

**Submission
No 320**

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

Name: Mr Waine Donovan

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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.

Currently the Schools for Specific Purpose (SSPs) in my area have received no RAM/Gonski funding for their students with disabilities, even though it was supposed to have been provided in 2015. As a result, they are struggling to meet the needs of their students with the minimal amount that they are receiving. They are unable to employ support staff to assist the classroom teachers in the SSPs. It has also prevented them from being able to have the flexibility to implement programs in their schools that can further enhance the skills of their students/teachers. The lack of funding for students with disabilities has also meant that the classroom teachers in SSPs are denied funding for appropriate professional development which will assist them in delivering programs for their students. Students with Disabilities in SSPs also are denied free transport to school, something that is afforded to students in mainstream schools. Students are not getting mandatory hours of access to curriculum and students and staff are facing unreasonable health and safety risks due to the school having to draw funds from their limited budget to support students with complex needs. This highlights the lack of appropriate funding for students with a disability. The school budget allocation does not provide individual "targeted" funding (above the existing staffing entitlement) for students with disabilities with complex behaviour and health care needs. In our mainstream schools who also cater for students with disabilities, funding is also an issue. They struggle to provide the resources needed to ensure that these students get the best educational outcomes necessary for them to function and contribute effectively in their communities. They receive limited funding that prevents them from providing the specialist supports needed by students in schools for adequate periods of time, if at all. This impacts on the classroom teachers capacity to meet every student's needs if their time and focus is disproportionately applied to attending to students with complex needs. Teachers are quite stretched in their ability to manage some classrooms based on the cohort of students. Another issue is the lack of funding available to enable schools to offer effective face to face professional learning. A lot of this training is currently done online, which is time consuming and often encouraged to be

done in their own time (which is not fair). Given the obligations under the Disability Standards are mandatory, then teachers should be given time during school hours, to access training, expertise and ongoing support to meet these obligations.

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.

Name Waine Donovan

I am a Teacher