



Australian Government

Australian Government response

to recommendations of the
Dyslexia Working Party Report

‘Helping people with dyslexia: a national action agenda’



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This document must be attributed as the Australian Government *response to recommendations of the Dyslexia Working Party Report 'Helping people with dyslexia: a national action agenda'*.

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**Australian Government response to recommendations of the
Dyslexia Working Party Report
*‘Helping people with dyslexia: a national action agenda’***

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Recommendation 1. Definition of dyslexia

There should be adoption at a national level of a working definition of dyslexia to allow shared language for productive discourse on the issue in Australia. Our proposed working definition, consistent with the definitions published by the British Dyslexia Association, the International Dyslexia Association / National Institute of Child Health and Development, the International Reading Association, and the Rose Report on Dyslexia, is:

Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability of neurological origin. It primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. It is frequently associated with difficulties in phonological processing. It occurs across the range of intellectual abilities with no distinct cut-off points. It is viewed as a lifelong disability that often does not respond as expected to best-practice evidence-based classroom methods for teaching reading.

Response: Recommendation 1 – Agreed in principle.

It would be useful to have a nationally agreed definition of dyslexia. This recommendation is supported as an agreed definition may assist schools, parents and other professionals in identifying students with dyslexia and providing appropriate assistance. An agreed definition would also support increased sharing of best practice teaching methods between education authorities.

It is recognised that there is still a degree of debate, both nationally and internationally, regarding the definition of dyslexia, and that different definitions have been developed by different bodies for different purposes.

The Australian Government does not have a national body responsible for determining universal definitions. Instead, definitions are adopted or developed by different departments or statutory bodies for distinctive purposes, for example, for eligibility for a program, intervention or payment.

The Council of Australian Governments has been working more broadly toward the collection of nationally consistent data on students with disability. Nationally consistent data is essential if we want to know how many students with disability there are, where they are located and the level of adjustment that is provided for them. It is an important priority that will help build an evidence base to better inform policy development at the national and jurisdictional level and enable better conversations about students with disability and their needs, and how they can be more effectively supported.

The model for collecting nationally consistent data on school students with disability is not an 'agreed definition' but consists of an agreed process to include in the data collection those students who receive an adjustment because there is documented evidence that the student has a disability under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA). The DDA includes a legal definition of disability which is also adopted in the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (the Standards).

The model is underpinned by the Standards which require all education providers to make reasonable adjustments to ensure students with disability receive an education equal to that of any other student and, as far as possible, eliminate discrimination.

In October 2011 Education Ministers established a joint working group to refine the model for the collection of nationally consistent data on school students with disability and to develop a detailed implementation plan. The joint working group is chaired by DEEWR, and comprises education authorities, including the Catholic and independent sectors and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

The Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood accepted the descriptors for each of the levels of adjustment in the model for collecting nationally consistent data on school students with disability on 20 April 2012.

Recommendation 2. Recognition of dyslexia as a disability

There should be legislative recognition at both State and Commonwealth level of dyslexia as a *disability* as determined under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

Dyslexia should be included under the special needs section of the Education Acts in each of the states as has now been instituted in NSW. This will require that additional disability funding becomes available.

Response: Recommendation 2 – Partially agreed.

The objective of this recommendation is already being met.

The definition of 'disability' in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) is sufficiently broad as to include dyslexia within the meaning of that term as outlined in recommendation 1. Dyslexia would therefore be covered by the provisions of both the DDA and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* made under that Act. Hence, amendment of the DDA is not necessary.

The appropriateness of the definition of 'disability' in the DDA must be assessed on a case-by-case basis where alternative definitions of 'disability' are used or applicable.

The *Disability Standards for Education 2005* clarify the obligations of education and training providers to ensure that students with disability are able to access and participate in education without experiencing discrimination.

A Review of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* has commenced to determine whether they continue to be effective and remain the most efficient mechanism for achieving the objectives of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. A discussion paper was released in February 2011 to promote discussion and consideration of the Standards. Submissions have now closed. Information on the review process can be accessed at: www.deewr.gov.au/DSEReview.

Amendment of the relevant Education Acts in each state and territory jurisdiction is a matter for consideration by the state and territory governments.

