

Northern Territory Implementation Plan for the More Support for Students with Disabilities Initiative

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT FOR MORE SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

PART 1 - PRELIMINARIES

1. This Implementation Plan is created subject to the provisions of the **National Partnership Agreement for More Support for Students with Disabilities** and should be read in conjunction with that Agreement. The objective of the **National Partnership Agreement for More Support for Students with Disabilities** is 'Australian schools and teachers are better able to support students with disabilities, contributing to improved student learning experiences, educational outcomes and transitions to further education or work.'
2. The purpose of this Implementation Plan is to outline the Northern Territory's effort to deliver reform under the National Partnership Agreement for More Support for Students with Disabilities and to demonstrate how the Northern Territory will build the capacity of teachers and schools to better meet the needs of students with disabilities in the Northern Territory.
3. The Northern Territory will contribute to the achievement of the outcomes as described in the National Partnership Agreement for More Support for Students with Disabilities by focusing effort towards the following outputs:
 - Output 1 – Providing assistive technology to support the teaching and participation of students with disabilities.
 - Output 2 – Providing training for teachers to strengthen their skills in the use of assistive technology in the classroom.
 - Output 4 – Schools coordinating with health/allied health or other professionals to strengthen schools' support for students with disabilities.

- Output 5 - Providing training for pre-service and practicing teachers to build their skills in special education
- Output 8 - Supporting school staff to assess the current learning level of students with disabilities, adapt the teaching curriculum to suit their current level of ability and report on student progress against adapted curriculum.
- Output 9 - Supporting teachers to develop or modify lesson plans to suit the needs of students with disabilities.
- Output 10 - Supporting teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities through collaborative teaching practices (aka team teaching).

PART 2 - TERMS OF THIS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

4. This Implementation Plan will commence as soon as it is agreed between the Commonwealth of Australia, represented by the Minister for School Education, and the Northern Territory, represented by the Minister for Education and Training or the position of the Minister's authorised delegate.
5. The purpose of this Implementation Plan is to provide the public with an indication of how the project is intended to be delivered and demonstrate the Northern Territory's capacity to achieve the outcomes of the National Partnership.
6. This Implementation Plan will cease on completion or termination of the National Partnership, including the Commonwealth's acceptance of the final performance reporting (Progress Report 3) and processing of related final payments.
7. This Implementation Plan may be varied by written agreement between the Commonwealth and State Ministers responsible for it under the overarching National Partnership.

PART 3 - STRATEGY FOR NORTHERN TERRITORY IMPLEMENTATION

Environmental Scan, Needs Analysis and Consultation

8. The Northern Territory Department of Education and Training (DET) provides specialist support services to schools and students identified with special needs, which includes those outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Students identified with Special Needs in the Northern Territory relevant to this Implementation Plan

Cohort	Total	% of all NT students
*Students identified with disabilities in Northern Territory Government Schools	2954	10.2
**Students identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder	432	1.3
**Students identified with speech and language support needs	252	0.75

Source:

* Australian Government- "2012 Report on Government Services"

** Northern Territory Department of Education and Training Student Services Division database as at 19/12/2011.

Note:

Please note there is a difference between the total percentage of students identified with a disability (10.2%) and the accumulated percentage of 2.05 % (Autism, speech and language above). This difference is made up of students who have disabilities that are not targeted in this project. This cohort of students have a range of other disabilities (intellectual impairment, physical etc). Consultation with stakeholders has indicated the target of this project is for the disability cohorts listed above as that is where the current and growing need exists and where teachers/schools are requiring support.

In the remote areas of the NT it is often difficult to ascertain the exact number of Indigenous students who have disabilities because of the difficulty in accessing specialist services due to distance, and students not being at school on the day a specialist comes to assess.

The data provided only reflects the number of students currently accessing specialist services through Northern Territory DET Student Services Division. Schools and external providers may also be supporting students individually and therefore the actual number of students with special needs in the NT may be higher.

9. Through consultation with key stakeholders and an assessment of the support services delivered in the Northern Territory, it was determined that students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and speech and language needs required improved access to support services and development of staff in these areas that would be the focus of the strategies within this Implementation Plan.
10. The strategies outlined in this Implementation Plan complement effort within the Northern Territory to deliver improved educational outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities. A key component of the [Northern Territory's strategic direction](#) is a focus on consolidating specialist services across the Northern Territory to improve the quality of these services and to provide timely support for students in need of targeted learning programs, including maximising educational opportunities for students with disabilities.
11. The Northern Territory is also committed to fostering inclusiveness in schools through the recognition of differences between students and building on such differences to minimise barriers in education for all students.

