

Best practice adjustments for Students with Disability

Project 2: Part 1

Report prepared for the Sub-Committee of the National Schools Resourcing Board

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1. SCOPE OF PROJECT

To address a key aspect of the Terms of Reference for the review of the loading for students with disability, namely, estimating the level of resources needed to support students with disability at each funded level of adjustment under the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD). The Board's Sub-Committee overseeing the review, with the assistance of its expert panel have identified five research projects to inform the Board's findings. The expert panel includes independent experts, candidates proposed by School Policy Group members and a Commonwealth school funding expert. This report responds to Project 2.

Project 2 (Step 1), has been designed to identify best practice adjustments for students with disability informed by data collected from education experts across all states and territories in Government systems and Catholic and Independent sectors. The collected information has been used to identify a set of adjustments appropriate for students with different levels of needs and characteristics. This information will be used to enable relative loadings and differences across the broad NCCD categories to be estimated. The cost estimation of the adjustments for each student will be calculated in Project 2 (Step 2).

2. ADJUSTMENTS

Adjustments are understood as actions or modifications made to enable students to access educational content and achieve valued outcomes. Adjustments to teaching and learning may include *curriculum adjustments* where for some students the teacher may modify the curriculum outcomes to meet the student's individual learning needs. They may also include *instructional adjustments* where teachers may make changes to how the lessons are delivered to some students, and students receive assistance from educational support staff. They may also include *Specialist support adjustments* such as those involving clinical specialist assistance (e.g. occupational therapy, speech therapy, psychologist support, physiotherapy) and personal care support (e.g. carers). Also, *environmental adjustments* where modifications are made to the school environment in order to help students learn on the same basis as their peers including alternative equipment and furnishings, technology and augmentative and alternative communication systems as well as modifications to buildings and classrooms. Adjustments may also be made for *assessment and reporting*.

For the purpose of this review, adjustments are related to best practice reasonable adjustments that will provide support to a student with a disability to enable them to access education in alignment with non-disabled peers. They are based on a student's level of functional need and deemed to be reasonable given ideal best practice opportunities to help maximise their access to learning at school.

3. STUDENT PROFILES

A total of 24 student profiles were curated from case studies developed by Monash University to cover the three broad NCCD categories. Of these, there were eight from each of the three levels of adjustment of supplementary, substantial, and extensive (see Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1: Case studies for each level of adjustment

Number	Level of adjustment	Identifying code
1	Supplementary (Level 1)	1.3.5
2	Supplementary (Level 1)	1.3.6
3	Supplementary (Level 1)	1.1.11
4	Supplementary (Level 1)	1.1.12
5	Supplementary (Level 1)	1.2.17
6	Supplementary (Level 1)	1.2.18
7	Supplementary (Level 1)	1.4.23
8	Supplementary (Level 1)	1.4.24
9	Substantial (Level 2)	2.3.3
10	Substantial (Level 2)	2.3.4
11	Substantial (Level 2)	2.1.9
12	Substantial (Level 2)	2.1.10
13	Substantial (Level 2)	2.2.15
14	Substantial (Level 2)	2.2.16
15	Substantial (Level 2)	2.4.21
16	Substantial (Level 2)	2.4.22
17	Extensive (Level 3)	3.3.1
18	Extensive (Level 3)	3.3.2
19	Extensive (Level 3)	3.1.7
20	Extensive (Level 3)	3.1.8
21	Extensive (Level 3)	3.2.13
22	Extensive (Level 3)	3.2.14
23	Extensive (Level 3)	3.4.19
24	Extensive (Level 3)	3.4.20

Each student profile outlined the functional needs of a student identified with a disability and receiving support through the NCCD for adjustments. The profiles sought to encompass the spectrum of need across the three broad NCCD categories of supplementary, substantial, and extensive adjustments; and the four broad types of disability, namely, physical, cognitive, sensory, social/emotional. The profiles were developed from real students who were being funded as part of different categories and levels under the NCCD (see Appendix A for sample profile). These were used to extrapolate best-practice reasonable adjustments needed to support the student profiled.

Adjustment template

A profile adjustment template was developed for each of the student cases. This template went through several iterations with feedback from the expert panel and final agreement from the sub-committee. Nine sections of potential adjustment were confirmed. Within each of the nine potential adjustment sections, sub sections identified between two and six key elements for attention. Each of the nine sections also allowed for ‘other’ information to be added.