Recommendation 3. National Dyslexia Advisory Council

A National Dyslexia Advisory Council should be established. Its membership should include people with dyslexia, representatives from Australian peak dyslexia organisations, and national and international experts on dyslexia and learning disability.

Response: Recommendation 3 – Agreed in principle.

Rather than establishing a new National Dyslexia Advisory Council, the Australian Government will undertake to ensure that the needs of students with dyslexia are considered and involved in current and any future stakeholder advisory mechanisms, including the Schools Disability Advisory Council. By incorporating representatives of people with dyslexia in this way it will enable dyslexia to become considered in current and future policy developments.

The Schools Disability Advisory Council (the Council) was established in late 2011. The Council reports to DEEWR and advises the Government through Parliamentary Secretary for School Education and Workplace Relations, Senator the Hon Jacinta Collins. The Council provides an opportunity for members to discuss and provide advice on school education reform. The Council aims to improve the educational outcomes, social inclusion, resilience and wellbeing of school aged students with disability and learning difficulties, including dyslexia.

Membership of the Council comprises representatives from peak organisations representing people with disabilities, educators and parent groups as well as academic experts and young people living with a disability. Ms Mandy Nayton, President of the Australian Federation of Specific Learning Difficulties Associations (AUSPELD) is a member of the Council and will represent the learning needs of students with dyslexia and learning difficulties, their parents, teachers and schools.

Recommendation 4. Compliance with the Act

Commonwealth funding of all educational institutions should be contingent on demonstrated compliance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Amended in 2008), and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.

Response: Recommendation 4 – Agreed.

All Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, as well as all government and non-government education authorities are required by legislation to comply with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.

The *Disability Standards for Education 2005* were reviewed in 2011. A report on the review including recommendations is expected to be released in 2012.

Recommendation 5. Pre-service training

All teacher-training syllabi should include:

1. Training in evidence-based reading instruction, shown through rigorous research to minimise the impact of dyslexia.
2. Training in early screening / identification of students at risk of long term literacy problems, including dyslexia.
3. Training in effective, research-based strategies that support students with dyslexia including: resilience development; use of non-print mediums; and presence of whole school dyslexia policies.

Response: Recommendations 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 – Agreed.

The Australian Government supports training for pre-service teachers to identify and teach students with special needs including dyslexia. Syllabi for specific instructional strategies for classroom teaching are not determined by the Australian Government, but by higher education providers.

The Australian Government recognises that quality teaching has a measurable impact on student outcomes. As part of the Teacher Quality National Partnership agreements all jurisdictions have committed to improving pre-service teacher education through measures such as improving the quality of practical components of teacher courses and the development of national consistency in pre-service teacher education course accreditation.

The National Professional Standards for Teachers were endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs in December 2010. These require graduate teachers to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities. In addition, they require graduate teachers to demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of legislative requirements and teaching strategies that support participation and learning of students with disability.

In addition, the \$200 million *More Support for Students with Disabilities* initiative will provide additional funding to government and non-government education authorities to support their work with students with disability and/or learning difficulties across 2012 and 2013. Through this initiative some education authorities have opted to implement activities that provide training for pre-service and/or practicing teachers to build their skills in special education, including dyslexia.

Recommendation 6. Evidence-based teaching

1. It should be ensured that appropriate teaching strategies, shown through rigorous, evidence based research to be effective in developing strong literacy skills, are used in all Australian Junior Primary classrooms. This will assist in reducing the impact of dyslexia significantly.
2. All schools should ensure that the three Waves of literacy provision are in place, are of a high quality, and are well-coordinated. In order to achieve this, schools should have access to the expertise of teachers with specialist skills in addressing dyslexic difficulties.
3. Provision should be made for close monitoring of students 'at risk' of dyslexia as well as those diagnosed with dyslexia.
4. Learning Support should be provided for those diagnosed with dyslexia through a written Support Plan that incorporates individual literacy teaching, resilience teaching, and classroom accommodations.

Response: Recommendations 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 – Agreed.

The Australian Government recognises that quality teaching has a measurable impact on student outcome and supports training for teachers to identify and teach students with special needs including dyslexia.

The National Professional Standards for Teachers were endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs in December 2010. These require teachers to differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities. In addition, they require teachers to demonstrate strategies to support full participation of students with disability.

