



NSW Youth Parliament

Needs Based Transition Support (Young People with Disabilities) Youth Act 2025

Bill Proposed By: Disability Inclusion and Accessibility
Committee

Contents

Explanatory Note	4
Rationale	6
Reference List	9
Part 1 Preliminary	13
1 Name of Act	13
2 Commencement	13
3 Relationships to other Acts	13
4 Objects	13
5 Definitions	13
Part 2 Mainstream High School Practices	14
6 Reform of Current Anti-Discrimination Policy	14
7 School Record Keeping and Reporting	14
8 NESA Disability Provision Reforms	15
Part 3 Post School Support	16
9 Career Counsellor Diversity Training	16
10 Wage Equity for Workers with Disabilities	16
Part 4 Expansion of Big Picture Learning Australia (Low Support Needs)	16
11 Implementation of Expansion	16
12 Operation of expanded program	17
13 Student enrolment in the Big Picture Program	18
Part 5 Reform of HSC Life Skills Program (High Support Needs)	18
14 Life Skills Curriculum Flexibility and Integration	18
15 Inclusion of Core Practical and Civic Education Units	19
16 Recognition and Review	19
Schedule 1 Definitions	20

I certify that this public Bill, which originated in the Youth Legislative Assembly, has finally passed the Youth Legislative Assembly of New South Wales.

Hamani Tanginoa, Youth Parliament Coordinator



NSW Youth Parliament

Needs Based Transition Support (Young People with Disabilities) Youth Act 2025

Act no. 6, 2025

A Bill for

An Act to establish a needs-based transition program for young people with disabilities in NSW, and other purposes.

I have examined this bill and find it to correspond in all respects with the bill as finally passed by the Youth Legislative Assembly.

Lian Sequeira, Youth Governor of the NSW

Explanatory Note

Summary

The object of the bill is to support the implementation of two distinct, tailored support alternative educational programs, combat negative stereotypes surrounding the capabilities of people with disability, reduce systematic exclusion within the mainstream education system and employment.

The Bill comes at a time when students with disabilities continue to be excluded from meaningful education and career pathways in NSW, as existing laws fail to ensure genuine inclusion, adequate support and equal opportunities. Rising disability diagnoses, high levels of school attrition and low employment rates in the disabled community reveal the urgent need for structural reform in NSW. The Bill aims to provide equitable educational opportunities to young people with disabilities, as well as create an environment where they can thrive independently post-school, includes providing in-school support and alternative educational programs for young people with disabilities, as well as support programs that continue post-school and independent living classes in the curriculum.

Overall, the Bill is a vital piece of legislation to afford equitable life fulfilment for young people with disability in NSW ensuring their diverse needs are met through education pathways, supports, and protections.

Overview of Provisions

Part 1 set out the short title, commencement, relationship to other laws and acts, objects and definitions of the act.

Part 2 proposes reforms to strengthen disability inclusion in NSW non-government schools. It mandates non-discrimination in enrolment, curriculum access and assessment adjustments, with enforceable compliance measures. Schools must record and report disability-related enrolment decisions and provide written reasons for rejections. NESA must reform HSC disability provisions to be based on functional need, not academic performance. Furthermore, an independent, publicly funded Disability Provisions Support Unit must be established. Annual public reporting on provision outcomes by school sector and socio-economic status is also required.

Part 3 proposes reform to wage equity for workers with disabilities, urging the Minister for Disability Inclusion to advocate to the Commonwealth for reform of the Supported Wage System to ensure all people who can perform a job to the minimum standard are paid fairly. The Department of Education must also ensure that all government schools provide access to disability-inclusive career counselling to support all students post-school and ensure a lack of discrimination in post-school guidance and opportunities.

Part 4 proposes expansion of Big Picture Learning Australia as an alternative learning environment for disabled students with low support needs. It mandates an accessible and fair enrolment process. It also introduces clauses which support the program's long term success, for example the establishment of a dedicated expansion and inclusion taskforce.