By completing the *Profile Adjustment Template* (see Appendix B), responses were received across nine sections of potential adjustments as outlined in Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 2: Nine areas of potential adjustment in the template

Adjustment Area	Information Requested
1. Planning	What adjustments should be made to planning specifically for the student, over and above planning arrangements for all students?
2. Teaching & Learning (pedagogical approaches)	What adjustments should be made to learning and teaching specifically for the student, over and above the differentiated teaching that all students in a class receive?
3. Curriculum (access to the curriculum)	What adjustments should be made to curriculum specifically for the student, over and above curriculum arrangements for all students?
4. Assessment (Alternative ways to demonstrate learning)	What adjustments should be made to assessment specifically for the student, over and above assessment arrangements for all students?
5. Reporting	What adjustments should be made to reporting specifically for the student, over and above reporting arrangements for all students?
6. Extra-Curricular	What adjustments should be made to extra-curricular activities specifically for the student, over and above extra-curricular arrangements for all students?
7. Environment & Infrastructure	What adjustments should be made to the school environment and infrastructure specifically for the student?

Adjustment Area	Information Requested
8. Health & Personal Care	What adjustments should be made for health and personal care specifically for the student?
9. Communication & Social Interaction	What adjustments should be made for communication and social interaction specifically for the student, over and above communication and social interaction arrangements made for all students?

4. METHODOLOGY

The methodology was grounded on a professional judgement model (Guthrie & Rothstein, 1999; Picus, Odden, & Fermanich, 2003), where participants used their expertise to identify effective adjustments for students with differing levels of need. The approach has been found to enable a stronger linkage between funding levels and best practice; although its major limitation is that it depends on the judgments of educational professionals in identifying strategies rather than research (Picus et al., 2003). Nevertheless, this model is becoming a popular method in the USA for determining school financing costs.

The professional judgement model underpinned this investigation. To reach estimates of costing for providing best-practice reasonable adjustments for students with disability a panel of professional educators was established. These expert practitioners were drawn from all jurisdictions to provide input on what best practice adjustments might involve so that cost estimates will then be able to be made. Using this methodology individuals first independently identified effective adjustment practices. They were then brought together to review their suggestions and determine consensus during a workshop. Following the workshop, the adjustments were finalised in preparation for Step 2 where the costing will be estimated.

PARTICIPANTS

Given the highly technical nature of the terms of reference, practical feedback from system administrators with funding experience and principals of special schools and mainstream schools with high proportions of students with disability was also sought for this project. On 7th December 2018, initial contact was made by the secretariat via a letter to each education department and to the executive directors of the Independent Schools Council of Australia and the National Catholic Education Commission. Assistance was sought in nominating up to three representatives to participate in targeted discussions for the project. This resulted in the nomination of 11 practitioners for the workshop stream from three government systems and the Independent Schools Council of Australia.

A follow up letter on 29 March 2019, clarified the validation project and sought further nominees from government and non-government sector practitioners and experts (from both special and mainstream schools) to assist in identifying best-practice reasonable adjustments for students with disability to help maximise their access to learning at school. Ideally, therefore, the nominated practitioners were requested to be drawn from settings that were delivering effective strategies or best-practice reasonable adjustments. With follow-up emails and telephone calls this resulted in the nomination of 39 people representing all jurisdictions.

A final total of 39 practitioners confirmed their participation from across all states and territories from Government Education systems and Catholic and Independent sectors. The practitioners were employed in a variety of positions including teachers, principals, heads of learning support, directors and allied health professionals. They were identified through the

Director Generals of all Government state education systems, the National Catholic Commission, and the Independent Schools Council of Australia who were asked to nominate practitioners and experts to provide best-practice reasonable adjustments for students with disability. All were invited due to their expertise in providing best practice adjustments for students with disability to access education.

The role of experts was twofold:

1. Review 2–4 student profiles and complete the *Profile Adjustment Template* to identify ideal adjustments to enable the student to participate effectively in learning. These completed templates were due to be returned to the Secretariat by the due date of Friday 17th May
2. Attend and participate in a workshop to be held in Canberra on the 30th May, 2019 to discuss and finalise best practice adjustment profiles.

5. PROCEDURE

Following a national request for participants a final group was established. Prior to the workshop the expert group members were asked to examine a number of ‘typical student profiles’ of students identified with a disability, to provide advice on what the ideal or best adjustments would be for each student to help maximise their access to learning at school. Participants were asked to consider the functional needs of the given student and to propose adjustments that would ideally be in place to help them maximise access to learning.

Each expert was asked to work on 4-5 profiles independently prior to participating in the workshop. Each student profile, therefore, had at least three experts to determine the types of adjustments. These were to be submitted in preparation for the workshop and collated to form the materials for discussion during the activities. The Secretariat co-ordinated the dissemination of the profiles and adjustment templates, matching professional expertise with student profile wherever possible.

For each potential adjustment section, participants were asked to identify, based on their experience and expertise, what adjustments they believed were needed at a school and individual level to maximise access to learning and to achieve the best outcomes for the profiled individual student. Consideration was to be given to five areas:

1. What should happen at the individual level?
2. How often should it happen at the individual level?
3. What should happen at the school level?
4. How often should it happen at the school level?
5. Which people are best placed to implement the adjustments at individual and/or school level?