All Australian governments are committed to the development and implementation of an Australian Curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12, beginning with the learning areas of English, mathematics, science and history. The Australian Curriculum is being developed to ensure that the curriculum establishes high expectations for all students, including those with disability.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority has established the Students with Disability Advisory Group to provide advice on the development of the Australian Curriculum from Foundation to Year 12 as a curriculum for all young Australians, including students with disability. It will also provide advice on matters that relate to assessment and reporting for students with disability.

The Australian Government is currently providing significant levels of funding for a range of other initiatives which will improve teaching and educational outcomes of students with disability and special needs, such as dyslexia. These initiatives include the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership, *More Support for Students with Disabilities*, the introduction of the Australian Curriculum and further developments to the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

Recommendation 7. In-service training

1. Professional development programs should be developed for all practising classroom teachers to assist them to identify and support students at risk of dyslexia.
2. Existing in-service training courses provided by approved organisations should be officially recognised and funded.

Response: Recommendations 7.1 and 7.2 – Agreed.

The Australian Government recognises and supports the need for teachers to have an extensive repertoire of effective teaching and intervention strategies to meet the differing needs of all Australian school children. The Australian Government supports professional development and training for teachers to identify and teach students with special needs including dyslexia.

Under the National Education Agreement and the *Schools Assistance Act 2008*, state and territory government and non-government education authorities are responsible for determining and providing professional development programs specific to the needs of their teaching staff and individual school communities.

The Australian Government is currently providing significant levels of funding for a range of initiatives which will improve teaching and educational outcomes of students with disability and special needs, such as dyslexia. These initiatives include the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership and *More Support for Students with Disabilities*. Through the *More Support for Students with Disabilities* initiative a number of education authorities have opted to implement professional development opportunities for teachers, principals and leadership teams, some of which are specific to students with learning disabilities such as dyslexia.

Recommendation 8. Specialist training

Funding should be provided to universities and other approved organisations for the establishment of specialist accredited training courses to train practising teachers to identify and teach students at risk of dyslexia, such as those courses provided by Dyslexia Action UK.

Response: Recommendation 8 – Agreed.

The Australian Government supports training for pre-service and current teachers to identify and teach students with special needs including dyslexia. Syllabi for specific instructional strategies for classroom teaching are not determined by the Australian Government, but by higher education providers.

The Australian Government is currently providing significant levels of funding for a range of initiatives which will improve teaching and educational outcomes of students with disability and special needs, such as dyslexia. These initiatives include the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership and *More Support for Students with Disabilities*.

Recommendation 9. Dyslexia-friendly schools

1. A national program should be established for the development and accreditation of 'dyslexia friendly' schools involving specific inclusion (at all levels of policy and practice) of the needs of students who have dyslexia. (The British Dyslexia Association has a detailed model of such 'dyslexia friendly' schools).
2. A funding scheme should be established to which schools could apply with a specific plan for making the school dyslexia-friendly. Schools already accredited as dyslexia-friendly could also apply to this scheme for funding to become consultants and PD providers to other schools and to become providers of assistance to dyslexic children in other schools.
3. Clear guidance should be provided to schools on what appropriate provisions have become available for people with dyslexia.
4. A national teacher dyslexia resource booklet should be compiled and distributed to all schools, similar to that produced by NZ Education Department.

Response: Recommendations 9.1, 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4 – Not agreed.

There is currently no Australian Government funding available for the establishment of a national accreditation program for dyslexia-friendly schools. However, the Australian Government is providing \$65.4 billion in 2009-2012 to government and non-government education authorities for school education, including funding for students with disabilities. The state and territory governments and non-government education authorities have primary responsibility for the delivery of school education and can utilise this funding flexibly to provide programs and services for schools and their students.

The Australian Government has been working closely with states, territories and the non-government education sector to progress work in response to the Review of Funding for Schooling recommendations related to improved funding arrangements for students with disability. The report proposes that the Australian Government develop a funding 'Schooling Resource Standard', including funding loadings for a range of disadvantage factors, including disability.

Under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* all schools have an obligation to ensure all children have the same opportunities to participate in learning experiences. The *Disability Standards for Education 2005* provide schools and other education providers with further guidance regarding their obligations and provisions that should be made for students with disability, including those with dyslexia.

Further guidance and clarity regarding the application of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* in schools, including information on provisions and accommodations available and appropriate for individual students, has been raised and is being considered within the *Disability Standards for Education 2005 Review*.

