



Historic Move to End Education Discrimination

The peak body for Australians with disabilities has welcomed the historic introduction of Standards for Education under the Disability Discrimination Act.

The Education Standards were introduced into Federal Parliament yesterday by the Attorney-General and should come into effect on 20 June 2005.

The Standards clarify the obligations of education providers to treat students with disability on the same basis as other students. This is critical to the development and inclusion of people with disability in the Australian community.

Mr Maurice Corcoran, President, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, said that the Standards would give students with disabilities greater protection by outlining the steps education providers will have to take to avoid discrimination.

"The Standards clear up some of the grey area in disability discrimination," he said.

"By giving schools, TAFEs, universities, private colleges and community education providers clear instructions on how to work with students with disabilities, the Standards make it easier for everyone."

It will be unlawful for an education provider to contravene the Standards.

Under the Standards all aspects of education will have to be accessible to students with disabilities including the classroom or lecture hall, practicum, sports programs and extra curricular activities.

"The Standards are particularly historic because they make it unlawful to discriminate in curriculum design. This is fantastic news for the inclusion of students with disability in the long-term," Mr Corcoran said.

Mr Corcoran paid tribute to those who worked to develop the Standards, particularly the representatives of people with disabilities: Sandi Seymour, Graham Smith and Paul Cain.

"This is another great example of how national Standards can be developed and refined through the collective input of industry, Commonwealth and State Governments and people with a direct experience of disability", he said.

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