

DISABILITY SERVICES SECTOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

A 5 YEAR FRAMEWORK

2007/08 – 2011/12

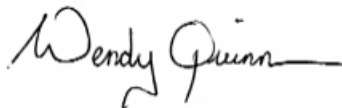
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1. INTRODUCTION

This strategy is the beginning of a collaborative partnership between government and non-government disability service providers to address workforce planning for the disability services sector.

The government and non-government disability service providers jointly seek to develop a cross-sector workforce of creative, innovative and highly skilled people who have the knowledge and attributes to provide effective and efficient services to Tasmanians with disabilities and their families, both now and into the future.

The strategy is underpinned by a framework that will be supported by the development of action plans to progress workforce development planning for the Tasmanian disability services sector.

2. AIMS

This strategy provides a framework to establish a committed approach to workforce development including a focus on learning and development activities, and developing sustainable recruitment and retention enabling the disability services sector to build a culture where workforce development is seen as an investment for the future.

This strategy articulates a planned approach to increase the capacity and capability of individuals to participate effectively and productively in a changing workplace by providing a pathway to a continuum of workforce development within an agreed framework.

3. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

The creation and sustainability of an efficient and productive workforce requires more than an adequate number of workers. It requires a flexible approach for workers which assists individuals to balance work and life which aims to improve morale and job satisfaction.

To sustain a high capacity workforce, building the capability of all staff requires focus on entry level programs, targeted and tailored learning and flexible career futures. Entry level programs need to include effective induction and orientation, traineeships, graduate programs and mentoring to new employees. Targeted and tailored learning needs to address national training standards and competencies, and organisational learning which are focused on meeting the individual needs of clients. Flexible career futures include a pathway for staff rotation, coaching, mentoring, career pathways, planning and development and professional learning opportunities.

Individuals need to be encouraged and supported in life long learning. Workforce development activities promote a culture of learning and innovation that can create a skilled workforce that has the competency and capability to achieve individual objectives whilst aligning to the organisation's and sector's goals and objectives in an environment subject to change.

Employee development must be reflective of a wider strategy for the business and aligned with the organisation's corporate mission and goals. Linking workforce development activities to all levels of business planning will ensure that the workforce development activities are relevant, effective and support the sector in achieving its planning and performance.

4. STRATEGY CONTEXT

In November 2006, an industry forum facilitated by the Institute for Inclusive Learning Communities, University of Tasmania was convened to progress workforce planning for the disability services sector.

This forum included key representatives from the community services sector. Participants at the forum agreed on immediate action areas which included:

- a stakeholder analysis incorporating a skills audit and demographic and learning/training needs analysis; and
- the development of minimum core competencies for staff.

The immediate priority identified at the forum was the need for a workforce steering committee which would provide a governing framework for workforce planning and development for the disability services sector.

The Institute for Inclusive Learning Communities reviewed three (3) key papers relevant to workforce development for the disability services sector in Tasmania. These papers underpinned the planning and direction at the industry forum in November 2006. The 3 papers include two (2) state and one (1) national:

- National Disability Administrators *Investigation into disability workforce capacity issues* research report (2006)
<http://www.nda.gov.au/cproot/504/1830/DisabilityWorkforceCapacityResearchReport.pdf>
- *Recruitment and Retention 2005* paper prepared by Libby Wherrett for the ASF - Disability Sector Workforce Project
- *Learning and Development Strategy 2005* prepared by Libby Wherrett for Disability Services
<http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/agency/hs/documents/DisabilityServicesLearningandDevelopmentStrategy.pdf>

The review of the three papers identified common emphases which are summarised below:

1) Vision Statements:

- The client is at the centre (and must be at the centre of professional learning programs);
- Professional learning must be ongoing, and intrinsic to the work of Disability Services officers;
- Workplace learning raises the profile of the disability service sector, and fosters professionalism;
- Disability Services is a profession of choice (and professional learning will make the sector attractive).

2) Governance: how processes are managed:

- Links between vision – goals – operational plans – learning development strategies are important (*implication that these links don't currently exist and that actions are not happening*);

- Need to establish a management team (cf DHHS Learning and Development Strategy, Wherrett 2005);
- Data collection and feedback is essential to inform management team (*implication that there is no coherent data collection across the sector*);
- Strategic professional learning and staff development require a high level of focus.

