

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

Organisation: Ms Ruth Short
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As public school teachers and NSW Teachers Federation members we continue to campaign for the right of every student to receive a public education of the highest quality and for all students to become successful learners.

We are committed to equity and excellence for every student and in doing so assert, as was confirmed in The Review of Funding for Schooling (Gonski Review) that it costs more to deliver on these values for students with disability.

We will not stand by the currently inadequate provision of education to students with disability and the lifelong implications this inequity has.

The National Education Reform Agreement (NERA) and Australian Education Act 2013, acknowledge the requirement for, and commitment to additional funds for students with disability. The NSW government's unwavering commitment to the Gonski funding model paves the way for this investment to be realised.

We stand ready to work with our employer and NSW government in delivering equitable quality education but can only do so effectively when equipped with the necessary tools and supported by a system that is responsive to need.

We offer the following submission as an index of unmet need and a call for equity for every student.

A) Equitable access to resources for students with a disability or special needs in regional and metropolitan areas.

Students with a hearing disability in regional and remote areas do not have access to the resources available to students living on the Eastern seaboard. They are dependent on the Itinerant Support Teacher Hearing (ISTH) to help them develop their speech, language and vocabulary plus helping them to stay abreast of their classwork. Inadequate resources means that this does not always happen.

B) The impact of the Government's 'Every Student Every School' policy on the provision of education to students with a disability or special needs in New South Wales public schools.

It has made no difference to students with a Hearing disability who live in regional and remote areas.

C) Developments since the 2010 inquiry by General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 into the provision of education to students with a disability or special needs and the implementation of its recommendations.

D) Complaint and review mechanisms within the school systems in New South Wales for parents and carers.

Pleas to DoE in Sydney for more time for students in regional and remote areas to work with ISTH fall on 'deaf' ears. There is a lack of understanding of the great needs of students with a Hearing disability in the country by the administrators of the Department's resources.

E) Any other related matters.

Concerns about: 1. The DoE has stopped training Teachers of the Deaf. Teachers wishing to do the Masters Degree course have to pay for it themselves and do it in their own time. 2. Guidelines for allocation of hours for an ISTH to work with a Deaf student are becoming mandatory. Attitude is that one size fits all. Socio-economic conditions, the student's intelligence and maturity levels are not being taken into account when hours are attributed to the student. 3. Students with a unilateral loss are not being supported even though the research shows that they are as affected in their speech and language development to the same degree as students with a bilateral loss. 4. Students suffering from Otitis Media in their early years at school have to meet nearly impossible guide lines in order to receive help from an ISTH. A change of these guidelines would ensure that more students would qualify for help for a year so that their progress in the classroom is not impeded and ensuring that their basic skills are sound.

Name Ruth Short

I am a Teacher