



DISABILITY ROYAL COMMISSION

VOLUME 7 SUMMARY

The Disability Royal Commission Volume 7, Inclusive Education, Employment and Housing, identified that mainstream and special/segregated education in Australia are failing to realise an inclusive society for some people with disability.

In particular, “Australian schools do not consistently deliver an inclusive education that protects students with disability from violence, abuse and neglect.”

A human-rights based approach to education requires a safe, quality and inclusive school system for all students with disability.

This includes promoting attitudes and behaviours that embrace diversity and inclusion, and transforming schools so that students can achieve their individual educational goals, and positive social outcomes in and beyond school.

This flyer summarises the recommendations of the Commission.

7.1 Provide equal access to mainstream education and enrolment

The rights of students with disability to enrol in local mainstream schools are upheld through the creation of a legal entitlement for students with disability to enrol in a local mainstream school and aligned to the DDA.

Gate keeping in mainstream schools is prevented through central record keeping and annual reporting on enrolment refusal or cancellation. Parents and carers are supported through an independent review process to challenge a refusal to enrol the a student in school.

Students with disabilities and their families are provided with clear, accessible, transparent material on their rights, schools’ obligations relating to applications to attend a local school, and review processes.

7.2 Prevent the inappropriate use of exclusionary discipline against students with disability

Education providers should avoid the use of exclusionary discipline on students with disability unless there is a serious risk of harm. They should consider the student’s disability, needs and age, and the particular effects of exclusionary discipline and take steps to ensure an individual behaviour plan and reasonable adjustments have been implemented, including consultation, before exclusion.

This is to be supported by regulations, rules, procedures and other instruments as well as providing context for escalation of repeated use of exclusionary discipline, review and appeals processes

It is recommended that these obligations should also apply to non-government schools.



The full Volume 7 report can be found at <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report-volume-7-inclusive-education-employment-and-housing>

Improve policies and procedures on the provision of reasonable adjustments to

7.3 students with disability

Guidelines to be developed and made accessible to enable schools to comply with their statutory obligations to provide adjustments and include guidance on:

- The relationship between statutory duty to provide adjustments and duties of care
- Identifying, planning, implementing and evaluating
- Consultation as defined under the DSE
- Funding
- Record keeping and reporting
- Individual learning plans

Education providers have the tools and resources to adapt the curriculum and teaching practices so that diverse learners can participate in learning experiences on the same basis as students without disability.

7.4 Participation in school communities

Non-mainstream or segregated schools are located within or in close proximity to mainstream schools. Here, students in the non-mainstream schools are facilitated to participate in school activities with their peers in mainstream schools through an active partnership.

Half of the Commissioners took this further through Recommendation 7.14 recognising that inclusive education as required by article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is not compatible with sustaining special/segregated education as a long-term feature of education systems in Australia. The recommendation outlined steps to phase out and end special/ segregated education.

7.5 Careers guidance and transition support services

A careers guidance and transition support service for students with disability should be implemented to aid transition from all educational institutions to further education and/or open employment.

The service should collaborate with students to assist them in articulating their goals and aspirations beyond school, provide access to information and resources about future study options and labour market opportunities, provide students with opportunities to undertake work experience and provide linkages to further providers and services.

7.6 Student and parental communication and relationships

Policies and guidance for schools to support the implementation and continuous improvement of requirements for student and parental communication and relationships. These should:

- Include student and parent rights and the school's obligations
- Address how students and parents should expect to be involved in decision making, adjustments and complaints handling and informal resolution processes
- Indicate types of decisions that require formal parental agreement, such as approaches to behaviour management

7.8 Workforce capabilities, expertise and development

Standards, a capability framework and professional development strategies embed a human rights-based approach to inclusive education for students with disability by improving teachers inclusivity knowledge and skills across their careers.

7.9 Data, evidence and building best practice

Data development and collection should be consistent and comparable through nationally defined data and collection systems. The data should be disaggregated and include information on student experiences, school outcomes and progress in addressing barriers to inclusive education. Standardised information should also be collected for home schooled students.

Data on student educational experiences, student outcomes and school barriers should be publicly reported annually.

The evidence base for best practice in inclusive education is improved through research and translated into school practices,

7.10 Complaint management

Complaint management offices should help resolve complaints concerning the treatment of students with disability. These offices should be empowered to:

- Provide students and parents with information about their rights and options when managing complaints
- Request information and conduct conciliations, connecting families with support and expertise
- Initiate a formal investigation if a complaint is serious or otherwise indicates systemic issues
- Support and assist the in referring matters to the appropriate party if a complaint cannot be resolved
- Support schools to analyse complaints and report on measures to reduce future complaints
- Ensure school policies are student-centric, accessible, efficient, safe, trauma-informed and culturally appropriate.

In 7.3, 7.5, 7.6, and 7.9 more recommendations were made for the inclusion of First Nations students with disability, and specifically 7.7 Inclusive education units and First Nations expertise.



Stronger oversight and enforcement of school

7.11 duties

Enforcement of inclusive education practices should be strengthened by expanding school registration requirements to include:

- School enrolment policies
- Procedures regarding school workforce obligations and access professional development
- Procedures on complaints and the use of restrictive practices and exclusionary discipline
- Reporting on the use of students disability funding

The Western Australian government should identify appropriate mechanisms to ensure government schools are subject to these mandatory obligations, with appropriate monitoring, compliance and enforcement.

7.12 Improving funding

State governments should ensure they are using a disability funding model based on strengths and needs to enable students with disability to access and participate in education on an equal basis to their peers.

Transparency on the use of disability funding in the government school sector should be improved by:

- Recording the use of all sources of school funding against defined categories of adjustments and supports
- Recording expenditure on services and staff commissioned for students with disability
- Publicly reporting on how needs are being met from available resources

7.13 National Roadmap to Inclusive Education

A 'National Roadmap to Inclusive Education' should be released for students with disability. The roadmap should:

- Detail the outcome measures, targets, actions and milestones for delivering the Royal Commission's recommendations for inclusive education
- Provide public transparency on how the recommendations will be implemented and progress tracked and publicly reported

Progress against agreed milestones and associated outcome performance measures in the roadmap should be reported annually.

Annual progress reports should outline actions to overcome identified barriers to progress and be publicly released.



The Commissioners were split on the following recommendations regarding segregated schooling with Commissioners Bennett, Galbally and McEwin recommending 7.14 and The Chair and Commissioners Mason and Ryan recommending 7.15.

7.14 Phasing out and ending special/ segregated education

This recommendation outlined steps to end specialised and segregated schooling for students with disability including:

- No new special/segregated schools being built or new special/segregated classes or units being included within schools from 2025
- No new enrolments of students with disability in special/segregated schools from 2032
- No new placements of students with disability in special/segregated units or classes from 2041
- No students remaining in special/segregated schools by the end of 2051.
- Financial penalties for failure to meet desegregation milestones

7.15 An alternative approach

Unlike recommendation 7.14, 7.15 did not recommend phasing out segregated schooling. Instead it included the recommendations in 7.4 Participation in school communities and also included:

- Involving students in non-mainstream schools to participate in classes and educational activities with their peers in mainstream schools
- Provide for concurrent individual enrolment for in both mainstream and non-mainstream schools
- Transition students with disability, particularly those with complex support needs, to mainstream schools, whether on a full-time or part-time basis
- Better understand the strengths and skills of students with disability for postschool transition
- Students with disability completing their education to obtain employment in the open labour market



This flyer is provided as a summary of the recommendations of Volume 7. This summary should not be used in place the report but as a supplementary guide to assist with understanding.