



## Report recommends better access to TAFE for learners with disability

In a landmark report released today, the Legislative Assembly Economy and Infrastructure Committee has made a series of recommendations aimed at improving access to TAFE for learners with disability.

During its 12-month investigation, the Committee heard learners with disability can struggle to transition into TAFE and fully participate because of barriers set up by poor career advice, the physical environment, inaccessible technology and people's attitudes.

"Some learners with disability have been exposed to a culture of low expectations from a young age, which erodes their confidence to apply to TAFE," said Committee Chair John Eren.

"We also found many learners with disability who enrol at TAFE do not disclose their disability with staff and so miss out on receiving support to help them with their training," Mr Eren added.

"This is an important barrier to overcome because research shows learners who share their disability with their TAFE are more likely to complete their course."

The Committee recommends TAFEs employ transition officers to help students with disability navigate the transition into TAFE and that TAFEs create a safe space for learners with disability to share their diagnosis and seek support.

It also recommends providing learners with disability wraparound support, informal peer networks, better access to assistive technology and more flexibility in course design and assessment.

"Learners with disability have the right to participate in TAFE on the same basis as their peers. TAFEs can help by adopting universal design principles that provide all learners with different ways to engage with a course and demonstrate their competency," Mr Eren said.

Unlike schools and universities, there is no specific funding for TAFEs to support learners with disability. The Committee recommends introducing dedicated funding to TAFEs based on the number of enrolled students with disability and the complexity of their needs.

The Committee also found inconsistent provision of disability support across the TAFE network. To remedy this, it recommends the creation of a VET delivery strategy for learners with disability, further professional development for teaching and frontline staff, and the sharing of resources and information across the network.

"Our recommendations are directed at both improving disability support for individual learners as well as streamlining how this support is provided across the TAFE network," Mr Eren said.

The report is available on the Committee's [website](#).

*Issued: 1 September 2021*