

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

By G.J. & P.A. Fitzallen

Introduction

- 1. We are a Defence Force family with four children, two with intellectually disabilities (Autism and Learning Disability) and two with medical problems. We have enrolled our children into state and special schools in Queensland, ACT and now currently in Tasmania. We wish to bring your attention to some of the issues and problems that we have seen and experienced with the education of our children.**

The criteria used to define disability and to differentiate between levels of handicap

- 2. It is our experience that the criteria varies considerably between states and these require that we have to ‘jump thru the hoops’ and have our children reassessed in each location at our expense to justify level of educational support.**

The accuracy with which students’ disability related needs are being assessed

- 3. Queensland. The Special Education Development Unit in Queensland who through working closely with Intellectual Disability Services was able to deliver a cohesive education plan for our autistic child. However the identification of our learning disabled child was overlooked even in the face of obvious problems.**
- 4. Australian Capital Territory. The Junior Assessment Unit in the ACT for our learning disabled child modified the curriculum to suit his needs and provided constant reassessment of progress. However our Autistic child was placed in a Special School with no ongoing assessment of needs. Individual Education Plans (IEP) was drawn up from anecdotal information from teachers not addressing her actual needs.**
- 5. Tasmania. There have been no assessments done in this state for either our Autistic or learning disabled child to provide assessment.**

Access to and adequacy of funding and support in both the public and private sectors

- 6. Our experience has told us that there is no continuity of public education funding between states. There has been an onus on us to provide the evidence to justify funding regardless of educational history.**

Consultation between parents and educational institutions in Tasmania

7. **The representation of disabled children through parent consultation is extremely poor this is most evidence with the Special Educational Advisory Committee (SEAC) having one parent body representative and that person not being disability specific.**

Conclusion

8. **We constantly have experienced a struggle in adequately funding the education of both our Autistic and learning disabled child so that they are productive members of society.**

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