Part 5 reforms the HSC Life Skills program to allow students with high support needs to integrate Life Skills with mainstream courses to their own discretion, assisted by individualised planning and inclusive assessment practices. Furthermore, it mandates practical life, civic, and ensures formal recognition of all achievements and access to appropriate tertiary transition support.

Rationale

Introduction

Students living with disabilities are being left behind in NSW Schools. Unfortunately, many students continue to face exclusion from classrooms, inconsistency in support and systemic barriers to graduating and accessing higher education. Growing disparities in education and the workplace led to poor mental health, high attrition rates, limited career opportunities. Discrimination is not the result of disability, but of an education system that does not include all learners, and a workplace that does not provide necessary opportunities.

Currently, the existing legislation outlining requirements and responsibilities for education providers to students with disabilities are the 1992 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (Cth) and 2005 Disability Standards for Education (DSE) developed by the Federal Department of Education. These policies outline the rights of students with disabilities; equivalent participation, accessible curriculum and course delivery mode, adaptable assessment tasks, and teaching strategies that meet specific needs and disadvantages (DDA, 2005).

The DSE review occurring in mid-2025 is subject to a review every 5 years, employing community consultation, and from it, 4 directions for reform are set. After the 2020 review, the directions for reform were: supporting students with disabilities and their families, strengthening knowledge and capability of educators, embedding accountability for standards, and building awareness and capability in the early childhood education and care sector. However, there are no contingencies to ensure that action is taken to address concerns, even so, the action that is needed to give all students a fair education requires new systems and existing programs to be largely built on. Further legislation is needed to ensure that all unique needs are catered to and supported in the education system.

Secondary Education

The exemption of several anti-discrimination laws has allowed NSW private education institutions to discriminate based on disability, fostering insular cultures. In academic findings, over 40% of students with disabilities in private school experience exclusion. And 10% of students with disabilities experienced instances where they were told they were not welcome at the school. Only 51% of students with disabilities finished year 12, compared to 60% of students without. (Children and Young People Disability Australia, 2021).

In NSW public schools, the need for more support programs for students with disabilities is growing rapidly. In 2023, students with a disability saw a 21% increase since 2022 and 40% since 2018 (Daily Telegraph). While the government has introduced more support classes in mainstream settings, the demand for these programs still outweighs the availability of trained staff and resources (NSW Education). Most public schools still lack consistent monitoring and evaluation of these programs, leading to a lack of adaptability to students' needs (NSW Parliament Audit Report, 2023). Without stronger systems in place, many students are left without individualised adjustments needed to complete education equity.

Parental perspectives on mainstream education describe a lack of inclusive pedagogy and unwillingness to accommodate students with disabilities, putting immense pressure on family units. In 2023, a national survey found that over 70% of families encountered restrictive practices when enrolling their disabled child in school. The reliance on parents to find suitable educational pathways for their child is worrisome, and the NSW Department of Education needs clearer pathways for children with additional needs.

The education system falls short in ensuring an equitable, inclusive and holistic learning experience. Students with disabilities are less likely to complete Year 12 and are

underrepresented in higher education, limiting future opportunities. Inaccessible environments, low teacher expectations, and inconsistent adjustments across jurisdictions hinder academic and social participation. These educational disparities have deep emotional and psychological consequences, with many students reporting exclusion, low self-esteem, and anxiety. This is particularly acute for students with specific learning disabilities, frequently undiagnosed, facing stigmas and inadequate support. Despite increased enrolment in mainstream schools, outcomes remain unequal, and cultural change is slow.

Existing Programs and Responses

Big Picture Learning Australia is a non-profit organisation transforming secondary education with personalised, interest-led learning offering the International Big Picture Learning Credential (IBPLC), an ATAR-equivalent certification accepted by 17 universities, providing an alternative pathway for high-achieving students from years 7-12 who need flexible education. BPLA operates both as standalone schools and within public schools, with programs integrated into 46 schools across Australia.