3) Professional Learning: recognised as a key strategy for fostering change, and commonly emphasised:

- Client is at the centre (emphasis on client autonomy, independence and empowerment);
- Clients, families and carers should be involved in development and delivery of professional learning;
- Important to ensure familiarity with legislation, policies, guidelines and local site rules and routines **which are human rights based** (*communication/familiarity currently absent*);
- Essential that quality induction programs for staff are part of planned professional learning;
- Prior learning and current competencies must be recognised and part of planned professional learning;
- Workplace training and professional learning must be flexible whilst ensuring consistency;
- Professional learning must be available for all levels of staff (*currently there appears to be a bias towards managers*);
- Refresher training is **mandatory and values-based** (*to offset problem of core of people with long employment history who have not completed current training programs*);
- Professional learning to support multiple career pathways (and across workplaces) is vital;
- Mentoring and working in teams, and developing ways to foster professional learning (*Mentoring is developed in consultation with clients*);
- Develop ways to encourage and reward people to undertake professional learning (eg awards, increase in pay);
- Flexible arrangements that strengthen networks and partnerships;
- Reflective inquiry into work practices: for example “Why am I doing this?” and “Who is at the centre?”

4) Human Resources

- Key theme of the papers was that there are fewer new workers in the workforce whilst the level of demand is increasing and the profile of the workforce is ageing;
- Client consultation required to ensure positions (eg support worker) reflect values and skills important to clients “What are the qualities of ‘good’ support workers?”
- Retention of high quality workers (*and ways to keep them*);
- Establishing planning and oversight committee for Learning and Development;
- Standardisation and consistency in staff selection and induction processes
- Mentoring and buddy systems (*nb “strangers in my home” is a major issue impacting on this*);
- Innovation, excellence and flexibility in workplace with client at the centre;
- Career pathways development (strongly linked with professional development);
- Establishing online access to provide data collection and information systems which enable feedback;
- Supporting community building and inclusion, particularly for people in own homes;
- Linking together systems in a regional and often isolated setting;

- Ensuring commonwealth and state priorities are linked together.

5) Health and Safety

- Safety for clients and staff (nb *Important condition: don't create situations which endanger staff*);
- Ageing workforce: implications in relation to health and safety;
- Emerging issues relating to working in non traditional workplaces, and how this impacts on clients and staff.

6) Gaps which emerged from the papers and group discussion (from the 23 November 2006 Industry Forum):

- A detailed assessment of professional learning and training needs of workforce;
- Lack of information on the strengths of the workforce: how to translate a high turnover of staff into a positive situation – how to recruit temporary and highly motivated workers;
- Baseline information and strategies required to ensure consistency among a high turnover staff in complex, high risk workplaces;
- System for collecting data and providing online support;
- Creating settings for training 'in-situ' eg group homes as learning sites;
- Professional learning for all staff, and establishing links for inclusion;
- "Strangers in the home" a major issue needing to be addressed;
- Clients input on skills and qualities of support workers;
- Addressing the culture clash in relationships between staff;
- Acknowledgement of values-based and human rights-based learning.

5. STRATEGY OBJECTIVE AND PRINCIPLES

The following objective and principles underpin the Strategy framework and action plan.

Objective

- Effective, targeted workforce development initiatives that are aligned with business planning and meet the needs of the disability services sector.

Principles

- The strategy will build and embed a culture of lifelong learning that contributes to positioning and supporting service providers in the sector to evolve as learning organisations;
- Learning is integral to building and maintaining a quality workforce to improve services to people with disabilities;
- Workforce development will be aligned to and address the needs of the three elements of the workforce: the system, the workplace and the individual;
- Performance and development planning for individuals are aligned to business planning and performance including direction and purpose;
- The action plan is based on mutual obligation where:
 - All staff are expected to share and apply learning;
 - Leadership practice and philosophy support a learning culture;
- The disability services sector supports the practice of sharing and valuing knowledge, skills, diversity and innovation; and
- Transparency and equity underpin access to, and provision of learning.

6. TASMANIAN DISABILITY SERVICES SECTOR OVERVIEW

The Tasmanian Government aims to work towards a society where people with a disability are able to achieve their maximum potential. To achieve this, Disability Services works with relevant stakeholders to deliver a range of integrated services promoting the health and well being of people with a disability, their families and carers.

The activities and responsibilities of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Disability Services are shaped by a range of legislation, government priorities, budget priorities, strategic plans, policies and agreements. The more significant influences on the work of Disability Services include the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA) and the *Disability Services Act 1992* (Tas).

Under the *Disability Services Act 1992* (Tas), disability means a disability which:

- a) is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of those impairments; and
- (b) is permanent or likely to be permanent; and
- (c) results in –
 - (i) a substantially reduced capacity of a person for communication, learning or mobility; and
 - (ii) the need for continuing support services; and
- (d) may or may not be of a chronic episodic nature.

6.1. DISABILITY SERVICES SECTOR

The disability services sector (i.e. Disability Services, and the non-government disability sector) in Tasmania includes organisations that are funded to provide support and services to people with disabilities.