12. The strategies outlined in this Implementation Plan have been developed in consultation with the Northern Territory's:
 - Special Education Reference Group. This includes representatives from schools (Principals, Special Education Teachers), the Association of Northern Territory School Educational Leaders, the Northern Territory Chapter of the Australian Association of Special Education, and the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training; and
 - Special Education Stakeholder Group. This includes parents of students with disabilities who also represent associations such as the Down Syndrome Association of the Northern Territory and Autism NT.
13. Speech and language has been identified as a high need through discussions with the DET Special Education Reference Group, Special Education Teachers and the Northern Territory Department of Health, recognising the need to improve access and timely services for these students.
14. The Northern Territory government sector has also consulted with the non-government sector on the identified strategies that will be supported under this Implementation Plan and will continue to work collaboratively with the non-government sectors. Through this consultation process, it has been identified that there is some policy alignment between the sectors and where possible resources will be shared, such as the new online special education courses.
15. Resources developed under this Implementation Plan will be available to all Northern Territory government schools.
16. Support will be targeted to government schools across the Northern Territory that have student cohorts identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder and speech and language support needs. Schools that receive support services will be identified through progress reports.

Project Information

17. Table 2 outlines the way in which the Northern Territory's strategies will achieve the outcomes and objectives set out in the National Partnership Agreement for More Support for Students with Disabilities and the performance indicators and baseline data for measuring performance.
18. The strategies outlined in this Implementation Plan aim to improve specialist service delivery by forming or joining existing teams that will provide assistive technology, speech, language and Autism support.
19. Students will benefit as a result of teachers' access to expert support and online learning. The professional learning provided will help teachers build an understanding of how to better cater for students with disabilities. The sharing of their practice with colleagues will also maximise the learning benefits to students with disabilities. In addition, students will benefit from the improved access to specialist services and support.

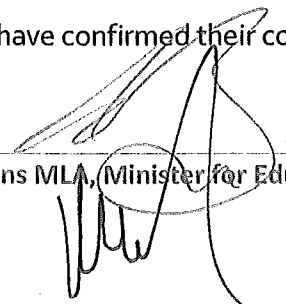
Performance Benchmarks

20. Payment to the Northern Territory will be made on demonstrated achievement of performance benchmarks outlined in Table 2. This is the case for all payments except those against reporting period 1 which will be paid on signing of this Implementation Plan in recognition of the requirement for working capital to assist with the implementation of outputs.
21. Performance benchmarks outlined in Table 2 are cumulative.

Sign off

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this agreement as follows:

Signature



Date

4/5/2012

[Dr Chris Burns MLA, Minister for Education and Training]

Signature



Date

22.5.12

[The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP, Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth]

Table 2: Strategies for implementing reform, performance indicators, baseline data and associated payments