The PLC Sydney Transition program aims to support academic, independent living and social skills for students with learning disabilities. A comprehensive and adaptable curriculum is offered for secondary students, incorporating independent living skills into mainstream courses. Specially trained teachers engage in individual and group learning to ensure all students are given the support they need. Off-site training for work experience is also offered, and families are supported as they explore post-school options through meetings with various agencies, completing referrals, providing travel training and orientation programs.

In contrast to the limitations of the HSC system, several international and interstate models offer more successful and effective approaches. The ACT model of senior secondary education is a flexible, continuous assessment-based system that allows students to complete years 11-12 without high-stakes final exams, supporting diverse learning styles. Furthermore, in the US, the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) mandates the creation of individualised transition planning by age 16. The models show the potential of policy frameworks, individualised planning, early intervention, reduction of standardised exams and a commitment to long-term outcomes starting at school age.

Tertiary Education

In NSW, students with disabilities continue to encounter systemic disadvantages in university and TAFE institutions. Despite the 2014 Disability Inclusion Act (DIA) (NSW), inconsistencies in the promotion of socio-economic inclusion of individuals with disabilities persist. In 2022, the success of students with disabilities was 5-10% lower than students without. Though the DDA (Cth) prohibits discrimination based on disability, indirect discrimination is apparent. Only 17% of people over 20 with a disability held a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 35% of those without, highlighting the ongoing barriers to educational attainment (Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success, 2018). While recent amendments to the Higher Education Support Guidelines 2025 aim to increase funding for disability support in higher education, the lived experiences of students in NSW tertiary education continue to reflect significant disadvantages in navigating admissions and participation in their study.

Disability in the workplace

Disabled individuals face significant disadvantages in the workplace, with discrimination and intractable barriers to participation. Only 38% of employers in Australia had hired a disabled individual in the last year, despite disabled Australians making up nearly 20% of the Australian population (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2022). Many programs created to increase representation have failed at addressing these issues at the grassroots level. *Employing 100* (Department of Social Services), placed over 100 disabled Australians into positions with major corporations; however, the program's limited goals have failed to make a significant impact. Additionally, the federally funded Disability Employment Services, which assists in the placement of disabled Australians in stable jobs, operates in only 40 locations nationally and, therefore, is widely insufficient. Overall, current programs are not servicing disabled Australians to the necessary level.

Conclusion

The current education system in NSW continues to exclude students with disabilities, limiting their potential and placing unfair pressure on families. Despite existing laws, in both schools and the workplace, disabled Australians are denied opportunities and struggle due to systemic issues. Without immediate, holistic change, these inequities will persist with thousands of young people denied the education, opportunities and futures they deserve.

Reference List

Aspect Western Sydney School. (2024). Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect).
<https://www.aspect.org.au/our-services/going-to-school/western-sydney-school>

Australian institute of health and welfare. (2022, July 5). People with disability in Australia, Employment participation needs and challenges. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.
<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/employment/employment-participation-needs-and-challenges>

Australia at an educational crossroads: Special schools and inclusive education. (2024., October 2). Frontiers.
<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/education/articles/10.3389/feduc.2024.1422089/>

Big Picture Learning Australia. (2017). Welcome | Big Picture Education Australia.
Bigpicture.org.au. <https://www.bigpicture.org.au/>

Chainey, N. (2023, May 27). How deep does it go? Australian students with disability and their experience of entrenched inequity in education. CYDA. <https://cyda.org.au/how-deep-does-it-go-australian-students-with-disability-and-their-experience-of-entrenched-inequity-in-education/>

Contact Disability Services - University. (n.d.). ADCET. <https://www.adcet.edu.au/students-with-disability/key-contacts/disability-services-university>

Clarke, M. (2022). Higher Education Disability Support Program - Department of Education, Australian Government. Department of Education. <https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-disability-support-program>