As participants were not assessing the students in person, they were requested to identify any assumptions they made during the exercise.

Once the adjustment profiles were returned they were collated and used as the foundation for the workshop for the experts that was held in Canberra. The workshop sought to discuss any differences and arrive at a consensus. Following initial receipt of practitioner templates, however, it was noted that timings were very generic and, in some cases, would be difficult to calculate from the information included. Additional guidance on completing the templates was, therefore, provided to participants requesting clarification and further detail of the proposed adjustments. Additional time was provided to undertake revisions with final templates due by Friday 17th May. The following information was provided to the practitioners:

- In the ‘How often should it happen?’ columns, if the adjustment is made ad hoc, please provide the average number of hours devoted to the adjustment over a two-week period.

Please avoid statements such as 'as needed'. Where the adjustment is a one-off or regular and has a definite duration, please include that instead. Without a sense of how often the adjustment is likely to be made, we will not be able to convert it to a cost estimate.

- In the 'Which people are best placed to implement the adjustments at individual and/or school level?' column, please list the job titles of the team members (e.g. classroom teacher, teacher's aide, school counsellor, specific therapists etc.) so we can estimate the cost of the contribution of each team member individually.
- Please spell-out all acronyms in full.

The practitioners subsequently all met at the workshop held in Canberra and worked in groups to obtain consensus on the type of adjustments and persons to be involved for undertaking them.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

Following compilation of all submitted profiles data were initially scanned for usability in the analysis. Where necessary, further information was sought to complete the profiles (e.g. clarity regarding the number of hours required for a teaching assistant). A three-step process was adopted.

Step 1

Based on the student profile completed, individual profiles were coded according to four categories. The first two were extracted from the original case studies (although these had not been given to the participants); the remaining two were allocated during the distribution of profiles:

- Level of adjustment (1 = supplementary; 2 = substantial; 3 = extensive).
- Category of need (1= physical; 2= sensory; 3 = cognitive; 4 = social /emotional).
- Profile case number (1-24).
- Participant number (1-39)

Thus, a coding of 2.1.9.16 identified a student requiring substantial level of adjustment for the physical disability category as Student profile 9, completed by Participant 16. All profiles were coded to ensure anonymity of data for the workshop and to enable future cross referencing if needed.

Step 2

Using Excel, an exclusive spreadsheet was created for each case (n-24) to collate the responses from the participants. All cases had between four and five completed profiles. This spreadsheet was uniquely labelled "level.category.case" (e.g. 2.1.9).

These individual student profile spreadsheets contained 10 tabs; one for each of the nine potential adjustment sections (Planning, Teaching & Learning etc.) and one summary tab. In each of the tabs (adjustment sections), data were recorded under the sub sections which ranged from two to six according to the section. A code tab was included at the end of each spreadsheet which automatically populated the respondent's code throughout the other tabs.

For each unique student profile, data from the profiles completed by the participants were entered into these tabs under the relevant sub section. The unique identifying number of the participant was recorded against each entry. At the end of each section an assumptions section was included where assumptions were coded against the respondent.

Step 3

Within each sub section for every student profile, all the 4-5 responses were read several times. These were then summarised to include the range of key best practice adjustments recommended by the expert practitioners. All summary sections were transferred to the front tab labelled 'summary' to provide a collated response to all sections and sub sections for each student profile. Collated information on assumptions and in response to the question "Is there any information missing from this profile that you would want to know to better inform your decisions about best-practice reasonable adjustments?" were provided in the summary pages.

7. RESULTS

Individual Student Profiles

Detailed responses were included for most of the 24 student profiles across all three levels of adjustment. When analysing the data for each of the sub sections some noticeable trends occurred. In many instances, respondents included significant detail in the first sub section within each of the nine sections of the profiles. Thus, for the remaining sub sections reference would be made to "see previous comment", or "as previously mentioned" or the earlier comment would be repeated in the next sub section. When completing the summaries, these data were recorded only once under the relevant sub section.

A range of different names were used to identify the teams involved in the planning process. These included planning team, student support group, inclusion and learning team, faculty team, student support team. Similarly, a range of designations were given to individual plans including individual curriculum plan, individual support plan, individual support program, risk assessment management plan, and personal care assistance plan.

When practitioners completed profiles for students at similar levels of support, it was apparent that they had employed a cut and paste approach. In a number of cases this meant that the name of another student was entered into the new profile instead, indicating where it was pasted from.

The practitioners suggested that some of the personnel would be undertaking more than one role when participating in planning meetings.

