

Review of the loading for students with disability 2019–public submission

Northern Territory Catholic Education

Stakeholder type: Approved authority

Jurisdiction: Northern Territory

Summary

See below.

Submission

Questions

Is the funding provided under the loadings for the top three NCCD levels of adjustment appropriate to support students with disability to access and participate in education on the same basis as other students?

The current and projected funding (until 2029) for supplementary to extensive students is in the opinion of the CENT Leader of Inclusion Support Services sufficient to provide reasonable adjustments, in general creating more parity between students with additional needs and mainstream students.

How does the level of resources required to support a student at each level of adjustment differ?

A student on supplementary usually receives between 4-6 hours per week of ISA funding, substantial receives 7– 12 hours per week and extensive 15- 30 hours per week based on specific needs and adjustment evidence. If any resources are needed, it is provided on a specific needs basis rather than related to NCCD level.

Does school setting or context impact on the cost of adjustments provided?

Yes, rural and remote schools have challenges like upskilling teachers & assistants, accessing clinical services (Psychologists, OTs, Speech Pathologists etc.) We provide those services from the Catholic Education Office, through appointing and upskilling specialist staff, covering travel and accommodation.

Inclusion school staff are brought into the Catholic Office for professional development and networking with colleagues twice a year.

In urban schools the costing is significantly less due to their ability to access Inclusion services, attend PDs and acquire resources more readily.

Does the stage of education impact the cost of adjustments needed; for example, in the early years and transitioning to secondary education?

We do find that the complexity of the secondary settings require a more stringent process to assure quality of process. In the early years and primary school, the accumulation of evidence and planning for remediation is centred with one or two staff members, while in secondary schools, multiple staff contribute, creating impact to various teaching staff, with a bigger cost and time impact

What costs of supporting students with disability (for example, fixed system costs, costs of collection, assurance and management of the NCCD at a school level) should be factored into the loadings?

Comparing with the previous SWD model, the NCCD model far more rigorous and potentially fair for students, but specifically in a small system where there is limited capacity to employ a NCCD team to 'drive' the process, the workload resides within current positions, diminishing our capacity to deliver quality student support in classrooms. CENT ISS staff spend +30 % of their time in schools and at the office on NCCD processes and procedures. CENT ISS 'purchase' Inclusion Coordinators' days from schools to allow them to do their NCCD and related work. (commencing at .4FTE for a school up to 150 students, to 1.25FTE for schools of 700 students.)

We also developed and are maintaining a software program in partnership with a Software Company, with recurrent costs

It should be recognised that smaller systems will have additional costing compared to larger organisation to produce the administrative requirements by Federal and local Government, as the expectations are the same but staffing to address the requirements impacts exponentially on smaller systems & budgets.

Are there any other factors that impact on the level of resources required to provide adjustments?

Student and teacher transiency remains a serious challenge to provide effective services in the NT. The perpetual training and induction of new staff, and data gathering or assessments for new students heavily impacts on our staffing and financial resources

Are Australian Government assurance processes, undertaken to support the accuracy of information provided to calculate a school's Australian Government funding entitlement relating to students with disability, appropriate and sufficiently robust and how might they be effectively improved?

The PE census audit was inconsistently applied across the four schools. The process seemed to evolve school by school. The requested evidence was consistently applied, one piece of evidence in each of the four areas, but the format requested changed from purely paper-based to accepting digital evidence.

The PWC assurance process was quite different in nature, execution and evidence collation. This was looking at the range and quality of all evidence for each identified student, scored against a 100 point matrix.