Cleary, M., West, S., McLean, L., Johnston-Devin, C., Kornhaber, R., & Hungerford, C. (2024). When the Education System and Autism Collide: An Australian Qualitative Study Exploring School Exclusion and the Impact on Parent Mental Health. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 45(5), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01612840.2024.2328251>

D.D.A. guide: Getting an education. (n.d.). Australian Human Rights Commission.
<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/dda-guide-getting-education>

Department of Education. (2005). Disability Standards for Education. Disability Standards for Education 2005; Australian Government. <https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005>

Disability and access services | TAFE NSW | TAFE NSW. (2025). Tafensw.edu.au.
<https://www.tafensw.edu.au/study/support-services/disability>

Disability employment services. (2023, March 30). NSW Public Service Commission.
<https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/culture-and-inclusion/disability-employment/inclusive-recruitment-of-people-with-disability/disability-employment-services>

Disability internship program – Stepping into. (2023, August 22). NSW Public Service Commission. <https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/workforce-management/recruitment/nsw-government-disability-internship-program>

Disability Royal Commission Final Report. (n.d.). <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report>

Disability standards for education. (n.d.). ADCET. <https://www.adcet.edu.au/disability-practitioner/legislation-standards/disability-standards-for-education> Webpage

Disability Standards for Education Review. (n.d.). <https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/2020-review-disabi>

Disability Standards for Education 2005 Implementation Report Recommendations 2020 Review. (n.d.). <https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/resources/implementation-report-recommendations-2020-review-disability-standards-education-2005>

Education | Disability Gateway. (n.d.). www.disabilitygateway.gov.au. <https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/education>

Employees with disability. (2023, October 24). <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/employees-with-disability>

Engagement, C. and. (2024, February 19). More support classes in mainstream schools for students with disabilities. [Education.nsw.gov.au](http://education.nsw.gov.au). <https://education.nsw.gov.au/news/latest-news/more-support-classes-in-mainstream-schools-for-students-with-dis>

Federal Register of legislation. (n.d.). Federal Register of Legislation. <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A04426/2016-07-01/text> Webpage

Inclusion and Wellbeing. (2024). Going to university. [Nsw.gov.au](http://nsw.gov.au). <https://education.nsw.gov.au/schooling/parents-and-carers/inclusive-learning-support/after-school-pathways/going-to-university-with-disability>

Language Guide - Australian Federation of Disability Organisations. (2018, March 7). Australian Federation of Disability Organisations - Australian Federation of Disability Organisations. <https://afdo.org.au/news/language-guide/>

(n.d.). Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/34f09557-0acf-4adf-837d-eada7b74d466/education-20905.pdf.aspx>

“One in four”: Disability rates hit record high in NSW schools. (2025). [Dailytelegraph.com.au](http://dailytelegraph.com.au). <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/record-221000-nsw-public-school-students-diagnosed-with-disabilities/news-story/8ac81c5671ec37526c2a7ccb0e38539c>

'Parents are outraged': Why closing special schools is such a complex topic. (2023, October 24). ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation). <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-10-25/royal-commission-closing-special-schools/102981714>

People with disability in Australia, education and skills. (n.d.). Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/education-and-skills>

People with disability in Australia, employment participation needs and challenges. (n.d.). Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/employment/employment-participation-needs-and-challenges>

People with disability in Australia, prevalence of disability. (n.d.). Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/people-with-disability/prevalence-of-disability>

Poed, S., Cologon, K., & Jackson, R. (2020). Gatekeeping and restrictive practices by Australian mainstream schools: results of a national survey. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 26(8), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1726512>

Special needs schools. (n.d.). Private Schools Guide - Australia's Premier Private Schools Directory. <https://privateschoolsguide.com/special-needs-schools>

Specific learning disability and the education context in Australia. (n.d.). ADCET. <https://www.adcet.edu.au/oao/for-disability-practitioners/specific-learning-disability-and-the-education-context-in-australia>