Information provided for the same student profiles varied across respondents. In the first column related to "What should happen at the individual level"? and the last column in response to "Which people are best placed to implement the adjustments at individual and/or school level?" there was generally fairly close agreement on best practice options. This was especially notable for the sections on planning, teaching and learning, curriculum and assessment. The main differences in proposed best practice adjustments were found when respondents were asked to comment on the frequency of the proposed support. When summarising the latter data, a range of responses was included if the variations were large.

For teaching and learning the expectation was that the classroom teacher would implement the proposed adjustments with support from the school's learning support team/coordinator or support staff.

In the curriculum section when modifications were suggested to the class program and learning materials, the general expectation was that this would occur "all of the time". When suggesting a specific intervention program, though, (e.g. literacy or social skills), a specified number of sessions and the duration per week were provided (e.g. "Specialised activities twice a week in a small group i.e. 2x 40 minutes").

For adjustments to assessment, these mainly related to the provision of additional time or the use of alternative formats for demonstrating learning. The proposed frequency of these was generally non-specific with comments such as “where needed”, “as required”, or “all of the time”.

Best practice for extra curricula activities revolved around the need for social skills training and additional support during out of classroom breaks. Upskilling of staff to ensure that all staff were aware of the student’s needs was important here.

Many suggestions were based on the respondents view of their own “current practice” for students with similar needs, thus taking into account their own context and availability of support.

8. WORKSHOP

As part of the professional judgement approach, a workshop was planned to obtain an expert practitioner consensus on best-practice adjustments for a number of students with disability based on given student profiles.

Finalising the templates for the workshop

Following collation of the data and review of the student profiles, the templates were revised and updated for use in the workshop. A number of changes were made to the templates to improve the usefulness of the feedback from the practitioners. These included:

- All student names were changed to read ‘student’.
- Where specific team names were used a more generic ‘student support team’ term was applied for consistency.
- In order to derive a costing estimate for the time spent in making the proposed adjustments in Part 2 of the project, three additional columns were included in the templates. These required decisions to be made regarding the frequency, duration and intensity of the proposed adjustments.

The frequency was coded according to daily, weekly, termly, semesterly or annually. The duration was recorded regarding how long the adjustment would take each time it was made, expressed in hours. The intensity referred to the effort required by the people involved in the best practice reasonable adjustment preparation and delivery; considering whether the adjustment was solely for the student profile student or as part of group practice. For example, if the adjustment required 1:1 support then the intensity would be 100%. If the adjustment required for example, working with the student in a group of four, then this would be 25%. Practitioners were asked to provide their best agreed estimate and for all adjustments in the sub areas to give a single quantitative response to be indicative of a given student across multiple domains. Where the effort for an adjustment as covered in another area, participants could assign a value of zero. This was recorded by completing the frequency, duration and intensity columns against the relevant people for each potential area of adjustment.

Workshop participants

A total of 38 expert practitioners participated in the workshop, emanating from across all states and territories from Government Education systems and Catholic and Independent sectors, also including clinicians identified by the sub-committee. They participated in a 3-hour workshop to review the feedback they had provided individually on the profiles with an aim to achieve consensus on best-practice reasonable adjustments. Of the 39 practitioners (noting that one practitioner completed the template but did not attend the workshop) who received profiles, 33 completed between two and four profiles prior to the workshop. Eleven people completed two

profiles, 18 completed three, and four people completed four profiles. From the original invitees there was one withdrawal and six alternates. Five people did not submit.

Agenda

Following a brief welcome and introduction by Professor Ken Smith (Sub-committee Chair) and Professor Steven Lamb (Sub-committee member), the workshop was facilitated by Mr Brian Smyth King. The time was divided into three similarly structured sessions. Participants at the eight tables focused on a different student profile each session. Practitioners were allocated to tables primarily according to the profiles they had reviewed prior to the workshop, with at least two people having responded during the pre-workshop activity to the student profile to be discussed. Each group had a facilitator from the Secretariat who recorded notes from the discussion, kept the participants focussed, and ensured that discussions retained momentum through the sections of the templates.

For each of the three workshop sessions, every table received one student profile and the synthesis of responses derived from the submitted profile adjustment templates for that student. These collated materials included the suggested best-practice reasonable adjustments across the nine sections and 29 sub-sections of the template, for two main areas of what should happen at the individual and at the school levels. Best-practice reasonable adjustments at the individual level were focussed on preparing what adjustments were needed for the identified student. At the school level, the focus was on the application and delivery of these adjustments. Workshop guidance involved two criteria:

1. Based on your responses, best-practice reasonable adjustments submitted at the individual level are focussed on preparing what is needed to support the student.
2. Based on your responses, best-practice reasonable adjustments submitted at the school level are focussed on the application or delivery of the adjustment

For each session, 10 minutes were allocated initially to familiarisation with the profile and sharing of any key points that practitioners had identified during their prior individual identification of adjustments. The remainder of the time was assigned to reviewing the nine sections and providing a response to the three new time columns that had been added to the original template. These required the experts to confirm the recommended best-practice reasonable adjustments and to arrive at a consensus on the frequency, duration, and intensity of effort given by the people they considered to be best placed to determine and then provide the recommended adjustments.

