

EDUCATION AMENDMENT (EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH SIGNIFICANT LEARNING DIFFICULTIES) BILL 2008

Bill introduced, and read a first time and ordered to be printed on motion by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile.

Motion by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile agreed to:

That standing orders be suspended to allow the passing of the bill through all its remaining stages during the present or any one sitting of the House.

Second Reading

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE [4.18 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I thank members for their support of this bill. It conforms with the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 23, which states:

... any child with a disability should have access to, and receive, an education in a manner conducive to achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development.

According to the International Dyslexia Association, approximately 12 per cent of the population are hindered in this endeavour due to significant learning difficulties such as dyslexia. To date, New South Wales government schoolchildren suffering significant learning difficulties have not always received appropriate assistance within the Department of Education and Training's Learning Assistance program. In some cases, children suffering from learning difficulties require specialised care. Hence, I have introduced this legislative measure to ensure assistance is given to government schoolchildren with special needs, which includes dyslexia, autism and so on. I wish to acknowledge the significant input of the community during the consultation period of this legislation. Those to be honoured include the many suffering parents who have contacted my office over the years. I wish to pay particular tribute to the inputs of Professor Max Colthart, Director of the Macquarie Centre for Cognitive Science, and the Academic Director of the Children's Hospital Education Research Institute, Dr Pye Twadell, and Dr Paul Whiting. Finally, and not least, I wish to thank Mr Jim Bond for his tireless efforts, over 20 years, to have assistance provided to those suffering from significant learning difficulties like dyslexia.