

17 December 2024

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey, MLC
Treasurer
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Treasurer

Letter of Support – School to Work Transition Pilot Pre-Budget submission

I write in support of Family Advocacy's 2025-26 Pre-Budget submission for a School to Work Transition pilot for NSW students with disability in urban, regional and rural areas.

Across the last year, I have been working closely with Family Advocacy and other sector stakeholders around driving change in practice and minds around inclusive education for NSW students with disability. This included writing to the Minister for Education and meeting with her on 12 November 2024 to discuss specifically Family Advocacy's School to Work Transition program.

The actions that resulted from that meeting have culminated in productive meetings between the Department of Education and Family Advocacy, People with Disability Australia and leading international practitioners Marc Gold & Associates to develop a pilot.

The Department of Education (DoE) has noted that its Educational Pathways Program (EPP), with 171 schools now participating across NSW, could be the right program to pilot the proposed Work Transition program developed by Family Advocacy. The DoE also indicate that there are schools that could be appropriate to pilot the Work Transition program in metropolitan, regional and rural settings.

At the time of this submission:

- DoE has provided stakeholders with further information on the EPP.
- DoE has indicated that it can continue to provide advice and support on the implementation of the pilot, in collaboration with Family Advocacy and People with Disability Australia, should funding be obtained.

Could you please consider prioritising adequate provision in the 2025/26 NSW Budget of the Department of Education for the School to Work Transition Pilot developed by Family Advocacy?

Yours sincerely



Alex Greenwich
Member for Sydney



Family Advocacy School to Work Transition Pilot for Students in Metropolitan, Regional and Rural areas

Summary

This pilot is designed to help students with significant disabilities in metropolitan, regional and rural areas gain access to employment planning and services while in mainstream school using the Discovery Process, based on the Customised Employment Model. The pilot will be aimed at students in Years 9/10 and Year 11/12, which is the typical time to get a part-time job, but it can be started earlier. This pilot aims to shift the low employment rate currently experienced by this group.

We are currently having discussions, at the suggestion of the Minister for Education and Early Learning, with the Department of Education about how to structure this pilot so it has the best chance of success. We have also had productive meetings between the Department of Education, People with Disability Australia and the leading international expert practitioners, Marc Gold & Associates to develop the pilot. The below proposal and costings are reflective of these early discussions but may be subject to change based on the outcomes of the initial scoping phase of the pilot.

Pilot Implementation:

Student Selection: The pilot will have 30 students with significant disabilities across rural, urban, and remote areas

Number of schools and students:

2 Metro schools – 10 students in total - 5 students in Year 9/10 and 5 students in Year 11/12

2 Regional schools - 10 students in total - 5 students in Year 9/10 and 5 students in Year 11/12

2 Rural schools - 10 students in total - 5 students in Year 9/10 and 5 students in Year 11/12

Type of school: Comprehensive 7-12 secondary school with learning support

Student cohort: Cohort 1: Year 9/10 students significantly impacted by their disability with the most barriers to employment and would ordinarily end up in an Australian Disability Service or Day Service, and Cohort 2: Year 11/12 students significantly impacted by their disability with the most barriers to employment and would ordinarily end up in an Australian Disability Service or Day Service

Goal:

The ultimate goal of this pilot is paid employment at the end of school or in the first year after school for students with significant disabilities. Other goals are increased parental/teacher expectations, self-determination

Pilot Components:

- **Discovery Process:** The Discovery Process will be used to uncover students' strengths, interests, conditions for success, and potential contributions. This will be a non-comparative and non-competitive process that involves spending time with the student and looking at their whole life. The Discovery Process will take 24 hours over 2 School Terms (approximately 18- 20 weeks) and will be facilitated through observation, interviews, and participation across all areas of the student's life.
- **Individualized Education Program (IEP) Integration:** The information gathered through the Discovery Process will be used to inform the student's IEP and transition planning.
- **Work-Based Learning Experiences:** Students will participate in various work-based learning experiences, such as:
 - Chores at home and helping around the neighbourhood
 - Volunteering
 - After-school activities
 - Job shadowing and tours
 - Service learning/internships
 - Work experience
 - Self-employment/entrepreneurial experience

Customised work experience:

- **Family Involvement:** Families will be actively involved in the Discovery Process and transition planning. They will be provided with information and resources to support their child's transition to work through Family Advocacy's capacity building School to Work Project. This would include providing them with Family Advocacy's Employment Guide.