The workshop included three main aims. These were to:

1. Confirm the best-practice reasonable adjustments reflected by the synthesised data;
2. Identify the relevant people who would be best placed to determine what adjustments were needed and deliver the proposed adjustments; and
3. Allocate an agreed response by providing a time value for three areas including the frequency of the adjustment, duration and intensity.

Assumptions

Practitioners were asked to accept the following assumptions:

1. The review is of a student profile rather than an actual student
2. Best practice conditions will prevail in the school the student attends and all recommended adjustments would be available and could be delivered
3. The school has established effective inclusive practice and any service that is required can be accessed by the school

4. The assessment of adjustments needed for the student is independent of the schooling context or geographical location
5. Any overlap of best practice adjustments with NDIS is out of scope
6. This approach is not perfect

Issues Arising and Points to Raise

During the three workshop sessions practitioners were asked to identify any issues that arose that were considered important for sharing. These were placed on stickies and attached to A2 sheets in the relevant section of the profile. These have been collated inductively according to the three main themes that emerged, related to school structure; provision of adjustments; and the *profile adjustment template*. Where these were also raised in the feedback sheets they have not been duplicated here.

Points related to school structure

- Cost alters depending on school structure e.g. executive structures can impact
- Size of the school impacts on the availability of supports e.g. coordinators/overlapping roles
- Cost to provide support in rural/remote—loading required.

Points related to provision of adjustments

- Individual people providing the adjustments may be taking on multiple / overlapping roles.
- When using the term Education Assistant (EA) this should be clarified as a non-qualified teacher assistant
- Providing best practice adjustments assumes that all teachers and EAs are appropriately trained and have the skills to provide them.
- There is inconsistent support for students with HI and VI across states and territories
- What is best practice? Do we have consensus?
- Complex disabilities, resources/funding following the student e.g. 24/7 equipment etc.
- Transition points for complex students would equate to different adjustment levels and therefore, expenditure

Points related to the profile adjustment templates

- Template is unwieldy and repetitive. Inefficient. Combine rows that duplicate effort
- Need a definition of each person's role—what qualifications? Role in the school?

Workshop Evaluation by Practitioners

On conclusion of the workshop participants were asked to complete a feedback form on the quality of the workshop, the most useful aspects and important learning / take away messages. The majority of responses (97%) were very positive indicating that the workshop was a worthwhile event, with feedback ranging from good to excellent; and that they were very pleased to have been invited to participate. A number of participants proposed that they would be very willing to participate in any further discussions or similar workshops. A summary of the most frequent responses from the 31/39 completed forms includes:

Poor—0; Fair—2; Good—7; Very Good—15; Excellent—7

Most Useful Aspects

- Rigorous table discussions, networking, and cross sector collaboration with other expert professionals in the field – great to have such professional respect with a multidisciplinary group of practitioners
- Opportunities to discuss with other jurisdictions and the shared understanding of best practice adjustments which is reassuring
- Good evidence to conclude agreement and validation of what constitutes best practice across the country and systems
- Highly effective process, well-structured and well prepared to produce the collated profiles for review
- Providing a scribe was great as this allowed the conversation to flow – a valuable day.

Take Away Messages

- A complex task with an ambitious agenda to cover all the proposed work.
- More time required to analyse case studies in greater depth – either a whole day or less case studies.
- Applying weightings based on a student profile to identify frequency, duration and intensity is very difficult when the student information is not contextual or situated.
- There were several assumptions made—remember to consider school type and setting in future deliberations.
- Review methodology and template as providing adjustments line by line is difficult.

Workshop Evaluation by Expert Panel Members

Informal feedback was sought immediately following the workshop and during the teleconference held on the 21st June. Five members of the expert panel participated in the workshop as observers, rotating among the tables. From their perspectives they found the workshop to be a very engaging session with practitioners being active participants in the group dialogues. They confirmed that the instructions for the workshop were concise, clear and well targeted. The process was geared towards practitioners from all sectors and jurisdictions with an expectation that they would be able to recommend best practice reasonable adjustments based upon their expertise and understanding of inclusive education.

There were, nonetheless, some limitations noted:

- Like the participants, the expert panel group members found the sessions to be quite rushed with consensus being reached simply to move the discussion forward. They also found identifying best practice reasonable adjustments without information about the school context to be highly problematic.
- All jurisdictions had been asked to recommend participants who were “experts” in implementing the reasonable adjustment process from the DSE (as it underpins the NCCD). The list of participants and the discussion on the day clearly identified that quite a lot of participants were not experienced at the classroom /school planning level or the model of providing support. Particularly principals who stated that they would not be involved in the collaborative planning and implementation as this would be undertaken by their support staff. There were also a number of non-practitioners such as medical personnel, paediatricians and therapists, who while welcome participants, had little knowledge of the NCCD or school processes and hence time was required to explain how this approach works in practice, rather than focussing on completing the documentation during the sessions.

