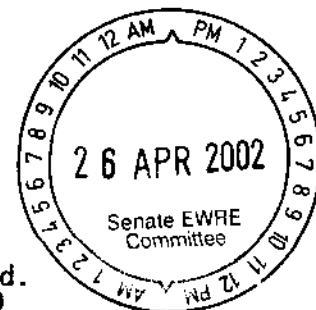


The Secretary  
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and  
Education References Committee  
Suite S1 61 Parliament  
CANBERRA, ACT 2600



71, The Boulevard.  
Floreat, WA 6019

Dear Sirs,

I am writing this letter to you with reference to your inquiry into the Education of Students with disabilities.

I have a seven year old son with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, Dylan and his twin brother Michael are both currently in the State Education System and my wife and I have been, in the main, happy with the level of support from the school and the Education department of W.A.

However we have felt that it would benefit Dylan if he could enter a school that would see him through to year 12 at the earliest opportunity, enabling him to mix socially with his peers at a time when he is still fairly mobile, only requiring a wheelchair for the longer walks. Over the next few years we would hope that, as his condition deteriorates he will still have built enough friendships to make his passage through schooling that bit easier. The opportunity to go from year 1 to 12 in the same School is, in our local area only available in the private sector.

which brings me to the very reason I write to your Committee. Upon applying to the private sector for a placing at a Private School we have been informed that Dylans Teachers Aide (which is provided under the policy for Inclusive Schooling) would not be available in the Private Sector, and as there is no negative effect for the taxpayer I was somewhat disturbed by this development. The Disabilities Discrimination Act is something of a nonsense on this matter, The Private School could take Dylan into the school asking that we (The Parents) provide an Aide for Dylan, but if the School took on Dylan without providing a Teachers Aide, it would be denying Dylan the right to his proper Education thereby leaving the School liable to prosecution under (you guessed it!) The Disabilities Discrimination Act. This Guarantees that Dylan will not meet the selection criteria, and if my understanding of the Act is correct (Sussex St. Community Law Service, 9470 2676) there is a question that the State Government is as a third party "Aiding AND Abetting" a Discriminatory Act. Oh! And low and behold Dylan (and his twin) were rejected by the School.

It is clear that my son has been discriminated against, he is being denied the right to go to a School of his choice because he is disabled. A Teachers Aide is provided for Dylan at this time, a need has been established, there is no negative effect to the taxpayer. In spite of Government fears there will not be an increase in disabled children because of a change in this policy, people are not born disabled because they want to go to private Schools. Dylan can go to any Public School in the Country, and the Government (under the act) would have to provide Dylan with ramps, wheelchairs, Aides, Disabled toilets etc. etc. and yet the moment disabled children want to try the private sector the door is slammed.

There can be two reasons for this:-

One:- The Private Education Sector does not fight this policy because it does not want disabled children

Two:- The Government wants these Schools for there own children

I Remain,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Needham'.

DAVID NEEDHAM  
9284 0449 w 9444 1777