Through the \$200 million *More Support for Students with Disabilities* initiative a number of education authorities are developing on-line training modules for teachers and other schools staff on dyslexia. An independent evaluation of the initiative will identify good practice and ensure information on case studies and resources are publically available.

All schools can promote what they are doing for students with learning difficulties and disabilities, such as dyslexia, in their profile on My School. My School provides updated school profile data, performance outcomes and financial information for all Australian schools.

Recommendation 10. Special considerations for people with dyslexia

A diagnosis of dyslexia should entitle a student or adult to use a computer or laptop, with appropriate assistive technology programs installed, in class, in exams and in the workplace; and should also entitle students to additional time in exams, or to the use of a reader or scribe.

Response: Recommendation 10 – Agreed in principle.

The Australian Government recognises the value of technology in improving access and facilitating adjustments for students with dyslexia.

Under the current *Disability Standards for Education 2005* education and training service providers are required to assess a students' individual needs and make reasonable adjustments, such as the provision of assistive technology, where necessary to facilitate the student's participation.

Specific requirements are not determined by the Australian Government but by individual schools and educational authorities. Specific student needs, examination provisions and requirements are determined by state and territory authorities, rather than the Australian Government. The Working Party may wish to raise this matter with individual state and territory authorities, or national representative bodies such as the Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities.

The Australian Government has committed funding of \$1.2 billion over five years to improve secondary school student's access to world class information through the Digital Education Revolution. The Digital Education Revolution package included flexible funding arrangements for students with special needs who may require specialised information and technology systems.

In addition, the Australian Government, through the \$200 million *More Support for Students with Disabilities* initiative, education authorities will be able to access additional funding for the provision of assistive technology to support students' learning in the classroom.

Recommendation 11. Dyslexia assessment

1. Access to early, systematic, dyslexia assessment should be available to all students identified by teachers as being at risk of dyslexia.
2. Initial screening and assessment of such at-risk children to be undertaken within the school environment by a specialist teacher, followed by in-depth assessment of reading and spelling by an appropriately-trained psychologist, speech pathologist or other person with relevant qualifications.
3. FaHCSIA should directly fund parents and adults to access dyslexia assessments provided by suitably qualified professionals.
4. Full funding through Centrelink should be provided to parents on pensions or with health care cards, students on Austudy or equivalent and those on unemployment benefits.
5. Professional development programs need to be developed for all practising school psychologists to assist them in the assessment and appropriate support of students with dyslexia.
6. Recommendations arising from in-depth assessments should be fully supported by the school, training institution or workplace.
7. The cost of dyslexia assessment, tuition and costs involved with accessibility such as alternate formats and specialist software programs should be added to the list of eligible expenses for the Education Tax Refund.

Clarification from the Working Party about this recommendation

The Working Party recommends that both options for dyslexia assessments i.e. in-school and in specialised dyslexia clinics, be available. Item 2 of this recommendation refers to in-school assessments. Items 3 and 4 refer to assessments done by dyslexia clinics, which would be separate from schools and for which a charge would be made. The Chair confirmed with all members of the Working Party that the recommendation is for two routes to dyslexia assessment – one school-based and one private.

Response: Recommendations 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.4, 11.5, 11.6, and 11.7 – Agreed in principle.

Recommendations 11.1, 11.2, 11.5, 11.6 and 11.7 (commentary)

The Australian Government supports the recommendation that students who are not meeting benchmarks and struggling with literacy and numeracy should have access to assessment facilities to diagnose dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties.

State and territory government and non-government education authorities are responsible for the assessment of adjustments required to enable access and participation of school students with disability under the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.

Students who would be considered at risk, including those who are not meeting learning benchmarks, are already benefitting from the Smarter Schools National Partnership. In addition, the recently released National Professional Standards for Teachers recognise that teachers must be able to differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.

A new Schoolkids Bonus was announced in the 2012-13 Budget. The initiative, which is administered by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, provides a total of \$820 for high school aged students and \$410 for primary school aged students paid directly to eligible recipients. The payment could be used for tuition and assessment purposes.

Recommendations 11.3 and 11.4 (commentary)

The Australian Government provides support through pensions, payments and allowances to those most vulnerable in the Australian community.