Sproston, K., Sedgewick, F., & Crane, L. (2017). Autistic girls and school exclusion: Perspectives of students and their parents. *Autism & Developmental Language Impairments*, 2(2), 239694151770617. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2396941517706172>

Stepping Into Internship Program - Australian Disability Network. (2024, September 29). Australian Disability Network. <https://australiandisabilitynetwork.org.au/students-jobseekers/start-a-stepping-into-internship/>

Supporting students with disability. (2024, September 27). Audit Office of New South Wales. <https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/supporting-students-with-disability>

Supporting students with disability. (n.d.). Retrieved May 8, 2025, from <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/tp/files/189468/For%20tabling%20-%20Supporting%20students%20with%20disability%20audit%20report.pdf>

Visual and Applied Arts at PLC Sydney - www.plc.nsw.edu.au. (2024). [Nsw.edu.au. https://www.plc.nsw.edu.au/learning/senior-school/transition-program/](https://www.plc.nsw.edu.au/learning/senior-school/transition-program/)

The Youth Legislature of New South Wales enacts—

Part 1 Preliminary

1 Name of Act

This Act is the Needs Based Transition Support (Young People with Disabilities) Youth Act 2025.

2 Commencement

The Act commences on 1 January 2027.

3 Relationships to other Acts

This Act prevails to the extent of any inconsistency with another NSW Act, unless that Act expressly states otherwise.

4 Objects

The objects of this Act are to—

- (a) to support the implementation of two distinct, tailored support programs within mainstream educational settings that meet the diverse needs of young people with disabilities by—
 - i. expanding the Big Picture Education Program to provide an inclusive, interest-based senior school pathway for students with low-support needs disabilities; and
 - ii. reforming the Life Skills HSC curriculum to ensure flexibility, practical life preparation, and inclusive recognition for students with high-support needs disabilities
- (b) to mandate the adoption and application of inclusive pedagogical practices that are responsive to the diverse needs, interests, and aspirations of students with disabilities in secondary schools; and
- (c) to promote and facilitate comprehensive provisions that are needs-based, to ensure successful post-school transition and entry into employment; and
- (d) to reduce the systemic exclusion of students with disabilities from educational and post-school opportunities, and to enhance long-term participation, inclusion and overall well-being; and
- (e) to foster and normalise a culture of success for students with disabilities, with the aim of improving individual life outcomes and shifting societal perceptions regarding the academic, professional and social capabilities of the disability community.

5 Definitions

In this Act—

Definitions can be found in Schedule 1

Note— The *Interpretation Act 1987* also contains definitions and other provisions that affect the interpretation of this Bill.

Part 2 Mainstream High School Practices

6 Reform of Current Anti-Discrimination Policy

- (1) A registered non-government school must not discriminate against a prospective or current student on the grounds of disability in matters relating to—
 - a. admission or enrolment; or
 - b. provision of reasonable adjustments; or
 - c. access to the curriculum and co-curricular activities; or
 - d. disciplinary proceedings and enrolment cancellation.
- (2) The NSW Education Standards Authority must develop and publish Disability Inclusion Guidelines to assist non-government schools in meeting their obligations under this section.
- (3) A non-government school that contravenes this section—
 - a. may be issued a compliance notice by the NSW Education Standards Authority; and
 - b. must submit a Corrective Action Plan within 30 days of notice being issued; and
 - c. an non-government school receiving public funds may be subject to loss of funding in the case of severe non-compliance.

7 School Record Keeping and Reporting

- (1) All registered schools in NSW, including non-government schools, must—
 - a. maintain accurate records of all applications for enrolment made by or on behalf of a student with a disability; and
 - b. record decisions regarding offers of enrolment or refusal of enrolment and the stated reasons; and
 - c. record any subsequent cancellation of enrolment or unexplained cessation of attendance
- (2) Where an application for enrolment by a student with a disability is declined, the school must, within 10 business days, provide written notice to the student or their parents or guardian stating—
 - a. the reasons for the decision; and
 - b. informing them of their right to request a review through an independent oversight body established under this Act.

