

## Editorial

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A significant development in special education this year will be the introduction of the Disability Standards for Education. The standards were tabled in parliament on 17<sup>th</sup> March and will come into effect later this year. The standards are designed to clarify the rights of students with disabilities in regard to education and training that were established by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and will apply to all government and non-government providers. There are three main extensions to the DDA. The first is the extension of the hardship defence for providers beyond the initial enrolment, to cover continued provision of services and supports. The second is the extension of the definition of education providers to include authorities and bodies that develop and accredit curricula, training packages and courses. The third is the requirement for the prevention of harassment and victimisation of students with disabilities in educational settings.

There are clear implications for professional development arising from the standards. The first and most obvious is the need for all involved in education and training to be aware of their obligations under the standards. The second is the importance of professional development for those who will be providing additional supports and services for students. The standards (in Section 5.3 (c) and (d)) require that "appropriate programs necessary to enable participation by the student are negotiated, agreed and implemented" and that "additional support is provided to the student where necessary, to assist him or her achieve intended learning outcomes." These requirements will hopefully ensure that appropriately qualified special educators and other professionals are involved in creating programs and supports. It is to be hoped that evidence based practices with a good research base will form the basis for programs and

supports provided, and that a requirement for demonstrably effective practices to be employed will become part of the criteria for determining compliance with the standards.

In this issue we reinstate a custom that had fallen by the wayside a little in recent years. We are able to publish the Des English Memorial Lecture that was presented at the 2004 AASE National Conference in Hobart by Alison Jacob who is Deputy Secretary (School Education) in the Tasmanian Department of Education. Alison has been a special educator and school principal, and has lectured in universities. Her address was a wide ranging consideration of problem behaviour in schools which considered several factors such as social inequality, cultural differences, within school factors and students characteristics and the complex ways in which they interact.

The paper by Rebekah Grace and Cherry Russell provides an in depth look at the experiences of students with Tourette's Syndrome and clearly illustrates that there may be some way to go before schools are free of victimisation and harassment, and the need for teachers to receive appropriate professional development. Similarly, the paper by Joe Murik and his colleagues illustrates the need for additional appropriate support and programs for students with challenging behaviours and for professional development grounded in research based practices.

Finally, Jennifer Stephenson and Mark Carter report on a study that showed that most student teachers preparing to be special educators agree with accepted best practice indicators for the education of students with high support needs, but report lower levels of perceived implementation than those reported by teachers.

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