.

For enquires or wiki help contact Jo Boyle, Communications Advisor at CCS Disability Action on comms@ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz

Conferences and Workshops:

Assistive Technology: The tip of the iceberg Conference

Registration for Assistive Technology: The tip of the iceberg, ARATA National Conference is NOW OPEN.

The conference will be held at the Hotel Grand Chancellor Hobart from Wednesday 11 - Friday 13 August 2010.

Download the full registration guide with program from www.arata.org.au

An accessible version of the registration form will be available shortly. If you require an accessible version, please forward your request via email to arata10@ammp.com.au

Secure online registration will open shortly at www.arata.org.au

REGISTER EARLY and SAVE with early bird registration closing Thursday 27th May 2010.

If you have any questions or enquiries please contact A.M. Meetings Plus on +61 (0)3 9372 7182 or arata10@ammp.com.au

Annual Student Equity in Higher Education Conference

The Melbourne Cricket Ground

11 and 12 October, 2010

For further details and updates: www.ncsehe2010.com.au

Pathways 10, 2010 Conference - Creating space for people with disabilities in tertiary education

Brisbane from Wednesday, 1 December 2010 to Friday, 3 December 2010.

The Australian Tertiary Education Network on Disability (ATEND) and the members of the Pathways 10 Conference Organising Committee extend a warm invitation to everyone who shares the vision for more inclusive tertiary education experiences and outcomes for people with disabilities.

Pathways 10, 2010 will be held at the vibrant Southbank precinct in the heart of Brisbane at various venues including Southbank Institute of Technology and Griffith University.

Join us for three days of thought-provoking discussion, information-sharing, strategising and problem solving as well as networking opportunities and some great social events.
Topics to be explored at the conference include:

- The Widening Participation Agenda
- Creating inclusive learning environments in tertiary education
- Curriculum development
- Pedagogy
- Assessment

Creating space in workplaces and professions

Reframing the role of the Disabilities Service Practitioner

We are looking forward to creating a stimulating conference program as well as an engaging space in which you can network, reconnect with friends and meet new people.

Watch this space for regular updates. – www.pathways10.org

Contact Judy Hartley, Pathways 10 Organising Committee Chair

07 3735 7280

j.hartley@griffith.edu.au

NSW Events:

NSVSN inaugural meeting

North Sydney Vocational Support Network (NSVSN) inaugural meeting will be held on 11 June, in the Charles Blunt conference centre in the grounds of the Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney.

NSVSN - A Network for direct support staff of Education, Training, Employment related and other relevant providers. The Network aims to be the peak cross disability forum for communication, information sharing, and joint planning between schools, higher education, vocational services and government programs in the North Sydney Region.

Membership of the NSVSN is open to Staff at -

- Government, Independent and Catholic schools;
- University, TAFE and RTOs;
- Job Services Australia Providers;
- Disability Employment Providers;
- Local Disability Service providers;
- ADHC postschool programs;
- others involved in the transition of people with a disability and/or their employment.

The Network will provide members with regular opportunities to meet with other local providers relevant to transition of school leavers with disability; network during a social morning tea; discuss arising issues affecting the region; and to participate in information sessions on current transition related topics.

The inaugural meeting of the NSVSN will be held on 11 June, in the Charles Blunt conference centre in the grounds of the Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney. At the inaugural meeting a steering committee will be formed which will share roles such as Chair and Minute taker, organising meetings, speakers and the running of the Network.

For catering purposes you will need to register to attend for the Inaugural meeting. Registrations will close on Tuesday 8th June 2010.

For further information and registration go to http://ndco.cds.org.au/index.php/nsvsnmeeting

Enhancing the Links - Sydney, Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club

Thursday 24 June 2010
9am-3:30pm (registration from 8:15)
Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club, Fitzroy Room
24 John St, Lidcombe

Presentations from expert practitioners about available services and supports for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, mental illness, or learning difficulties to ensure a positive transition from school.
Essential up-to-date information about post-school pathways, including:

- TAFE
- University
- Employment
- Info for students with Mental Health Conditions
- Info for students with Aspergers
- Panel discussions, case studies, resources and networking opportunities.

Who should come?

Schools: Counsellors, Careers Advisers, District Guidance Officers, Disability Programs Consultants, STTs, AP (Learning Support, Vision, Hearing), Principals, Head Teachers (Support), Head Teachers (Welfare), Support Teachers, ISTIs, Learning support teams, STLAs, SLSOs, Year Advisers 10-12, VET coordinators.