- **Community Partnerships:** The pilot will partner with local businesses, community organizations, and service providers to create work opportunities for students. This will involve:
 - Liaising with councils, business chambers, and service providers, as well as primary and pre-schools
 - Information sessions on topics like inclusion, open and customised employment, employment services, NDIS support, and the benefits of employing people with disabilities

Training and Support:

- Head Teacher Careers (HTC), Careers Adviser (CA) Transition Adviser (TA) Student Transition Support Adviser (STSA) and School to Work Transition Pilot Project Officer and administrators will receive comprehensive training and technical assistance on the Discovery Process and Customized Employment Model
- Guidance will be developed to show how Discovery aligns with and can be integrated into current education planning documents, including IEPs

Timeline: The four-year pilot will be implemented alongside student cohorts from Years 9-12 with a research evaluation wrapped around each 12 month cycle as a means to inform and bolster the potency of the pilot. The Pilot offers an initial 3-stage process and to commence with stage 1 in Term 1 2025 and finish in term 4 2028. The Pilot could be a 3-stage process with the hope of commencing in Term 1 2025:

Stage 1 – Scoping and planning phase – Marc Gold & Associates to run face to face workshops on the Discovery Process within the Customised Employment model workshops for key personnel such as all of the Head Teacher Careers (Employment Pathways Program), raise awareness, understanding, confidence in the process and get buy-in. Head Teacher Careers would provide an Expression of Interest to be able to determine those who have the appetite/would be champions/ have buy-in to ensure its success. This would then assist in the selection process of the 3 areas for the Pilot. School Term 1 2025.

Once the areas/key personnel/schools are decided upon, to determine the students to take part in the Pilot, an Expression of Interest would be sent out to students and their parents with an introductory information session for all those interested via the School to Work Project Team at Family Advocacy as well as Marc Gold & Associates. Stage 2 could be done online and could commence in Term 2 2025.

Stage 2 - Training, mentoring, developing resources for frontline personnel/ coordinators such as Head Teacher Careers, Careers Adviser/ Transition Adviser/

Student Transition Support Adviser, integrating into school activities, build a community of practice (including group mentoring) - could be done online.

Parents take part in School to Work capacity building workshops. School Term 3 and Term 4 2025.

Stage 3 - Evaluation phase - Measuring impact and outcomes - eg. employment, education, independent living, increased parental/ teacher expectations, self-determination, career exposure, age appropriate career opportunities, skills development. School Term 4 2025 to Term 3 2026.

Ideally, this pilot will run for 2-4 years. To allow the Year 9/10 cohort to complete school and to allow for a comparison with students who do not go through the Discovery process. This will provide an adequate opportunity to effectively change the life direction and employment opportunities for young people.

Evaluation: Need to develop an evaluation framework to assess the impact over time, including 6-12 months post-school outcomes. The pilot will be evaluated to assess its effectiveness in achieving the goal of paid employment for students with significant disabilities. Other valuable measures will be education, increased parental/ teacher expectations, self-determination, career exposure, age appropriate career opportunities, mentor/ references increased, skills development, independent living.

Communication: Need to meet with stakeholders including school principals, Director Education Leadership, ED Public Schools, Dep Sec Public Schools, EPP team, Head Teacher Careers, Careers Adviser, Transition Adviser, Student Transition Support Adviser and School to Work Transition Pilot Project Officer and administrators as well as potentially Youth Futures Networks that have strong connections to local employers through the VET work placement pilot and colleagues in Student Inclusion and Wellbeing Directorate.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased access to employment pathways such as work experience opportunities whilst at school that lead to paid employment
- Increased paid employment outcomes for students with significant disabilities after graduation
- Increased parental expectations of their children being employed after graduation in regular workplaces
- Increased expectations of the school staff that students with disability can work and be employed in typical settings
- Increased mentor/references, and career exposure/opportunities
- Enrich opportunities for self-determination and self-advocacy
- Enhanced access to transition planning and services for students with significant disabilities

- The creation of an infrastructure within NSW to provide access to the Discovery Process for students
- The development of a Visual Resume (VR) and a Customised plan for employment (CPE) using work experiences from the pilot to inform the Discovery Profile

Costings:

These costings are for a four-year pilot. Once the initial structure and training is set up, we anticipate the costings for the latter years to be significantly lower and informed by the external evaluation.

Stage	Activities	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Stage 1	Preparing for scoping and planning workshops for key personnel	\$50,000			
	Face-to-face workshops with key personnel (5 days); travel/accommodation for two Marc Gold & Associate representatives	\$10,000			
	Create a new role within DoE to oversee the pilot and facilitate the Community of Practice with key personnel – 3- 6 Project Officers	*\$ DoE to provide	*\$ DoE to provide	*\$ DoE to provide	*\$ DoE to provide
Stage 2	Training, mentoring, developing resources for Department Staff-Head Teacher Careers Career Advisors, Transition Advisors and Student Transition Support Advisors (All virtual; no in-person meetings) MGA	\$70,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
	Capacity Building for Families and Community Partners of students in pilot. (Family Advocacy School to Work Project)	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000

Stage 3A	Expert advice and consultation and additional Technical Assistance hours for schools/teachers within pilot areas	\$35,000	\$17,500	\$17,500	\$17,500
Stage 3B	Expert analysis and assessment, onsite meetings (2 days) for two MGA reps	\$25,000	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$12,500
	Travel/accommodation for 2 Consultants from Marc Gold & Associates	\$10,000		\$10,000	
Stage 3C	External research evaluator with a reputable University	<u>\$20,000</u>	<u>\$20,000</u>	<u>\$20,000</u>	<u>\$20,000</u>
Total	GST Ex	\$370,000	\$235,000	\$245,000	<u>\$235,000</u>
Grand total					\$1,085,000

*Excludes costings for DoE role to oversee the project