

Submission  
No 44

**INQUIRY INTO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITY IN NEW SOUTH WALES EDUCATIONAL  
SETTINGS**

**Name:** Name suppressed  
**Date Received:** 28 February 2024

---

Partially  
Confidential

My son is a non-verbal autistic 7 year old with global developmental delay.

In 2022 he attended Kenthurst Preschool. This is a mainstream preschool with amazing facilities and staff. He had a one-to-one support person the whole time he was there, she deeply cared about him and we often spent 30mins per day discussing how my son was going and how to help him get the best out of the preschool. Despite all of this support the mainstream preschool was a noisy and overwhelming place where my son never entirely felt comfortable. He would not participate in activities with the entire class, preferring to be on his own or in small groups.

In 2023 he enrolled in Warrah Special School. His mother and I believe this is the best place for him. He is in a class with 5 other children who he is learning to work and play with. He is learning and developing interests in things we could not have imagined, like hammering, painting and even numbers!

Regardless of the funding or support I do not believe that any mainstream school could offer him a comparable environment. I think he would struggle in the same way that he struggled in preschool.

I'm very concerned about the recommendation to shut down SSPs from the disability royal commission. In particular I've noticed comments from a commissioner along the lines of "No parent ever wants to send their child to an SSP". The language about "segregated schools" is also clearly designed to evoke the civil rights struggles and issues of racism/equity.

I think this shows a lack of awareness of the full breadth of the disability community. We should focus on ensuring that kids are given the best environment to help them grow and learn. For some disabled children this will be a well run and funded mainstream school, but not all disabled kids are alike! For some, like my son, the best environment is a well run and funded specialist school.