

Submission
No 65

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

Name: Mrs Eileen Lyons

Date received: 10/02/2010

Dear Director,

I am a support teacher transition and my role is to assist regions and schools with the transition process for secondary aged students with a disability schools to move to the most appropriate post school setting.

For several years the Learning Assistance Program (LAP) has been supporting schools with extra special education staff instead of individual funding. The allocation of the extra staff is based on a calculation around the bands of performance from national literacy and numeracy tests. These students (those with a mild intellectual disability or a language disorder) no longer require a Disability Confirmation Sheet to access support.

Other DET directorates require a Disability Confirmation Sheet as eligibility for support, in particular HSC VET delivered at TAFE (TVET). These students cannot access support for their HSC VET course and often fail or disengage in the course, some of them are not aware that they even have a support need. This is the very population that could be training to meet some of the areas of the national skills shortage.

The result of six years of the funding model under the LAP has brought this group to a position whereby they are:

- often unaware of their rights under the Commonwealth legislation (these students have not been disclosing on enrolment in TAFE and as a result they have not been identified as needing support until they ultimately fail their assessments or course)
- unable to take advantage of a referral to Support Teachers Transition (STT) for transition planning and vocational support
- missing opportunities to have individual planning
- leaving school without a clear plan, set of goals or appropriate information/understanding of their rights to adjustments
- no longer empowered with the appropriate knowledge to be self advocating.

With the expansion of the group through the School Learning Support Program, (to include those with mild autism and mental health; all students under the \$6,000 pa level) there will be an increase in the number of students with additional needs and disabilities who will not have to be assessed to access support in the school, will not have a Disability Confirmation Sheet but will have no support in TVET or have documentation to support the post school applications.