



The Hon. Carmel Tebbutt, MLC

Minister for Community Services
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Disability Services
Minister for Youth

Embargo: 5am; Friday 13th 2004

MEDIA RELEASE

PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOL-LEAVERS WITH A DISABILITY

The Government today announced new measures to ensure reforms to programs for school leavers with a disability are successfully implemented.

The Minister for Disability Services, Carmel Tebbutt, said that existing arrangements for participants in the Post School Options (PSO) program will be maintained.

Ms Tebbutt said it was clear that the new service models currently being considered were not appropriate for many PSO participants.

"People were accepted into the PSO program between 1993 and 1998. The program was not established with a time limit, and so participants and their families had a reasonable expectation the program would continue," Ms Tebbutt said.

"Funding will continue to be provided to PSO participants on an individual basis. The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) will also ensure that regular assessments of all participants are conducted to maximise opportunities to enter employment."

Ms Tebbutt also announced new measures to ensure that reforms to the Adult, Training, Learning and Support (ATLAS) program will continue.

This two year program will be replaced from the start of next year with a Transition to Work program and a new Community Participation program to provide ongoing support for people with a disability who are not able to enter the workforce.

However, Ms Tebbutt acknowledged that some service providers may have difficulty introducing the reforms and said that the Government would provide additional funding to assist the transition.

"To address the concerns of service providers I am announcing a pool of funding will be available to aid in the transition to the new service models. Funding will be available in the first six months of next year."

The quantum of the pool will be determined following the EOI process.

"The ATLAS reforms are vital to improve the chances for school leavers with a disability to enter the workforce, and to provide ongoing support for those who have not or are unlikely to move to employment within two years," Ms Tebbutt said.

Ms Tebbutt reiterated that the reforms should not reduce the hours of support an individual receives each week.

"As I have said previously if, through the expressions of interest process, it becomes clear that service providers cannot deliver what we are asking, we will need to have a look at that."

Expressions of interest for running these programs close on September 3.

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