



Australian Government
Department of Education

Our Ref MC23-001834

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary

Australian Government Department of Education submission to Senate inquiry on assessment and support services for people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

The Australian Government Department of Education welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs' inquiry into assessment and support services for people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

The Australian Government supports equitable, inclusive education for all children and students, including those with disability such as ADHD. All education providers in Australia are required to comply with the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards). The Standards require education providers to make reasonable adjustments to allow students with disability, including those with ADHD, to access, participate, and learn on the same basis as students and children without disability.

To help support the implementation of reasonable adjustments in schools, the Australian Government provides funding through the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) student with disability loading. The student with disability loading is about 11.2 per cent of total Australian Government recurrent funding in 2023. The Commonwealth will provide an estimated \$3.1 billion under the students with disability loading in 2023.

The loading calculation uses information reported in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD). Students with disability, including those with ADHD, who require reasonable adjustments to fully participate in schooling are counted under the NCCD. This information is provided by teachers and other classroom professionals who use their professional, evidence-based judgement to indicate the level of additional support a student is provided in the classroom.

Students who require the top 3 levels of additional support, known as extensive, substantial and supplementary, attract additional funding through the students with disability loading.

The NCCD captures a fourth level of support defined as 'support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice'. This is support provided within the classroom as part of standard teaching practice which is responsive to the needs of all students and delivered without the need for additional funding.

Note that while the Australian Government plays a leadership role in education and provides substantial funding for schools, state and territory governments are responsible for the regulation, administration and operation of schools.

In the context of early childhood education and care (ECEC), the department also administers the Inclusion Support Program (ISP), a \$133 million a year program assisting approved ECEC services to include children with additional needs. The ISP provides support to eligible ECEC services to build their capacity and capability and plays a vital role in ensuring children with additional needs, challenging and trauma related behaviours and serious medical or health conditions are included in ECEC services alongside their typically developing peers.

The Australian Government reviewed the Standards in 2020 (the Review) and made thirteen recommendations based on four key reform directions:

- Empowering and supporting students with disability and their families;
- Strengthening the knowledge and capability of educators and providers;
- Embedding accountability for the Standards throughout the education system; and
- Building awareness and capability in the ECEC sector.

More information on the Review is available at www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/2020-review-disability-standards-education-2005.

As part of implementation of Review recommendations, in September 2022 the Australian Government released practical and easy-to-use resources to help students with disability (including those with ADHD) and their families understand and exercise their rights. These resources were codesigned with young people with disability and their families with the help of Children and Young People with Disability Australia. You can find these resources on the department's website at www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005.

The Australian Government commissioned new resources that will help school educators better understand their legal and professional obligations to students with disability. They are available on the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) portal at www.nccd.edu.au/dse. In addition, later this year, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership will publish new 'In the Classroom' videos which show practical examples of teachers and school leaders supporting the learning and participation of students with disability.

While ECEC providers are not currently covered by the Standards, ECEC providers must abide by the anti-discrimination laws set out in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA). In September 2022, the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) published new resources so that ECEC providers will know about and understand the DDA. These are available at [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(DDA\) resources | ACECQA](#). ACECQA is publishing further resources by mid-2023 to assist ECEC

educators and providers to embed inclusive practises within their recruitment and encourage employers to reflect on their understanding of their obligations to better support children with disability.

The department is progressing draft amendments to the Standards which propose incorporating ECEC services to support greater clarity for providers and families in inclusion of children with disability.

The implementation of the recommendations is the initial focus of the department's contribution to *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-31*. Under the Strategy, all governments have committed to ensure children with disability can access and participate in high-quality ECEC, and to build capability in the delivery of inclusive education to improve educational outcomes for school students with disability. The department will continue to work in close partnership with states, territories and the non-government sector, as well as other Australian Government departments, to ensure students with ADHD are provided the opportunities to engage in education to their fullest ability.

The department is able to expand on any of the information provided, if requested by the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Meg Brighton
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Australian Government Department of Education

9 June 2023