



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO.3 - EDUCATION

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **REPORT ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY IN NEW SOUTH WALES EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS RELEASED**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**22 August 2024**

Portfolio Committee No.3 – Education has published the report of its inquiry into children and young people with disability in New South Wales educational settings. The report made 20 findings and 28 recommendations focussing on improving the educational experience for children and young people with disability.

The Chair of the committee, Ms Abigail Boyd MLC, said 'This inquiry gave us the opportunity to hear directly from children and young people with disability and their families, educators and representatives about how we can make NSW's education system safe, inclusive and accessible for all students. Following the landmark Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, which focused considerably on inclusive education as the nucleus of an inclusive society, the committee examined the state of NSW's education system including public and private mainstream and special educational settings, from early childhood education through to vocational education and university settings.'

'The report makes targeted recommendations for change that seek to address gaps in NSW's education system through legislative and policy changes, greater investment in mainstream schools and highly qualified educators, and a fundamental shift in the culture within schools.'

'The committee found that a lack of inclusion experienced by children and young people with disability across various educational settings has profound impacts and lifelong consequences on various aspects of their lives, including in employment, social life, accessing essential services and more. The inappropriate use of exclusionary discipline such as suspension and expulsion of students with disability, as well as the experience of students and their families being turned away from schools, can be particularly devastating.'

'Beyond the impact on students and their families, it was clear from our inquiry that a lack of inclusion in New South Wales educational settings reinforces prejudice, discrimination and ableism in society which, in turn, perpetuates non-inclusive practices in the education system.'

'The committee heard from educators including teachers and support staff that mainstream public educational settings are not adequately resourced to provide the necessary supports and accommodations for children and young people with disability. A number of the report's recommendations propose changes that would ensure NSW's mainstream public education system is fit for purpose so that educators are adequately supported to do their jobs.'

Ms Boyd also said: 'Many families felt they had little recourse for appeals or independent oversight of decisions, particularly with respect to exclusionary practices like suspensions, expulsions and restrictive practices and the implementation of individualised adjustments. The committee has therefore recommended the NSW Government consider an independent process for parents and carers to make complaints, raise concerns, or have decisions reviewed, which applies to all educational settings including early childhood, public and private schools, TAFE and university.'

The committee's report and other inquiry documents can be found on the committee's [website](#).

-ENDS-

*For further information please contact Committee Chair, Ms Abigail Boyd MLC on 9230 3676*