

# WESTERN AUSTRALIAN SEPTEMBER 2009 SUBMISSION

## CONTENT OF THE 2010 REPORT

### Key Points

- Western Australia requests that:
  - the impact of method changes versus data changes be quantified as fully as possible
  - (if relevant) the impact of changing the length of the data period be quantified
  - the distributional impact of category assessments and disability factors be quantified in detail
  - five years of data be presented, regardless of the recommended length of the data period
  - methods and data sources be fully described, with data and calculations available in spreadsheets to the fullest extent possible, subject to necessary confidentiality restrictions
  - the issues raised in the Review, and judgements made in developing the methods, be well documented
  - areas of continuing uncertainty, and unresolved issues, should be detailed.

Western Australia considers the draft report to be a good starting point for the final report. Nevertheless, we note that:

- data sources need to be tightened up (e.g. Table 18-7 is sourced as “ABS data”);
- method specifications could be a little more detailed (e.g. the definition of low SES in schools education (page 197) does not specify which ABS SEIFA index has been used; and the description of the post-secondary education regression analysis (page 194) provides no indication of the level of geographic detail)
  - as the final report will not be backed up by Working Papers, a good description of the methods in the report will be important; and
- discussions of issues are sometimes so broad that they do not do justice to the level of debate or complexity of the issue (e.g. the discussion of technical aspects of the wages model – paragraph 20 on page 463).

A very important part of the final report will be the provision of detailed quantification on:

- the distributional impact of categories and disability factors;
- the impact of method changes;
- the impact of data updating; and
- (if relevant) the impact of changing the length of the data period.

The Commission should provide assessments for the five data years ended 2008-09, even if it recommends a shorter data period. This will be helpful for States' analysis of trends (e.g. for forecasting purposes), as well as being necessary for transparency purposes (including understanding the impact of changing the length of the data period over time).

Judgements made, and areas for further work, should be well documented.

The Commission's spreadsheets have been, and will continue to be, an essential information source for States. These need to be well set out, and avoid "hidden corners".

- As far as practical, States should be able to drill down to the original data.
- While there are cases where data needs to be withheld, this should only be done where there are good reasons.

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