- Many of the participants could not move beyond their own context and could not envisage a school being able to provide all the adjustments a student would have in a best practice environment (despite the directions clearly stating that the response was not to be context specific and all required adjustments would be available). This may limit the identification of best practice adjustments if judgement was based on their own experiences in diverse school contexts that may be quite different from ideal conditions.
- Reporting the timing data using the frequency, duration and intensity columns specified in the template was difficult for some groups.
- The NCCD model was developed to move away from the medical model, thus, attendance of medical practitioners caused confusion with some practitioners.
- There was some significant disparity across discussion groups in response to who would be involved and the timing for implementing the identified adjustments. Some panel members observed what they believed to be significantly under or over estimations of time commitments for providing best-practice reasonable adjustments.

The workshop formed part of the consultation process for Project 2 for identifying the best-practice reasonable adjustments for students with disability. In Step 2 of this project, the finalised data from this Step 1 process will be used further to develop cost estimates for the identified best practice adjustments for students with disability at the three levels of adjustments funded under the NCCD.

Post workshop

The three sessions of the workshop were very intense with the participants being highly focussed. Although the practitioners gained momentum with practice, regardless, none of the groups were able to complete the profiles during the given time. A range of options were agreed upon to finalise the profiles. These were facilitated by the Secretariat members who consolidated the responses already recorded and then worked with group members either individually, through email, or via small group teleconferences, to complete the profiles. Follow up discussions were planned, including a meeting with Ms Lynne McDougall, Director of Inclusion and Diversity Services from the Tasmanian Department of Education, regarding the recent work they have undertaken on profiling best-practice reasonable adjustments for students with disability.

Following the practitioners' workshop, the Secretariat circulated the 21 of 24 adjustment summaries that could not be completed on the day of the workshop, via email to participants for completion. The Secretariat received at least one completed summary for each of the 21 student profiles and for most two or more completed summaries were received. On return of the completed summaries, the Secretariat collated the data that it received on the frequency, duration and intensity that would be required for each adjustment to identify commonalities and differences.

For 14 of the 21 student profiles that were completed after the workshop, differences in the data were resolved by averaging the data provided and recirculating completed summaries to participants for final endorsement. For the remaining 7 of the 21 student profiles that were completed after the workshop a number of differences could not be resolved by averaging data. For these profiles, teleconferences with participants were held to discuss and agree the frequency, duration and intensity for each adjustment. Final profiles were distributed to all group members for review and confirmation. The Secretariat redistributed the adjustment templates updated to reflect the input agreed at the workshop. All 24 adjustment summaries were finalised by 4th July.

Finalising the adjustments for Step 2 of Project 2

When completed by the practitioners following the workshop, the adjustment summaries underwent further review to identify if:

- Additional adjustments were required to enable students to participate in education on the same basis as other students, or
- The adjustments fell within quality differentiated teaching practices (QTP).

Analysis of the adjustment summaries resulted in the identification of five categories that outlined the key focus of those involved in making the adjustments. These were designated as costing verification codes for Planning, Preparation, Delivery, Review and QTP (see Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3. Costing verification codes

Adjustment	Description of adjustment
1. Planning:	Planning involves personnel from across and external to the school coming together to develop a personalised/individualised learning plan for a student whose learning is impacted by disability.
2. Preparation:	Preparation involves school personnel, specifically the class teacher, developing and bringing together for implementation the learning materials/resources and environmental structures that are detailed in a student's personalised/individualised learning plan. This in the main will be additional teacher time. It may also involve teacher and or staff training/professional learning, for example a therapist/specialist teacher instructing a class teacher/education assistant to implement a student's mobility training program.
3. Delivery:	Delivery is the implementation of the student's personalised/individualised learning plan within a designated learning environment. This in the main will be teacher and or education assistant time.
4. Review:	Review is the process undertaken by the class teacher and the school to formally assess the educational impact and adjust where necessary a student's personalised/individualised learning plan.
5. QTP:	Quality Teaching Practice is what is professionally expected of a teacher and school in delivery of teaching and learning to all students including those whose learning is impacted by disability

Each adjustment was, subsequently, further coded into one of these five categories. The penultimate adjustment summaries were circulated to the expert panel for feedback and will be considered further by the sub-committee before being forwarded to Professor Matthew Gray for Step 2 of the project. The Secretariat will also undertake a concurrent process to identify if any adjustments identified in the student profiles prepared by Monash University have been overlooked in this process, which should have been recorded in the adjustment summaries.

