

26<sup>th</sup> April 2002.

0355986330

Sir Flann  
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 Port Campbell Vic



7269  
 ph no 55986431.

To Whom it May Concern:

I'm writing to you in response to the Inquiry for students with disabilities.

I am a sole parent and have one child, a son aged 11 years who has High Functioning Autism and a bi-lateral hearing loss

Seam travels by bus each day to the closest and only school which is the Timboon P12 College, 18 kilometres from our home-town of Port Campbell. This take approximately 40 minutes to travel each way. Our closest provincial city is Geelong which is 60 kilometres away, this is where most of the government services are based such as A.H.S the Australian Hearing Service, and disability services that provide respite options and financial assistance for some needs of the child.

As Seam is a D.A.L. funded student I would expect that his particular learning needs be met but funding does not guarantee the expertise and commitment needed to educate a child with one or more disabilities.

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and advocating on the child's behalf. This can be a very isolating existence.

If the government expects children with disabilities to go to mainstream schools it is "their" responsibility to provide an educated support team for the child, teachers and peer groups. For a disabled child to become a valued member of a school, and a valued adult in a community there needs to be a greater provision of professional services visiting schools at regular intervals with assistance in programming, goal setting and evaluation. How to run peer support programs, making sure school disability policies are inclusive and are not just the "in" word.

Schools on the whole do seem to have the best intentions but not the expertise required. This in turn inhibits the school and our children even more from finding their true potential and experiencing true understanding and compassion.

Expertise in schools needs to be seriously addressed to make a difference to the "day to day" outcomes of our children's experience.

We want positive and successful outcomes for them!  
What parent, teacher or government wouldn't??

to educate a child with one or more disabilities.

Development session of a few hours certainly isn't enough to illuminate both the disability and the impact that a school has on a child with a "life-long disability," and the school's responsibility to provide successful educational and social outcomes for our children.

if you would like an exercise in extreme frustration follow the life of a hearing impaired autistic child in a mainstream school which has no "real" experience in the said disabilities, then take away the only visiting expert - the visiting teacher of the deaf, which

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