Under the terms of the CSTDA, Disability Services Tasmania has responsibility for the provision of the following specialist disability support and service types (these supports and services types are provided through organisations in the disability services sector):

- (1) Accommodation Support - includes institutional, hostel, group homes, in-home support, personal support, and alternative family placement.
- (2) Community Support - includes therapy services, early intervention, behavioural/specialist intervention, and regional support teams.
- (3) Community Access - includes recreation/holiday programs, day options programs, and learning and life skills development programs.
- (4) Respite - includes in-home respite, centre based respite, and host family respite.

Responsibility is shared with the Commonwealth for the following service types:

- (5) Advocacy and Information - includes advocacy, information and education services, mutual support/self help groups, print disability.
- (6) Research and Development - includes funding to Peak Bodies for training, information, research, evaluation and sector development purposes.

DISABILITY SERVICES SECTOR BUDGET

2007-08 Expenditure Budget Summary

Item	\$('000)
Government	\$35 000
Non-Government	\$87 000
Total	\$122 000

6.2. DISABILITY SERVICES

Disability Services is a business unit within the Human Services Group of the Tasmanian Government's Department of Health and Human Services.

Disability Services consists of a State Office and three Area Offices.

The role of the State Office is to provide strategic direction, specialist support, quality management and standards regulation functions.

The State Office provides leadership and support for the development of performance accountability, review, monitoring, and service and system development functions, within all three area offices and the broader disability non-government sector.

The North, North West and South Area Offices of Disability Services are primarily responsible for the operational management of specialist disability services.

Staffing

Disability Services has approximately 412 FTE positions state-wide, the majority of which are located in Disability Services three Area Offices (North, South and North-West).

6.3. NON-GOVERNMENT SECTOR

The majority of Tasmanian specialist disability services are provided by the non-government sector, with eighty-nine non-government organisations operating more than one hundred and seventy-two service outlets

7. STRATEGY GOVERNING FRAMEWORK

RELATED KEY AREAS

This strategy is aligned to key statutes, Agency business planning frameworks, initiatives, strategies and a national perspective on workforce development. The legislative governance of this Strategy is underpinned by the *Disability Services Act 1992* (Tas).

7.1 DHHS *fit* PROGRAM

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) *fit* program establishes a new approach to the management of its agency and workforce. The department is committed to a new style of management of its people, business processes, services and the clients it provides a service to.

The fit program consists of a number of governance-improvement initiatives in the following eight areas:

1. establishing a clear and shared purpose and direction throughout the agency
2. achieving integration of services within and without the agency
3. implementing effective ways to plan for, measure and improve our performance
4. becoming more solutions-orientated and decision-focussed
5. improving the way we communicate
6. improving our management and leadership capability
7. strengthening our staff capacity
8. Reforming our organisational arrangements.

7.2 DHHS PROGRESS CHART

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Progress Chart has been established as the framework with which to manage Agency planning and performance against a base which is common to the diverse services we provide. At the centre of the Progress Chart are three key performance categories:

- Achievement;
- Quality; and
- Access.

There are 5 supporting action areas of the Progress Chart:

- High performing, motivated and supported workforce;
- Efficient and effective resource management;
- Collaboration and integration;
- Community involvement in and satisfaction with DHHS; and
- Innovation and improvement.

7.3 DISABILITY SERVICES SECTOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE

The Disability Services Sector Workforce Development Steering Committee has been established to take responsibility for providing broad guidance, direction and leadership for the development of a framework for a workforce development strategy for the disability services sector. One of the key functions of the Committee includes consultation with key stakeholders across the wider disability services sector on workforce planning that promotes workforce development.

The Committee is to take responsibility for approving the development and implementation of a range of workforce planning and development strategies and activities including building and maintaining workforce capacity across the disability services sector whilst maintaining links with national and state workforce agendas.

8. STRATEGY FRAMEWORK KEY FOCUS AREAS

The framework for this strategy is underpinned by three (3) key focus areas. The focus areas which are supported by vision/values, objectives and project priorities (refer Appendix 1) were identified and supported at an industry forum in November 2006

The three focus areas are:

1. Professional Learning;
2. Human Resources; and
3. Health and Safety.

9. ACTION PLANS

Action plans will be developed to progress the focus areas from the strategy framework. Each action plan will be aligned to the fiscal year.

The development of each action plan will include key workforce planning and development priorities identified in the strategy and relevant findings and strategies that have been identified from state or national workforce projects.

The Disability Services Sector Workforce Development Steering Committee has responsibility for prioritising, approving and monitoring the projects for each action plan.

