

**Submission
No 88**

**INQUIRY INTO STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR
SPECIAL NEEDS IN NEW SOUTH WALES SCHOOLS**

Organisation: Fragile X Association of Australia Inc

Date received: 19 February 2017

NSW GOVERNMENT ENQUIRY INTO 'SPECIAL EDUCATION'

Submission by Fragile X Association of Australia Inc to General Purpose Standing Committee No.3

Fragile X Association of Australia (FXAA) welcomes this opportunity to comment on the provision of education to students with a disability or special needs in government and non-government schools in NSW.

FXAA is based in Sydney and exists to serve the Fragile X community, estimated at up to 90,000 Australians. Fragile X syndrome is the most common cause of inherited intellectual disability and up to 50% of fully affected males are also autistic.

Fragile X syndrome arises from a genetic abnormality which is carried within families and ranges in severity. This life-long condition is characterised by variability and individuality, with each case having distinctive features – like all people, those affected by FXS have unique profiles, capabilities and needs.

Accordingly, FXAA strongly supports and endorses the NSW policy of 'Every Student Every School' which emphasises individual assessment rather than diagnostic categorisation of students. As a national body, we are not in a position to submit first-hand experience of this policy in action but urge the government to maintain its commitment to:

- fully resource functional assessment as the core fundamental;
- support individual needs in collaboration with students and their families;
- implement best practice guides for creating personalised approaches to learning;
- provide training and tools for functional and inclusive assessment.

FXAA considers these priorities are consistent with the Australian Government's commitment as expressed in its National Resource entitled: "Planning for Personalised Learning and Support". This 4-step process involves individual assessment, consultation, planning and implementation, evaluation. It appears to be a right, as well as a guidance to educators.

We encourage the NSW government to strengthen its policies and practices in meeting the needs of all students. This is becoming even more vital as NDIS rolls out and further separates learning from the provision of other support measures. We believe the particularly negative consequences this will have for children with Fragile X syndrome and autistic children can be mitigated in NSW by a robust response along the lines already initiated.

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Fragile X syndrome is the most common known cause of inherited intellectual disability and the most common single gene cause of autism. Fragile X Association of Australia is a non-profit organisation and registered charity that provides support for families living with Fragile X-associated disorders and works to increase awareness. Underlying principles: Service, Respect, Accountability, Evaluation, Compliance