

**Submission  
No 95**

## **INQUIRY INTO POST SCHOOL DISABILITY PROGRAMS**

**Organisation:**

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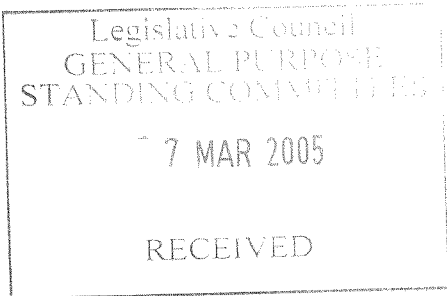
**Subject:**

**Summary**

**From:** "Ariella ..."  
**To:** <gpscno2@parliament.nsw.gov.au>  
**Date:** Sun, Mar 6, 2005 6:36 pm  
**Subject:** post-school programs for people with a disability

6-3-2005

To: Director  
General Purpose Standing Committee Number 2  
Parliament House



To whom it may concern,

My twin sister, Maia, and I are 18 years old and in our final year of school. Maia has severe Cerebral Palsy, meaning that she can do nothing for herself and relies on others for everything she does. For this reason, there are limited things she enjoys doing, and these things are even more limited by the fact that for the most part she needs help to do them, relying totally on others for this.

Up until now, school has been one of the most positive aspects in Maia's life. It has been a place where she has been able to go each weekday and enjoy an environment where not only is everyone friendly, but they also help her to do interesting things and motivate her and interest her in ways that we do not have the resources to do at home. We do the best we can on the weekends, but life at home is not as interesting for my sister as it is for her at school.

School is also Maia's main form of social interaction. Because of the severity of her disability it is very hard for her to meet up with friends outside of school. The distance that most of her friends live away from her and the combined aspects of both her and their disabilities, means that the main place that she meets up with them is at school.

When Maia leaves school she is only going to receive one and a half to two days services under the post-school programs – and this has to serve her for both intellectual stimulation and social interaction. The other five days of the week she will have nothing interesting to do, and almost no prospect of meeting up with friends. It seems like an extremely bleak future.

In contrast, I too am finishing school this year. There is a teacher at my school, called a careers advisor, whose job is completely dedicated to helping students determine what it is that they want to do in the future and helping them to achieve these goals. Students at my school are encouraged from Year 10 onwards to think about and work towards their futures. They are encouraged to make the most of their opportunities and pursue their dreams. Accordingly, my future looks bright. I plan to go overseas for a few months immediately after school ends and then return and go to university. Finishing school will expand my horizons, extend my learning and social opportunities, and generally enrich my life. I cannot say the same for my sister – instead I regard it as a shame for her that she is finishing school, because she is leaving behind some of the best opportunities and services that have ever been offered to her.

It is such a stark difference between her life and mine. I realise that at the end of my learning I will hold a job that contributes to the community

and that my sister will never fill a traditional role such as this. However, Maia has a strong interest in disability services and could perhaps fill the role of a consumer advocate in this area; however, she needs to be given the opportunity to do this if this is to happen. The current post-school programs will not give her this opportunity.

I question the logic of cutting the services for disabled people post-school when there is such a strong emphasis on including them in the schooling system. The same principles should apply to people with a disability no matter what age they are. Just as non-disabled individuals are encouraged to make the most of their opportunities in adult life, so too should disabled people be. The current post-school programs do not encourage this – instead they very clearly state that these opportunities are not allowed to be pursued. In doing so, this highlights the differences that are present between disabled and non-disabled people in societal attitudes; differences that modern society is trying to discourage, but that the government seems to be making ever present in their policies.

Yours Sincerely,

Ariella Meltzer