

Submission
No 7

**INQUIRY INTO THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION TO
STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR SPECIAL NEEDS**

Name: Ms Margaret Musico
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I would like to make a comment regarding this area from a Clinical Psychologist's point of view.

Working in a regional area of NSW, I find it very difficult to advocate for support within the educational system for my clients. Particularly those who have emotional disturbance or mild - moderate learning disability. The criteria for funding appears to be so rigid that many students are excluded as not fitting the criteria, and yet they have significant clinical problems that are interfering with their ability to cope at school. I believe a **functional assessment** would be a better indicator of a student's need or disability, and hence need for support and funding.

I also believe that providing an alternative classroom situation for emotionally disturbed and conduct disturbed children is advised, as their ability to cope with traditional learning environments is impaired. One to one learning is the ideal with these children, and while this may not be practical, a small student to teacher ratio is the best alternative.

There is insufficient school counselling resources to deal with the demands within the school population. Teachers have neither the training or the time to provide this resource, (nor should they be expected to- their role is as an educator)- each school community should be better supported by a counselling department so that teachers and students are better supported.

Margaret Musico
Clinical Psychologist