Any reform around funding structure and arrangements to include dyslexia assessment would be subject to funding being made available through a formal budget process.

Recommendation 12. Information booklet for families

A booklet for families and carers should be prepared and distributed which explains what new provisions for dyslexic children have been introduced.

Response: Recommendation 12 – Partially agreed.

Any new initiatives announced by the Government are publicised as a matter of course through the most appropriate means, which can include a variety of media formats including electronic and printed material in a variety of accessible formats.

Recommendation 13. Accessible Instructional Material Strategy

An Accessible Instructional Material Strategy for primary, secondary and tertiary education should be established throughout Australia. This should be enacted through Federal legislation.

Clarification from the Working Party about this recommendation

Accessible Instructional Material is a collective term covering the creation and distribution of educational materials in a variety of formats that meet the needs of a diverse population. Typical formats include large print, audio, DAISY, Braille and electronic text. In Australian secondary schools, at present such formats are only made available for students who are blind or who have low vision. They are not made available for dyslexic students.

Response: Recommendation 13 – Partially agreed.

The objective of this recommendation is already being met.

An Accessible Instructional Material Strategy is consistent with Australian Government policy of providing material in accessible formats.

This recommendation is already being facilitated through the requirement that all Commonwealth, state and territory governments, including government and non-government education authorities, are required by legislation to comply with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.

There are also a range of exceptions to the *Copyright Act 1968* for the purposes of making accessible copies for people with disabilities in an education context.

The Australian Government is adopting and implementing the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.0 (WCAG 2.0). The Web Accessibility National Transition Strategy sets a course for improved web services, paving the way for a more accessible and usable web environment that will more fully engage with, and allow participation from, all people within our society.

All levels of Government have endorsed WCAG 2.0, and require all government websites (federal, state and territory) to meet the new guidelines at the minimum compliance level (Single A) by the end of 2012. In addition, the Australian Government requires all federal websites to meet the medium conformance level (Double A) by the end of 2014.

Based on these current initiatives, it is not considered necessary to establish a separate Accessible Instructional Material Strategy or to change existing legislative obligations.

Recommendation 14. Accessible Instructional Materials Centre

The Federal Government should establish an Accessible Instructional Materials Centre as a matter of urgency.

Clarification from the Working Party about this recommendation

Nearly all production of alternate formats involves obtaining a printed copy of the material, cutting off the spine of the book, scanning each page, and correcting scanning errors prior to conversion to the format of choice. There is little to no sharing of resources between alternate format producers in Australia. An Accessible Instructional Materials Centre would liaise with publishers and obtain electronic copies of books in a suitable electronic format, thus greatly reducing the time taken to produce alternate formats. The Accessible Instructional Materials Centre would also act as a central repository for all alternate format producers around the country, and manage digital rights of the publishers and authors.

Response: Recommendation 14 – Agreed in principle.

The Australian Government supports this recommendation in principle. DEEWR will encourage state and territory educational institutions to identify existing web-based innovations for accessing such materials and, in conjunction with relevant partner authorities, draw on these mechanisms and structures. An example of an existing mechanism is PANDORA, Australia's Web Archive which contains copies of significant Australian online publications and web sites issued on the internet. It was established by the National Library in 1996 and is now built in collaboration with nine other Australian libraries and other organisations. Participating organisations identify, select, seek permission from publishers, archive and catalogue publications and web sites for the Archive.

As noted in Recommendation 13, the actions by all levels of government to endorse WCAG 2.0, and to work to meet the new guidelines will have far reaching impacts in terms of increasing the level of accessible material on government websites.

The Australian Government noted the rapid increase in the availability of information publishing and distribution platforms that enable widespread and rapid delivery of information. These technologies are often embedded with the ability to deliver alternative accessible formats without the need for traditional methods of manual intervention.

Recommendation 15. Assistive Technology

1. Funding for the Print Disability Services Program should be increased, with the appropriate level of funding determined under the Accessible Instructional Materials Centre.
2. An Assistive Technology Fund for Dyslexia should be established that provides assistive technology options directly to students around Australia.
3. A national subscription to Bookshare should be funded by FaHCSIA.
4. Publishers should be required by legislation to provide an electronic version of any educational text.