- (3) Schools must report the data referred to in section 7.1 (de-identified) annually to the NSW Department of Education and the Office of Disability Education Standards.
- (4) A school that contravenes this section—
 - a. may be subject to a state investigation in the case of repeated or severe non-compliance.

8 NESA Disability Provision Reforms

- (1) The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) must not deny a student with disability reasonable examination provisions in the High School Certificate (HSC) on the basis of high academic achievement or perceived giftedness.
- (2) Where a student has received assessment provisions consistently during Years 10-12 due to a diagnosed disability and evidence of needing support, those provisions must be presumed valid for HSC examinations unless there is a compelling medical or educational reason to reduce them, with the onus of justification on NESA.
- (3) NESA must amend its assessment provisions criteria to—
 - a. a student's eligibility for disability support shall be determined based on the presence of a diagnosed disability and the functional impact of that disability, not on the student's intellectual quotient (IQ) or academic performance; and
 - b. ensure provisions are assessed based on functional need, not academic output or standardised scores alone.
- (4) NESA must establish a publicly funded Disability Provisions Support Unit that is—
 - a. independent of schools; and
 - b. funded by the NSW Education Standards Authority.
- (5) The NESA Disability Provisions Support Unit will be accessible to all public-school students and families, to assist with—
 - a. navigating the disability provisions application process; and
 - b. securing relevant documentation through public health and school-based professionals; and
 - c. ensuring consistent implementation of provisions throughout a student's senior years.
- (6) NESA must publish disaggregated data annually on the provision of HSC exam adjustments, including—
 - a. number and types of provisions granted by the school sector (government, catholic, independent); and
 - b. approval and rejection rates by socio-economic decile.

Part 3 Post School Support

9 Career Counsellor Diversity Training

- (1) The Department of Education must ensure that all secondary schools provide access to career counsellors qualified in disability-inclusive career and education counselling.
- (2) The purpose of this extra qualification is to aid career counsellor in—
 - a. supporting students in planning for life beyond secondary school, including pathways to tertiary education, vocational training and employment; and
 - b. ensuring that student receive tailored advice based on their strengths, interests and aspirations; and
 - c. addressing the risks of stereotyping, low expectations, or inappropriate placement; and
 - d. facilitating connections with inclusive employers and training providers; and
 - e. address the disproportionate rates of youth unemployment and Centrelink reliance in the disability community.
- (3) These services must be culturally responsive and informed by lived experience where possible.

10 Wage Equity for Workers with Disabilities

- (1) The Minister for Disability Inclusion must advocate to the Commonwealth for reform of the Supported Wage System to ensure that people with disabilities, including young people transitioning from school, who can perform a job to the required standard, are paid at least the minimum wage under the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth).
- (2) Where the Commonwealth maintains a supported wage system or permits subminimum wages, the Minister must report annually to Parliament on—
 - a. the number of NSW residents employed under such schemes; and
 - b. the economic impact of subminimum wages on participants; and
 - c. efforts are being undertaken to phase out discriminatory wage practices.

Part 4 Expansion of Big Picture Learning Australia (Low Support Needs)

11 Implementation of Expansion

- (1) The Minister for Education must, within 12 months of the commencement of this Act, develop and publish an Implementation Plan for the statewide expansion of the Big Picture Education Program.
- (2) The Implementation Plan must include—
 - a. a schedule for the rollout of the program; and

- b. a process for identifying and selecting participating schools
- (3) The Department of Education must establish a dedicated Expansion and Inclusion Taskforce, comprising of—
- a. representatives from Big Picture Australia; and
 - b. practising Big Picture educators and school leaders; and
 - c. students and families with lived experience of disability; and
 - d. experts in inclusive education, neurodiversity and trauma-informed practice; and
 - e. individuals from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; and
 - f. individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse communities; and
 - g. individuals from regional/remote areas.
- (4) The Taskforce will be responsible for—
- a. advising on schools' readiness, staff training needs and necessary infrastructure investments; and
 - b. developing statewide professional development frameworks for participating schools; and
 - c. establishing standards and procedures for monitoring and evaluation of program outcomes.