In addition, to assist with streamlining costing estimation, the 16 different people identified as making the adjustments have been classified into six hierarchical levels of expected salary from senior management, professional, middle management, senior teacher, and class teacher to

non-professional (see Exhibit 4). The table also includes their expected involvement in the process across the five adjustment categories.

Exhibit 4. Levels of salary for those making adjustments

Person to make the adjustment	Adjustment required	Employment level
Principal	Planning, Review	Senior management
Allied health (medical)	Planning, review	Professional
Occupational therapist	Planning, Preparation, Delivery, Review	Professional
Physical therapist	Planning, Preparation, Delivery, Review	Professional
Speech therapist	Planning, Preparation, Delivery, Review	Professional
School psychologist / counsellor	Planning, Review	Professional
Deputy principal / executive	Planning, Review	Middle management
Head of Faculty	Planning, Preparation, Delivery, Review	Middle management
Subject specialist	Planning, Preparation, Delivery, Review	Senior teacher
Learning support / special education teacher	Planning, Preparation, Delivery, Review	Senior teacher
Learning support coordinator	Planning, Preparation, Delivery, Review	Senior teacher
Visiting teacher	Planning, Review	Senior teacher
Class Teacher	Planning, Preparation, Delivery, Review	Class teacher
Social worker / welfare	Planning, Review	Professional
Education Assistant	Delivery, Review	Non-professional
Parents / carers / case manager	Planning, Review	Not paid by school

9. FINAL OBSERVATIONS

Part 1 of this project aimed to identify best practice adjustments for learners with disability, currently being supported through funding for the three NCCD levels of need. Supported by an expert panel and using a professional judgement methodology, 39 expert practitioners from across all jurisdictions participated in identifying adjustments independently, and then by working collaboratively to seek consensus. This resulted in the finalising of best practice reasonable adjustments for 24 student profiles. These will be used in Part 2 to estimate relative loadings and differences across the broad NCCD categories and estimate the costs of the adjustments for each student to be calculated.

Based on the Part 1 process to develop the final adjustments, the following recommendations are provided for consideration when undertaking Part 2 of this project to quality assure the reliability and validity of the results:

- The issues identified by participants and the expert panel may impose limitations on the reliability of the data and will need to be considered carefully when undertaking the costing estimation stage.
- It was noted by participants that a number of the personnel undertaking the adjustments might be employed in different roles and acting concurrently. Decisions on how to treat these for funding purposes need consideration of the activity to identify any potential overlap of function and potential double costing.
- While a consensus was reached by the practitioners on potential best practice adjustments there was still significant differences in opinions from within the respondents.
- Decisions regarding what constitutes 'best practice' for supporting learners with disability are constantly changing and, therefore, it is important to acknowledge that these adjustments are based on 'current' ideas of best practice
- Understanding of what constitutes a 'reasonable' adjustment may vary according to the context and availability of resources.
- Recommendations of best practice reasonable adjustments were based on an assumption that effective inclusive practices were well established and that all forms of resourcing including manpower and materials would be readily available. Clearly, this may not be the case in many contexts and should be identified as a limitation in the costing estimation process.

10. REFERENCES

Guthrie, James & Richard Rothstein. (1999). Enabling 'Adequacy' to Achieve Reality: Translating Adequacy into State School Finance Distribution Arrangements.

Picus. L.O., Odden, A., & Fermanich, M. (2003). A professional judgement approach to school finance adequacy in Kentucky. Report by Lawrence O. Picus and Associates.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sample Student Profile

You are to use your professional judgement to identify best-practice reasonable adjustments for this student profile. Please note, unlike the profiles provided to participants, this profile does not provide any identifying information about the student.

Student profile Name:

Age:

School year level:

Diagnosed disability:

Autism Spectrum Disorder and exhibited signs of anxiety, has history of hospital stays for mental health reasons.

Functional needs assessment:

During primary school, the student received extra support to improve his spelling, his reading fluency and his reading comprehension. He began high school at or above peer level in most academic areas.

At the beginning of his first year of high school the student was quiet and courteous and also displayed some signs of anxiety. In English, he was able to identify general perspectives and interpretations and could communicate those ideas. He was able to show some understanding of the key features of text. He had difficulty justifying his decisions, analysing texts, his oral presentations were sometimes too short, and he did not pay enough attention to teacher feedback. He was capable of good written skills but did not pay adequate attention to these in his writing.

Though he passed all subjects, his marks generally did not display his ability level. He was often disorganised, particularly around forgetting essential equipment. During the year, he began seeing a psychiatrist.

