

18 July 2002

The Secretary
Senate Employment, Workplace Relation
& Education Reference Committee
Suite S1.61 Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dar Sir / Madam,

Please find attached a late submission to the inquiry into the education of students with disabilities.

My interest in this issue stems from my close association with the education of people with disabilities at all age levels, but in particular adolescents and adults with disabilities.

In 1965 I was appointed to the Northmead High School Partially Seeing Unit to initiate what was possibly Australia's first integration of disabled students into mainstream classes. In 1970 I was appointed as Principal of a Special School for Students with mild intellectual disabilities.

I became a foundation staff member of the Special Education Centre at Macquarie University in 1974 and helped initiate one of Australia's first Teacher Training programs in Special Education. In the period 1974 - 97 I established and directed the Unit for Community Integration Studies at Macquarie University that developed a program of applied research into issues such as the transition from school to work, adult living and further study; models of employment; models of community living; ageing and disability; and support for people with behavioural / emotional problems.

In 1997 I was appointed Foundation Professor of Developmental Disability in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Sydney and Director of the Centre for Developmental Disability Studies. I also hold the positions of Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Sydney and visiting Professor in the School of Education, Macquarie University.

My research and teaching activities have been informed by a network of international contacts including President of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disabilities (IASSID) (1996 - 2000); member of the Board of American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR) and affiliations with University Research Centres on disability in Sweden, Finland, UK, USA, New Zealand, Canada, Italy, Spain, Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong, The Netherlands, France, Belgium and Ireland.

Of special significance has been my close association with the World Health Organization, in particular the revision of the 1980 International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicap (ICIDH), and the subsequent publication of the International Classification of Function, Disability and Health (ICF, 2001).

I have also been associated with the work of the OECD Centre for Education Research and Innovation (CERI) in the areas of transition and support for students with disability in post compulsory education.

I was also a foundation Board member of the Global Applied Disability Network in Employment and Training (GLADNET) that was sponsored by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

I therefore, believe I am reasonably equipped to provide comment upon a number of issues raised in the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.

Should the Committee desire, I would be happy to be available to give oral evidence at its hearing in Canberra on September 14, 2002.

I shall forward an electronic copy of the submission together with electronic copies of the attachments that are available.

Yours sincerely

Trevor R Parmenter Ph.D
Professor & Director