12 Operation of expanded program

- (1) The Big Picture Education Program for years 11 and 12 shall be progressively implemented in at least one public secondary school per state electorate over a five-year period, with priority given to—
- a. schools in regional, remote and low-SES areas; and
 - b. schools with a demonstrated community need for alternative learning models
- (2) The Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education must ensure that the Big Picture Education Program continues to be formally recognised by Australian universities as a legitimate and equitable alternative pathway to tertiary study, through the continued and expanded use of the International Big Picture Learning Credential.
- (3) The Department of Education must—
- a. provide ongoing training and support for school staff delivering Big Picture Education; and
 - b. fund necessary infrastructure and staffing to support inclusive learning models.

13 Student enrolment in the Big Picture Program

- (1) A student may apply to enrol in the Big Picture Education Program for Years 11 and 12.
- (2) The application must include a personal learning statement from the student outlining their interests and goals.
- (3) The school must provide reasonable support to all students, including those with disabilities, to complete the application process.
- (4) Participation in the Big Picture Education Program includes—
 - a. a willingness to engage in independent and interest-led learning; and
 - b. participation in outlearning opportunities such as work placements; and
 - c. a commitment to completing a portfolio and public exhibition of learning
- (5) Enrolment decisions must be made by a senior staff member and the potential Big Picture Advisory teacher.
- (6) If an application is declined, the student must be provided with written reasons and an opportunity to appeal the decision.
- (7) Student must show aptitude for independent learning and passion in their interests.
- (8) Students must be willing to complete outlearning and work experience with adults.

Part 5 Reform of HSC Life Skills Program (High Support Needs)

14 Life Skills Curriculum Flexibility and Integration

- (1) The Department of Education must amend the Life Skills HSC curriculum to—
 - a. permit students enrolled in Life Skills to undertake mainstream Board Developed Courses in individual subject areas, where appropriate, based on student strengths; and
 - b. ensure that partial enrolment in mainstream classes does not require full withdrawal from the Life Skills pathway or impact eligibility for the High School Certificate; and
 - c. require that all schools provide individualised curriculum planning to support this blended enrolment model
- (2) Schools must—
 - a. provide reasonable adjustments and supports to students undertaking a combination of Life Skills and mainstream courses; and
 - b. give teachers of mainstream classes the ability to dismiss combination students from examination requirements instead using outcome measures aligned with Universal Design for Learning principles

15 Inclusion of Core Practical and Civic Education Units

- (1) The Life Skills curriculum must include mandatory practical life education units, including but not limited to—
- a. digital literacy, including identifying scams, protecting personal information and understanding online safety; and
 - b. financial capability, including the difference between debit and credit, how to budget and understanding payslips and taxation; and
 - c. civic education, including mandatory voting, tenancy rights, understanding laws that affect daily living and engaging with government services; and
 - d. NDIS education, including the service's purpose and structure, the role of evidence, assessments, planning meetings, Support Coordinators, Local Area Coordinators and plan managers, ideas of self-advocacy and participant rights; and
 - e. water and personal safety, including coastal, inland and aquatic safety, and accessing community-based safety education programs; and
 - f. consent education, including respecting personal boundaries, individual rights, reporting and practices; and
 - g. independent living skills are taught through hands-on experience including cooking, using household appliances, using public transportation, personal care and hygiene.

16 Recognition and Review

- (1) NESA must ensure that students who complete a combination of Life Skills and mainstream courses—
- a. are awarded a formal statement recognising achievement across all completed units, including both Life Skills and mainstream subjects; and
 - b. has access to tailored transition support referred to in section 9.1.

