



29 September 2015

Ms Gill Callister
Program for Students with Disabilities Review
Department of Education and Training
PO Box 6307
Melbourne VIC 3004

Ask for: Natalie Walker
Phone: 9932 1096
Our Ref: A2225939

Dear Ms Callister,

Program for Students with Disabilities Review

Hobsons Bay City Council welcomes the opportunity to support the comprehensive review of the Program for Students with Disabilities. Council recognises the significance of initiatives that maximise the learning opportunity of students with disabilities in an inclusive environment.

People with disability make up approximately 17 per cent of the Hobsons Bay population. Inclusion of people with disability is a key priority for Council, as noted in Council's Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-17 and Council Plan 2013-17.

Council's commitment to people with disability is further confirmed with the development and implementation of the Disability Access and Inclusion Strategy 2013-17, which works towards achieving a fully accessible and inclusive municipality where all residents, regardless of their ability, can reach their full potential and lead fulfilling lives.

It is well documented that Australia is ranked 21 out of 29 on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries for employment rates for people with disability and ranked last when it comes to relative poverty (Price Waterhouse Coopers 2011). Education is a cornerstone of these experiences of disadvantage.

Opportunities to gain formal education, and consequently meaningful employment, have great impacts on health and wellbeing, including social and emotional wellbeing as well as increased income and housing security which will have further positive impacts as people age. In addition, supporting people with disability to enter education or the workforce increases the family and carers ability to also return to work in a greater capacity.

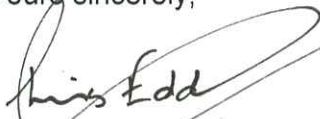
The Program for Students with Disabilities review is a positive step in making improvements to educational outcomes that will result in better employment

opportunities, socioeconomic status and long term health and wellbeing. To realise full inclusion by people with a disability the review needs to consider all aspects of life including, barriers in the built environment, barriers to transport, barriers to participation in education and the workforce and barriers to full inclusion in social life.

People with disabilities in Hobsons Bay have told Council that they want the things that everyone else in the community takes for granted. They want to go to school and work, get married, go on holidays, and have access to shops and restaurants. Most importantly people with disabilities in Hobsons Bay want to be accepted and want the opportunity to be spontaneous. Council encourages the review of the Program for Students with Disabilities to challenge the barriers that prevent our community members from achieving these goals and work towards an education system that at all levels, whether it is early education, primary, secondary or post tertiary is inclusive of all.

If you would like to discuss this submission further, please contact Natalie Walker, Director Strategic Development on 9932 1096 or email nwalker@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Eddy
Chief Executive Officer