Clarification from the Working Party about this recommendation

The text-to-speech facility, which has been included in the Windows and Mac operating systems for around eight years is primitive compared to the software specifically designed to help dyslexic people to understand the print they see on the screen, which offers many additional facilities to assist reading comprehension.

Response: Recommendation 15.1 – Not agreed.

This Activity is being met under other Government education department programs.

The Print Disability Services Program (PDSP), administered by FaHCSIA, aims to ensure the provision of information in alternative formats for people with print disability, to enable them to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life.

This specific program does not fund the provision of alternative formats of instructional materials, and responsibility to deliver such formats is the responsibility of other spheres of Government, primarily education departments.

Any funding increases for the provision of alternative formats of instructional materials through other spheres of Government would be subject to funding being made available through a formal Budget process.

Response: Recommendations 15.2 and 15.3 – Agreed in principle.

Recommendation 15.2 (commentary)

State and territory government and non-government education authorities have responsibility to enable students with special needs to access appropriate assistive technology to ensure they can participate equally to their other student counterparts. Specific eligibility requirements are not determined by the Australian Government but by individual educational authorities.

The Australian Government is providing approximately \$65.6 billion over the 2009-12 funding period to government and non-government education authorities for school education. These education authorities administer funding in their jurisdictions and have the flexibility to determine how best to allocate resources and support services, including assistive and information technology, to meet the needs of schools and their students.

The Digital Education Revolution has increased access for all students, including those with dyslexia, to new information and communication technology equipment. A key element of this is the National Secondary School Computer Fund, which includes flexible funding arrangements for students with special needs so that these students can have information and communication technology that meets their individual special needs.

The *More Support for Students with Disabilities* initiative will provide \$200 million in additional funding to government and non-government education authorities to support their work with students with disability and/or learning difficulties. The initiative will be delivered through the selection of a range of activities by education authorities that may include the provision of assistive technology to support students' learning in the classroom.

Recommendation 15.3 (commentary)

The objectives of this recommendation are already being met in respect of people with print disability through the Increasing Accessibility Library Initiative which has provided playback devices to libraries to enable people with print disability to access digital material. Material is able to be accessed through the libraries of disability print providers including Vision Australia (which has free membership).

Response: Recommendation 15.4 – Partially agreed.

The objective of this recommendation is already being met. The Australian Government is committed to enhancing access to materials for persons with a print disability.

People have a general right under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) not to be discriminated against on the basis of their disability. They are entitled to have reasonable adjustments made to accommodate their disability in a range of areas of public life such as employment and education. This right includes having print materials available in an accessible format, for example, having an electronic version of a textbook for a person with a print disability studying at university. As the DDA, and *Disability Standards for Education 2005* made under the DDA, already make discrimination on the basis of a print disability unlawful, and prescribe processes for making reasonable adjustments for students, it is not necessary to change existing legislative obligations.

In addition, the *Copyright Act 1968* contains a comprehensive framework of exceptions and statutory licenses, which facilitate access to copyright works for persons with a disability. One statutory licence extends to the making or communication of accessible versions of works by institutions assisting persons with a print disability, which includes persons with a perceptual disability. A separate statutory licence provides for copying of works by institutions assisting persons with an intellectual disability. Both of these statutory licences can be used by educational institutions. The Copyright Act also contains a 'flexible dealing' exception which permits uses of copyright material by or for a person with a disability for the purpose of reproducing the material in another form, or with a feature, to improve access to a person with a disability.

The Government is also playing an active role in discussions in the World Intellectual Property Organisation Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights on a possible international instrument to facilitate cross-border transfer of accessible versions of copyright works to persons with a disability.

Recommendation 16. Community Awareness

National support should be provided for initiatives that develop community awareness and understanding of dyslexia, such as:

1. Funding should be provided for existing Dyslexia help lines and support programs.
2. Support for a Dyslexia Week should be developed.
3. A mentor system by successful people who have dyslexia should be established.
4. A Dyslexia section on the FaHCSIA Raising Children website should be developed.
5. Clear guidance should be provided to families on what appropriate provisions have become available for people with dyslexia.
6. Media coverage of what assistance people with dyslexia are entitled to receive should be fostered.

Response: Recommendations 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, and 16.4 – Agreed in principle.
Recommendations 16.5 and 16.6 – Partially agreed.