NT Strategies for delivering outputs	NPA Outputs	NPA Performance Indicators	Baseline Date or Period	Performance Indicator as at Baseline	Reporting period ending 30 June 2012 ¹		Reporting period ending 1 March 2013		Reporting period ending 31 December 2013	
					Performance Benchmark	Payment and weightings ²	Performance Benchmark	Payment and weightings ¹	Performance Benchmark	Payment and weightings ¹
Current Assistive Technology resources and equipment will be researched and assessed to determine resources suitable for the needs of schools supporting students with disabilities. Suitable assistive technology resources will be purchased and provided to relevant schools throughout the life of the Agreement.	Output 1 Providing assistive technology (e.g. computer software, low vision aids, communication tools) to support the teaching and participation of students with disabilities.	Number and/or numerical range of assistive technology items provided to schools to support the teaching of students with disabilities	November 2011	10	10	\$158,000 (8.00%)	30	\$118,500 (6.00%)	45	\$49,150 (2.50%)
		Number and/or numerical range of schools provided with assistive technology items	November 2011	0	0	0	15	\$39,500 (2.00%)	35	\$29,500 (1.50%)
Assistive Technology professional learning and specialist support services will be delivered for schools, particularly in the identification of appropriate assistive technology to support student needs. The needs of schools will be assessed and training and support will be provided throughout the life of the Agreement.	Output 2 Providing training for teachers to strengthen their skills in the use of assistive technology in the classroom.	Number and/or numerical range of teachers that participated in training in the use of assistive technology	January 2012	1	1	\$93,800 (4.75%)	25	\$93,800 (4.75%)	65	\$47,250 (2.40%)
Speech and Language assessments of students with recommendations for program support will be provided. These services will be provided throughout the life of the Agreement.	Output 4 Schools coordinating with health/allied health or other professionals to strengthen schools' support for students with disabilities	Number and/or numerical range of schools supported by health/allied health or other professionals.	January 2012	0	0	\$110,600 5.60%	35	\$102,700 5.20%	70	\$59,100 (3.00%)
		Number and/or numerical range of health/allied health or other professionals engaged to strengthen the school's support for students with disabilities.		0	0	\$110,600 5.60%	1	\$118,500 6.00%	1	\$51,200 (2.60%)
Professional learning support for school staff, assessment of students identified by schools and/or parents with Autism Spectrum Disorder and case management of students assessed as requiring support. School staff will be provided access to participate in the Understanding Autism online course. These services will be provided throughout the life of the Agreement.	Output 5 Providing training for pre-service and/or practicing teachers to build their skills in special education. Output 8 Supporting school staff to assess the current learning level of students with disabilities, adapt the teaching curriculum to suit their current level of ability and report on student progress against adapted curriculum.	Number and/or numerical range of pre-service and/or practicing teachers that participated in training to build their skills in special education	January 2012	0	0	0	36	\$43,400 (2.20%)	72	\$19,700 (1.00%)
		Number and/or numerical range of school staff supported in assessing students with disabilities, adapting curriculum to their needs and reporting on student progress against adapted curriculum	January 2012	522	522	\$102,700 (5.20%)	542	\$59,300 (3.00%)	552	\$31,500 (1.60%)
Research and development of Speech and Language programs and resources suitable for the needs of schools supporting students with disabilities and professional learning will be provided for school staff. These services will be provided throughout the life of the Agreement.	Output 9 Supporting teachers to develop or modify lesson plans to suit the needs of students with disabilities.	Number and/or numerical range of teachers supported to develop or modify lesson plans to suit the needs of students with disabilities	January 2012	0	0	\$111,888 (5.65%)	25	\$111,840 (5.65%)	40	\$57,124 (2.9%)
Professional teaching and learning support services to school staff and establish Special Education Teachers professional learning communities across each region. These services will be provided throughout the life of the Agreement.	Output 10 Supporting teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities through collaborative teaching practices (aka team teaching).	Number and/or numerical range of teachers supported to meet the needs of students with disabilities through collaborative teaching practices	February - April 2012	0	0	\$102,700 (5.20%)	25	\$102,700 (5.20%)	40	\$49,150 (2.50%)

¹ Payment to the Northern Territory for reporting period 1 will be paid on signing of this Implementation Plan in recognition of the requirement for working capital to assist with the implementation of outputs.

² Payment weightings are provided as a percentage of the total funding under this Agreement.

NT Strategies for delivering outputs	NPA Outputs	NPA Performance Indicators	Baseline Date or Period	Performance Indicator as at Baseline	Reporting period ending 30 June 2012 ¹		Reporting period ending 1 March 2013		Reporting period ending 31 December 2013	
					Performance Benchmark	Payment and weightings ²	Performance Benchmark	Payment and weightings ¹	Performance Benchmark	Payment and weightings ¹
					TOTAL	\$790,288 (40.00%)		\$790,240 (40.00%)		\$393,674 (20.00%)

¹ Payment to the Northern Territory for reporting period 1 will be paid on signing of this Implementation Plan in recognition of the requirement for working capital to assist with the implementation of outputs.

¹ Payment weightings are provided as a percentage of the total funding under this Agreement.

Links with existing reforms or projects

28. In developing this Implementation Plan, consideration has been given to the Northern Territory's strategic direction, including *Territory 2030* and *a Smart Territory* and existing strategies that support improved educational outcomes for students with disabilities in the Northern Territory, including:
- The National Secondary School Computer fund which provides for assistive technologies which complements strategies under this Implementation Plan to purchase assistive technology resources targeted at students with disabilities. ^{Output 1}
 - Speech therapy services provided by the Department of Health can be enhanced by providing targeted services to students who require assessment and intervention through the establishment of a Speech and Language therapist for Northern Territory government schools. ^{Output 4}
 - Northern Territory wide advisory support teams in Autism Spectrum Disorder will be complemented through targeted regional focus of support services, including professional learning, targeted case management and tutoring the online course in these areas. ^{Outputs 5 & 8}
 - The Northern Territory's Special Education Project will be extended through the establishment of regional professional support to professionally develop the teaching and learning skills in special education for teachers. ^{Outputs 9 & 10}