INCLUSION WORKING GROUP
DISABILITY FOCUS

Meeting 3 – 16 April 2014

A greater say for school communities and improved information for parents, schools and community

Background
Formed late in 2013, The Department of Education held its third Inclusion Working Group – Disability Focus on 16 April 2014, meeting with key stakeholders from around the state. This working group is chaired by the Department of Education’s Secretary – Colin Pettit and it is investigating better ways to support schools, students and parents in being inclusive school communities.

In doing this focus work on inclusion of students with disability, the broad representation of the group will ensure no other equity groups are excluded in the process.

For more background on the group please see Communiqué 1.

Work Plan
The working group will provide advice and strategic direction to school communities on how we can better build inclusive school communities. This group is committed to making our schools a better place for our students.

This Inclusion Working Group meeting focused on the inclusive education areas of ‘A greater say for school communities and improved information for parents, schools and community’

Pre-reading articles on this area were analysed by the group and discussions were had around common themes.

The articles that were used to help guide the discussions for the session included:

- **National School Improvement Tool** – Element 9 – School Community Partnerships – Australian Council for Educational Research
- **Respectful Schools Respectful Behaviour** – DoE Tasmania (staff only)
- **Engaging People with Disability** (Department of Premier and Cabinet)
- **The Dance of Partnership** – Janice Fialka, M.S.W., A.C.S.W

The discussion included the following as critical areas to building inclusive school communities through ‘A greater say for school communities and improved information for parents, schools and community’:

A greater say for school communities

1. How will school associations and schools strive to ensure that all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted?
2. How can schools actively work towards a safe, anti-discriminatory environment, valuing diversity and promoting equality and fairness?
3. How should school leaders promote positive relationships between staff and with parents and the broader community to provide curriculum leadership?

**Improved information for parents, schools and community**

4. How can schools become more inclusive and create a place where everyone belongs, is accepted, supports and is supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his or her educational needs met?

5. How can school leaders create effective and inclusive schools that are adept at managing change and at building a school culture that is committed to inclusiveness and is improvement oriented?

6. How should our department assist people with a disability to gain the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to successfully participate as citizens by working with its staff and students?

The analysis of these discussions will form the basis of recommendations for advice and direction to school communities which will be provided by August 2014.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 13 May 2014 and the group will look at the inclusive education theme of ‘A robust national curriculum’.

**Membership**

School communities who would like to provide input into the work of the Working Group are invited to contact the relevant organisation; please see the [Inclusion Working Group – Disability Focus](#) webpage.