The Australian Government supports this recommendation in principle, and encourages Dyslexia peak organisations in conjunction with the community sector to share responsibility for raising awareness and understanding of dyslexia. Given state and territory responsibilities under the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* it would also be appropriate to encourage state and territory education departments to be involved in raising community awareness.

The Australian Government will need to consider any requests for funding for Dyslexia help lines and support programs, as well as any additional support for organisations who wish to develop a Dyslexia week and establish a mentor system of successful people who have dyslexia, on a case by case basis.

In regards to item 16.4, the Raising Children Network website helps parents fulfil their roles by providing centralised, Australian-focused, evidence based information for parents. The Raising Children Network's current funding is for the provision of up-to-date information and ongoing maintenance of existing content. Additional information may be able to be incorporated into the website, however this would incur additional development and ongoing maintenance costs.

The cost of including a new dyslexia section on the Raising Children Network's website would require consideration within the Budget context.

Recommendation 17. Dyslexia-friendly workplaces

A national program should be established for the development of 'dyslexia-friendly' workplaces detailing specific inclusion (at all levels of policy and practice) of the needs of employees who have dyslexia. Employment seekers with dyslexia should be eligible for funding under the Workplace Modification Scheme (this provides funding to people with disability to modify the workplace - physical modification, or the supply of assistive technology).

Response: Recommendation 17 – Partially agreed.

Improved employer awareness and greater employment opportunities for people with disability have been identified as areas for future action in the National Disability Strategy. Rather than establishing a new dyslexia specific program, it would be more effective to ensure that the needs of people with dyslexia are incorporated in initiatives and other future action arising out of the Strategy.

The Workplace Modifications Scheme has been replaced by the Employment Assistance Fund, which provides financial assistance to employers, individuals and employment service providers for the purchase of workplace equipment and modifications that are required to accommodate a person with disability (including those with dyslexia).

Through the Employment Assistance Fund, job seekers, employees and employers can access direct assistance for work-related modifications and equipment. This includes up to \$1,500 per annum for specialist support for employees with learning disorders. People with dyslexia could apply for this specialist support, in addition to work-related equipment and modifications. Employers can also apply for disability awareness training to help their staff work more competently and confidently with people with dyslexia. The Fund is flexible and uses a broad definition of disability which includes people with dyslexia and people with illness and injury.

The Australian Government also funds the national disability advisory service, JobAccess, which can provide information free of charge about workplace solutions, services and modifications related to all types of disability.

Recommendation 18. Improving adult literacy courses

1. The effectiveness of TAFE and adult learners programs in the remediation of adult illiteracy and access to learning / training should be evaluated.
2. The Certificate I in Foundation Skills for Adults with Dyslexia course currently run at TAFEs in Western Australia should be adopted in all states and territories.
3. Centrelink recommended literacy training courses should be monitored for effectiveness and accredited by specialists in the area of literacy difficulties.

Response: Recommendations 18.1, 18.2, and 18.3 – Agreed in principle.

The objectives of these recommendations are already being met.

The Australian Government funds one literacy training course to which Centrelink refers eligible job seekers. The Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) provides assistance to eligible job seekers whose English language, literacy and numeracy skills are below the level needed to secure employment or pursue further education and training.

All clients' language, literacy and numeracy needs are professionally assessed before they are considered for training. Where a job seeker is assessed as suitable for training, an individual training plan is developed and the job seeker is commenced in training.

All training under the LLNP must be accredited training based on approved curricula and delivered by a Registered Training Organisation.

Recommendation 19. Funding for efficacy research

Funding for research to determine effective dyslexia support in schools, for example, funding for:

1. Large randomised controlled trials of school-based dyslexia intervention studies including:
2. Evaluation of the efficacy of dyslexia treatment programs
3. Development and trial of models of dyslexia resilience programs and environments
4. Development and trial of models of teacher training and whole school support for effective use of assistive technology by students who have dyslexia.

The UK House of Commons Science and Technology Committee in its report dated 18 December 2009 recommended that “the Government commission a large randomised controlled trial to identify the most effective and cost-effective early literacy intervention”.

Response: Recommendations 19.1, 19.2, 19.3, and 19.4 – Agreed in principle.

The Australian Government may consider becoming a partner to a research project that was developed with, and had the support of, state and territory authorities responsible for schooling, along with appropriate academic and community participation. Such linkages and funding may be available through the Australian Research Council.