

**Submission
No 298**

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

Name: Mr Michael de Wall

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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.

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.

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.

E) Any other related matters.

As an experienced teacher of 15 years and now an Organiser for the NSW Teachers Federation working across 140 schools, I have seen the impact of the State 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, as well as the ongoing consequences of the Federal Government's failure to deliver additional resources through the Gonski disability loading. In some of my schools, the alleged benefits of more flexibility that was part of the pitch for 'Every Student, Every School' has equated to an already limited and inadequate resource being spread across more students. ESES also involved the dismantling of meaningful DEC support for schools in the form of external, expert consultancy services for a range of student disability. I am also aware of a number of schools that

have engaged relevant personnel within the Department of Education, only to feel discouraged from applying for placements for students with particular needs or persuaded to lower their expectations in the access request process. There are 268,000 students with disability who are missing out on funded support at school (Productivity Report on Government Services 2016). That is more than half of the total. Adequate funding equates to access to education. The Turnbull Government must fully fund the Gonski disability loading and end the discrimination. Gonski provides access to the lifelong benefits of schooling for every student. Schools need this funding now as many students are missing out on the education they need and deserve.

Name Michael de Wall