The student's anxiety has increased during Year 8 and he has begun to self-harm. He has had short stays in hospital for mental health reasons. He frequently goes to the sector area or to the Welfare office instead of attending class. He continues to see his psychiatrist on a regular basis and his anxiety is being treated through medication. He was recently diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Appendix B: Profile Adjustment Template completed by three to five workshop attendees for each student profile

Note: All tables in Appendix B were completed by workshop participants for each student profile for which they were responsible.

Planning

What adjustments should be made to planning specifically for the student, over and above planning arrangements for all students?

Potential area of adjustment	What should happen at the individual level?	How often should it happen at the individual level?	What should happen at the school level?	How often should it happen at the school level?	Which people are best placed to implement the adjustments at the individual and/or school level?
Transdisciplinary planning					
Personalised learning programs (also known as individual education plans)					
Parental involvement					
Consultation, collaboration and review meetings					
Other					

Assumptions: please describe below any assumptions you have made in deciding on the adjustments above

Teaching and Learning (pedagogical approaches)

What adjustments should be made to learning and teaching specifically for the student, over and above the differentiated teaching that all students in a class receive?

Potential area of adjustment	What should happen at the individual level?	How often should it happen at the individual level?	What should happen at the school level?	How often should it happen at the school level?	Which people are best placed to implement the adjustments at the individual and/or school level?
Number of students in the class					
Withdrawal or in-class model of support					
Structuring the environment, i.e. class layout					
Visual support					
Assistive technology					
Other					

Assumptions: please describe below any assumptions you have made in deciding on the adjustments above

Curriculum (access to curriculum)

What adjustments should be made to curriculum specifically for the student, over and above curriculum arrangements for all students?

Potential area of adjustment	What should happen at the individual level?	How often should it happen at the individual level?	What should happen at the school level?	How often should it happen at the school level?	Which people are best placed to implement the adjustments at the individual and/or school level?
Alternative teaching and learning program(s), individualised curriculum					
Curriculum modifications to classroom schedule or targeted programs					
Other					

Assumptions: please describe below any assumptions you have made in deciding on the adjustments above

Assessment (alternative ways to demonstrate learning)

What adjustments should be made to assessment specifically for the student, over and above assessment arrangements for all students?

Potential area of adjustment	What should happen at the individual level?	How often should it happen at the individual level?	What should happen at the school level?	How often should it happen at the school level?	Which people are best placed to implement the adjustments at the individual and/or school level?
Modified or differentiated assessment materials and reports					
Support for assessments					
Adaptive assessments					
Other					

Assumptions: please describe below any assumptions you have made in deciding on the adjustments above

Reporting

What adjustments should be made to reporting specifically for the student, over and above reporting arrangements for all students?

Potential area of adjustment	What should happen at the individual level?	How often should it happen at the individual level?	What should happen at the school level?	How often should it happen at the school level?	Which people are best placed to implement the adjustments at the individual and/or school level?
To parents					
To support team					
Other					

Assumptions: please describe below any assumptions you have made in deciding on the adjustments above

Extra-curricular

What adjustments should be made to extra-curricular activities specifically for the student, over and above extra-curricular arrangements for all students?

Potential area of adjustment	What should happen at the individual level?	How often should it happen at the individual level?	What should happen at the school level?	How often should it happen at the school level?	Which people are best placed to implement the adjustments at the individual and/or school level?
Supervision out of classroom time, including for breaks					
Excursions & Incursions					
Other					

Assumptions: please describe below any assumptions you have made in deciding on the adjustments above

Environment and infrastructure

What adjustments should be made to the school environment and infrastructure specifically for the student?

Potential area of adjustment	What should happen at the individual level?	How often should it happen at the individual level?	What should happen at the school level?	How often should it happen at the school level?	Which people are best placed to implement the adjustments at the individual and/or school level?
Modified school equipment					
Specialist facilities					
Other					

Assumptions: please describe below any assumptions you have made in deciding on the adjustments above

Health and personal care

What adjustments should be made for health and personal care specifically for the student?

Potential area of adjustment	What should happen at the individual level?	How often should it happen at the individual level?	What should happen at the school level?	How often should it happen at the school level?	Which people are best placed to implement the adjustments at the individual and/or school level?
Additional supervision					
Specialist feeding/toileting					
Supports and instruction in non- academic skills					
Other					

Assumptions: please describe below any assumptions you have made in deciding on the adjustments above.

Communication and interaction

What adjustments should be made for communication and social interaction specifically for the student, over and above communication and social interaction arrangements made for all students?

Potential area of adjustment	What should happen at the individual level?	How often should it happen at the individual level?	What should happen at the school level?	How often should it happen at the school level?	Which people are best placed to implement the adjustments at the individual and/or school level?
Interpret					
Communication aids					
Peer interactions					
Transition					
Other					

Assumptions: please describe below any assumptions you have made in deciding on the adjustments above.

Is there any information missing from this profile that you would want to know to better inform your decisions about best-practice reasonable adjustments