



Media Statement

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Statement by Mr Bill Daniels, Executive Director, Independent Schools Council of Australia

NSW Green's Analysis Misleads Funding Arrangements for Students with Disability

The NSW Greens' "analysis" misrepresents the funding arrangements for school students with disability and is discredited when compared to extensive research that already exists.

The facts are that students with disabilities in independent schools receive significantly less government funding for their educational support needs than if they were educated in a government school. The funding difference is greater for students with high level support needs which can rise to over \$40,000 per student per year.

The cost of educating a student with disability in a government school is met by the Australian community as a whole. For students with disability in independent schools, the gap between what they receive in government funding and the full costs of their education must be met by individual school communities.

There is a plethora of substantive, academically credible research available that reinforces the case that students with disability in independent schools are not adequately resourced to meet their educational needs.

In 2009, the National Disability Strategy Consultation Report SHUT OUT, released by the Department of FAHCSIA reported that *"Many submissions argued that the inflexibility and lack of portability of funding has narrowed their choices. Many parents said, for example, that the lack of assistance and support in independent and faith-based settings has constrained their ability to choose these school settings for their children."*

In 2006, the Australian Government inquiry, *"Investigating the Feasibility of Portable Funding for Students with Disabilities"* noted that funding levels of students with disability in government schools are substantially higher than students with disability in main-stream non-government schools.

In 2002, The Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee concluded in its unanimous report how surprised it *"was to find how little these students (SWDs) were supported" in the independent sector.*

Unlike Dr Kaye's "back of the envelope" analysis by press release, there is a vast body of evidence and research collected by independent organisations that support the case that students with disability require additional support because of the nature of their disability, not because of the school they attend.

It is unfortunate that Dr Kaye is seeking to misrepresent the funding arrangements of our most vulnerable students for the sake of political point scoring.

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Further information

Department of Education, Science and Training (2006), *Investigating the Feasibility of Portable Funding for Students with Disabilities*

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/Investigating_Feasibility_Portable_Funding_Students.htm

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (2009), *SHUT OUT: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia*

http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/SA/DISABILITY/PUBS/POLICY/COMMUNITY_CONSULT/Pages/default.aspx

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Reference Committee (2002), *Education of Students with Disabilities*

http://www.apb.gov.au/senate/Committee/eet_ctte/completed_inquiries/2002-04/ed_students_withdisabilities/report/index.htm