

**Inquiry into the education of students with disabilities, including learning disabilities,
throughout all levels and sectors of education**

Adventist Schools Australia

The Seventh-day Adventist school system is a significant provider of K-12 Christian education in Australia. The Adventist school system has been providing quality education in Australia since 1896 and our 60 schools are spread through all states and serve 12,000 students.

Adventist Schools Australia appreciates the level of support provided by federal and state governments and welcomes this opportunity to present a submission to the Senate Inquiry into students with disabilities.

A system perspective

The following points represent the views that would most accurately reflect the system perspective on students with disabilities.

1. We believe that parents and students in Australia have a right to choose the type of education that best serves their needs.
2. We recognise that disabilities occur across the population spectrum without distinguishing race, beliefs, socio-economic status and location.
3. We recognise the state's special responsibility to a state education system and that such responsibility also extends to students with disabilities.
4. We also maintain that the government's responsibility to students with disabilities extends to all education providers in Australia.
5. We believe that the cost of providing special care to students with disabilities should be covered by the public purse via government.

Therefore we recommend

1. That "students with disabilities" be defined in an inclusive way that will ensure uniform procedures for identifying, evaluating and assisting those students with disabilities.
2. That students with disabilities receive equal funding provisions, regardless of school type, be it government or independent.
3. Any future funding commitment should include a review of the recurrent funding of students with disabilities in non-government schools and a focused targeted funding program to accommodate students with disabilities.
4. That funding for students with disabilities be established as the responsibility of both federal and state agencies with provisions to prevent cost shifting from one level to another.
5. That funding to the non-government sector be provided without compromising the current level of funding available to students with disabilities in government schools.
6. That professional development be provided for the upskilling and training of teachers who have the direct responsibility of caring for students with disabilities.
7. That assistance to students with disabilities not only provide resources and care services, but should also include capital funding to accommodate and upgrade facilities for students with disabilities.

The Australian Senate
Employment, Workplace Relations & Education References Committee
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Adventist Education Australia, PO Box 116, Mitcham Vic 3132, Phone: 03 9259 2190