

Education (General Provisions) (Helping Families with School Costs) Amendment Bill 2023

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Submitted by: [REDACTED]
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Attachments:
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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Education, Employment and Training Committee](#)
Subject: Education (Helping Families with School Costs) Amendment Bill 2023
Date: Wednesday, 18 October 2023 2:37:31 PM

Dear Members of Parliament,

I'm writing this email as a submission to the Education (Helping Families with School Costs) Amendment Bill inquiry. I would prefer that my name and contact details be kept private and confidential.

In considering the appropriate level of funding for schools, consideration must be given to the specialist support required by children with neurodivergence and disability. To fund this through state schools will allow this support to be provided in a timely, responsive and cost-efficient manner, reaching as many neurodivergent children as possible. I will share a little of my experience to explain why I believe this is important.

I'm a parent of a child with Autism and ADHD. My child requires support from multiple specialists - speech pathology, psychology and occupational therapy to assist him to be successful at school. His school has some visiting services, such as a guidance officer and speech pathologist from the education department, however none of these visiting professionals have the time available to provide the level of support that my child needs, so my child's therapies are funded by a combination of NDIS and private funding.

My family is fortunate that we are able to pay for some therapies, we had occupational therapy already underway before we were approved for NDIS funding, and when NDIS funding runs out, we will continue my child's current therapies until his new NDIS plan starts. For families on lower incomes, their children could potentially wait months for a paediatrician's diagnoses before getting any support at all. To give some indication of the difficulty in getting a timely diagnosis, my child's paediatrician charges approximately double the Medicare scheduled fee for paediatric services and when my child started seeing this paediatrician her waiting list was 5 months. I imagine that a family relying on the public system would wait much longer. A child in a lower income family with the same level of NDIS funding would also have less professional support to make the funding last for an entire 2 year plan.

There are also inefficiencies in funding specialist services through NDIS that could otherwise be provided at school. I will use some examples:

- My child's speech pathologist charges travel fees on every appointment, as they are entitled to do, and this is covered by NDIS. If the Education Department was funding their own speech pathology services at a level to cover one-to-one support they would likely be paying only one travel fee for a speech pathologist to attend the school for the entire day and see several children.
- My child's psychologist teaches my child social and emotional skills using a group

work program that they adapt for their one-to-one work together. If the school guidance officer had the time and training to offer this program, they could offer this as a group program, teaching several students with ASD the same skills.

- If I need for one of my child's professional support services to speak to each other or the school teacher, I need to schedule and pay for an appointment for this to occur, if they all worked in the school, they would know each other and could schedule their meetings more informally.

Whilst these savings seem minimal, if we consider that these inefficiencies are multiplied by the number of children with neurodivergence who are using NDIS funded services, we can see that there is potential to improve outcomes for neurodivergent children by using the funding more efficiently.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this submission, if you require further information, please contact me by return email or phone [REDACTED]

Yours Faithfully,

[REDACTED]