TAFE: Equity Managers, Teacher/Consultants, Counsellors, Consultants (TVET), Disability Teachers, Career Advisers

Universities: Disability Advisors, Counsellors, Careers Advisors, Marketing Personnel

Government, Community and other Agencies: Local Community Brokers, Australian Apprenticeships Centres, DEEWR funded Employment Service Providers, Transition to Work and Community Participation Program Providers, ADHC staff

Registration and Payment information

This event costs $33 for participants and is subsidised by the National Disability Coordination Officer Program. Morning tea and lunch will be provided.

Places are limited so register early!

For further information and registration go to http://pubsites.uws.edu.au/ndco/news/index.htm#enhancing

Enhancing the Links - Hunter-Central Coast

A Free Hunter-Central Coast Seminar and Service Expo to Assist Students and People with a Disability in the Transition to Training, Education and Employment.

Thursday 22 July 2010

The University of Newcastle - Great Hall

9.00 am – 3.30 pm (Registration from 8.00 am)

Register by 16 July using our simple and fast online link (or download a registration form) at http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/ndco/staffresources/linksprogram.html

More Information


Kay Dean, NDCO Newcastle-Hunter
E: kay.dean@newcastle.edu.au | P: 4921 8844 | M: 0438 218848

Timothy Hart, NDCO Northern Sydney/Central Coast
E: thart@med.usyd.edu.au | P: (02) 8878 0514

Managing Disability at Work: The things you need to know

Friday 30 July, 2010

9 am – 3:30 pm (includes lunch)

University of Technology Sydney

A joint initiative being run by the UTS, the University of Sydney, UNSW, the Australian Employers Network on Disability and the NDCO Program (CDS, UWS).

Who should come?

All currently enrolled University students in NSW/ACT with a disability thinking about career pathways.

Does that mean you?

Perhaps you don’t think of yourself as having a disability but the definition is broad and includes dyslexia, mental illness and ongoing medical conditions.

The focus is on assisting you to maximise all opportunities whilst still at university, find the best career pathway, and how to access it after graduation. The forum will provide practical strategies and information, the opportunity to network and meet with other students and experts in the field.
Why come?
To find out more about practical career strategies and programs to give you an edge in a tough job market.
To participate in workshops:
What do I want to do?
- Designed as an introductory session for the beginner job seeker, it includes information on career exploration and researching jobs.
- Finding the job you want! Covers information on services such as: Stepping Into, WAM, DES Services, career counselling and networking.
- The Application - selling your skills and dealing with disclosure. Contains information on disclosure, selling your strengths, resume tips.
- The Interview – making a good impression and addressing workplace adjustments. Contains information on options for raising workplace adjustments, interview expectations.
University Careers Advisors will be available and the event promises to be inspiring and informative. A light lunch will be provided and a chance to meet people from other Universities.
The Event is free and lunch will be provided.
For more information go to http://ndco.cds.org.au/index.php/uni

Publication:
Australian vocational education and training statistics: Apprentices and trainees: Early trend estimates to March 2010
This new publication presents early trend estimates of apprentice and trainee commencements at the national level for trade and non-trade occupations up to March 2010.

New Resources:
Who provides VET programs?
Only Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) can provide Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs. Here is a list of RTO sites in Australia
From ADCET Newsletter - May

Media Releases:
Assisting jobseekers and people with disability return to work
PORTFOLIO: Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
SNIPPET: The Rudd Government will improve assessments for disadvantaged jobseekers and people with disabilities to ensure that appropriate employment services and income support are provided. The Government is committed to giving those people with a disability who may be able to work the encouragement and support they need to get and keep a job. People with severe disability or illness who are clearly unable to work will be fast-tracked to ensure they receive financial support more quickly.
Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth

PORTFOLIO: Education, Employment and Workplace Relations


SNIPPET: The Rudd Government will invest more than $660 million in training, apprenticeships and adult literacy and numeracy to ensure Australia has the skills it needs to support a growing economy. The four-year skills package will deliver: The Skills for Sustainable Growth package is designed to respond quickly to skills hot spots emerging through the growing economy, boost the capability of our workforce now and in the longer-term, and improve training in the vocational education sector.

Assisting jobseekers and people with disability return to work

PORTFOLIO: Education, Employment and Workplace Relations


SNIPPET: Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. The Rudd Government will improve assessments for disadvantaged jobseekers and people with disabilities to ensure that appropriate employment services and income support are provided. The Government is committed to giving those people with a disability who may be able to work the encouragement and support they need to get and keep a job.

To Subscribe:

We hope that this edition of Disability Education and Employment News has been of interest.

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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

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