

LIGHTHOUSE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

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12th June 2002

THE SENATE

Att: The Secretary

Employment Related Workplace and Education Relations Committee

Suite 1.61

Parliament

CANBERRA

ACT 2600

We are writing in support of the A.I.S.V's submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Education of Students with Disabilities. We particularly address the Terms of Reference

(1) (a) (v): *"access to and adequacy of funding and support in both the public and private sectors."*

As a relatively small private school with three disabled students on our 2 campuses, we are experiencing the discrepancy of funding between what we are receiving from Commonwealth funding (\$1,000 - \$3,000 per annum), compared to what these students received in their previous state schools.

Let me itemize. We have a girl with Down's Syndrome, who is now attending Lighthouse Christian College full time instead of a state special school because her parents were so impressed with the special atmosphere here. Last year, she attended our school part-time and we got \$3000 help. This year the parents concerned were so impressed with what their daughter was receiving at Lighthouse Christian College, they insisted on enrolling her full-time, even though we could not match the amount of integration services supplied by the special school. The funding we now receive for her is still \$3000 compared to over \$18,000 at the previous school. The shortfall can only be addressed three ways on the current system: the parents are paying a loading on their fees, we employ only a part-time integration aide and the school has to make up the rest of the short-fall from other people's fees, which is not really fair.

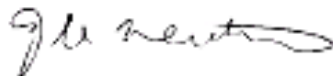
Similarly, at our Cranbourne campus (total student body of 54 in prep to year 8), we have a family suffering dwarfism. These three children also transferred from a state school (where they were supported with a generous amount of money) because of the special Christian atmosphere at Lighthouse Christian College. Now we receive just \$4000 to help these children aged 11,12 and 15.

This discrepancy must be addressed and corrected as soon as possible.

This discrepancy:

- (1) takes away freedom of choice of schools for parents with a disabled child
- (2) puts enormous financial pressure on them if they do decide to enrol their child in the private sector
- (3) puts large financial constraints and pressure on the private school in funding both staff and resources for the disabled student

Yours faithfully



J. K. Newton
Council Chairman



R. Lotriet
Junior Primary Coordinator