Schedule 1 Definitions

Young person with a disability refers to an individual under the age of 25 who has a diagnosed physical, sensory, cognitive, intellectual, neurological, and/or psychosocial permanent disability.

High School Certificate (HSC) is the highest level of school attainment in New South Wales, Australia, and is awarded to students who successfully complete their senior high school years (Year 11 and 12). It is a credential that allows students to apply to universities.

Non-ATAR HSC is a way for students to complete the HSC without pursuing university admission, focusing instead on vocational training, further education, or employment. It includes a combination of courses, such as Board Developed Courses, Board Endorsed Courses, and TAFE courses, which do not contribute to the calculation of the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

Life Skills HSC provides options for students with disabilities who cannot access the regular course outcomes, particularly students with an intellectual disability.

Inclusive pedagogy is a teaching approach that aims to create learning environments where all students can participate and succeed. This involves adapting teaching methods, curriculum, assessment strategies and class culture to meet individual needs and remove barriers to learning.

Student Support Learning are those who assist teachers in providing extra educational support to students.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework that ensures students have equal opportunities to succeed. It focuses on proactive design that considers the diverse needs of all learners from the outset, rather than relying on individual accommodations later. UDL emphasises providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression, allowing students to access information and demonstrate their learning in various ways.

Reasonable adjustments refer to practical arrangements made for students with disabilities to ensure they can access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disabilities.

Mainstream schools are the most common form of government educational institution in NSW, their student intake includes all students within the local catchment area. In the senior years, students can graduate via the HSC course, or some schools offer Non-ATAR HSC or the Life Skills program.

Twice-exceptionality (2e) describes individuals who are both gifted and have a disability.

NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) is an independent government agency in NSW, Australia. It's responsible for setting standards for schools, regulating them, and overseeing the curriculum, assessment, and teaching practices within NSW schools.

Discrimination refers to treating someone unfairly or worse than others because of a characteristic protected by law, such as race, gender, or disability. It can be direct, like refusing a job to someone because of their age, or indirect, like a rule that disproportionately affects people with a protected attribute, even if it's meant to be fair for everyone. as stated in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*.

Corrective Action Plan (CAP) is a systematic approach to address identified issues or non-conformities within a process or organisation.

High Support Needs Individuals who require extensive assistance for daily living tasks and school tasks.

Low Support Needs individuals with impairments that, while present, do not significantly impact their daily living or school tasks.

Government schools (Public or State) are schools owned, operated and primarily funded by the state (NSW) government.

International Big Picture Learning Credential (IBPLC) means a senior secondary school qualification awarded upon the completion of the final years of the Big Picture Education Program. The IBPLC is an internationally recognised credential that certifies a student's readiness for tertiary education, employment, or further training through the submission of a digital portfolio in lieu of traditional examinations. The IBPLC is based on a continuous and rigorous assessment of a student's academic, personal, and professional learning and growth, as evidenced through:

- a. A personalised learning plan developed in consultation with educators, mentors, and the student; and
- b. Documented achievement in core learning domains, including literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, and personal development; and
- c. Real-world learning experiences, including internships, work placements, and mentorships; and
- d. A major research project or Senior Thesis completed over the final year(s) of study; Public exhibitions and formal assessments of learning, moderated in accordance with national and international Big Picture Learning standards.

The IBPLC is accepted by a number of Australian and international tertiary institutions as an alternative to standardised senior secondary certificates and ATAR-based entry schemes.

Big Picture Education Program refers to an accredited alternative learning model delivered in registered schools that enables students in Years 11 and 12 to undertake a personalised, interest-led education pathway. The program is characterised by:

- a. Individualised learning plans; and
- b. Project-based assessment; Ongoing mentorship and real-world learning; and
- c. The development of a final digital portfolio that is externally moderated for the purpose of awarding the IBPLC.

Produced for The Y NSW Youth Parliament