10. CONCLUSION

For the disability services sector to maintain a pathway of continuous service delivery enhancement to people with disabilities, a learning culture needs to be supported at the sector level. The disability services sector needs to focus on the acquisition, sharing and utilisation of knowledge to foster a learning sector culture through open communication.

Individual development within the sector will be supported and encouraged through the enhancement of skills, knowledge and learning ability which will ensure continuous organisational as well as individual growth.

I. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	VISION	OBJECTIVES	PROJECTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a framework for generic and individual (client) learning and development activities that incorporates the principles of ‘person-first’, and provides a model of participation which builds on integration and inclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain a profile of learning and development needs of current workforce Develop learning and development pathways (from induction to VET to higher education) Ensure client involvement in recruitment and retention practices 	<p>Current Workforce</p> <p>1. Stakeholder Analysis (Immediate Action)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills audit Demographics and learning and training needs analysis Clients <p>2. Develop a set of core competencies (Immediate Action)</p> <p>Minimum competencies required for employment in the sector identified through best practice standards, service user analysis and Active Support methodologies. These could be developed within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prerequisite courses An accredited induction program for the whole sector <p>3. Undertake Performance Management Review and Performance Development Appraisals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure statement of duties are reflective of tasks/functions Establish mentoring, coaching, and buddying networks Coordinate database/records management

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote career and position opportunities within a diverse sector model Increase organisational awareness of training incentives 	<p>Potential Workforce</p> <p>1. Fully-fledged and co-ordinated recruitment drive sector-wide (Human Resources crossover/priority)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information sessions, career expos, job network agencies, promotional activities Targeted recruitment drives responding to sector needs (including targeting retired or retrenched staff) Promote sector diversity: raise sector profile and reward best practice <p>2. Investigate workforce development initiatives in other jurisdictions</p> <p>3. Investigate training incentives e.g. traineeships</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strategies to reward and encourage professional learning 	<p>1. Explore 'reward' options For instance: scholarships, assisted study and other incentives, awards of excellence (for individuals and organisations)</p> <p>2. Establish Professional Associations To monitor and assess skills (for all levels of employment)</p>

2. HUMAN RESOURCES	VISION	OBJECTIVES	PROJECTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Services is a profession of choice with ongoing professional learning opportunities in a diverse and changing work environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement and ownership across the sector to develop strategic plan and provide ongoing involvement with the process 	<p>1. Development of organisational structure which could oversee and facilitate workforce development. Oversight committee/working group which reflects government and non-government representation.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure baseline qualifications across sector 	<p>1. Develop set of core competencies.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common induction program which reflects core values of sector 	<p>1. Consider and review components of Cert 3 and 4 courses.</p> <p>2. Develop quality induction program To be shared and implemented consistently across organisations and the sector.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote disabilities as a profession of choice Develop learning process that caters for the diversity of work and the variety of work patterns Instigate professional development strategies which foster: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Self awareness; future potential; values and attitudes; and role clarity <i>for the individual</i> “Pathways through change” processes; morale; and open communication <i>within the system</i> 	<p>1. Marketing activities promoting disability services.</p> <p>2. Commitment to professional development throughout sector. Achieved by including PD as a core aspect of funding to disability services (promoted as a <i>positive</i> incentive). This could perhaps be included in Service Agreement.</p> <p>3. Disability services is prioritised as a workforce industry sector with a skills shortage by other departments (eg Department of Economic Development).</p> <p>4. Explore and develop training within workplace sites eg community of practice methodology built around staff teams, and reflective learning practice</p>

3. HEALTH AND SAFETY	VALUES	OBJECTIVES	PROJECTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared knowledge, agendas, and solutions across the sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased quality, efficiency and consistency in training standards across the sector 	<p>1. Sector-wide agreement on detailed standards of training. This is necessary to establish mandatory and minimal levels in safety requirements for staff (e.g. medication training, manual handling, first aid, legislative requirements)</p> <p>2. Collaborative training program between RTOs Examine processes whereby RTO's could work together to provide a comprehensive set of training skills to the workforce</p> <p>3. Sector-wide induction program</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An understanding of the importance of growth, change and flexibility in the environment (clients and staff), and encouraging change as a positive outcome Feeling valued, positive contribution of workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning and development needs of an ageing workforce Develop a cultural attitude which reflects transparency, clarity, openness Training and knowledge are applied in everyday work practices 	<p>1. Identify skills and experience of older staff To be achieved through a skills audit or job analysis in order to establish role diversification and career pathways.</p> <p>2. Implement personal development process Also involve a discussion of ageing needs and changing needs in this process.</p> <p>3. Examine changing status of values, principles, and culture which emanates from and reflects an ageing workforce.</p>