



Children and Young People
with Disability Australia

Media Release

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On eve of Royal Commission hearings, new research reveals Aussie schoolkids with disability excluded, segregated, bullied and robbed of education

With just one week until the Disability Royal Commission's first public hearing where evidence is taken, explosive new research has revealed that Australian kids with disability are being systemically failed by a broken education system that is denying them their basic human right to an inclusive education.

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) today launched the results of its recent survey of almost 500 parents and carers of primary and secondary students with disability. CYDA found that over the past year around:

- 1 in 10 students had been refused enrolment
- Almost half had been excluded from school events or activities
- 1 in 4 were restrained or secluded
- Half had experienced bullying
- 1 in 5 didn't attend school full time
- 14% had been suspended.

Families also reported a student with disability as young as 11 being suicidal, an under-12 hiding from schoolyard bullies in a rubbish bin, and general exasperation that student feedback focuses only on behaviour, not educational achievement.

To support the survey findings, CYDA has also today launched 'Towards inclusive education: A necessary process of transformation' – a comprehensive review of the world's best practice for inclusive education. CYDA is now calling on government to develop a National Action Plan for Inclusive Education that sets direction to:

- Phase out special schools, separated classrooms/units within mainstream schools.
- Improve inadequate teacher education – including a new requirement for a mandatory full semester subject at university, in addition to mandatory professional development for current teachers.
- Redefine the roles of aides so they provide inclusive support.

For a copy of the survey findings, state-by-state breakdowns, research report and fact sheets: <https://www.cyda.org.au>

The Disability Royal Commission is holding its first public hearing on education next Monday (4 November) in Townsville.

Quotes attributable to Mary Sayers, CEO, Children and Young People with Disability Australia:

“CYDA wholeheartedly agreed with the UN when it recently said that Australia needs to lift its game and stop the segregation of children with disability in education – which is a fundamental denial of their human rights.

“The evidence shows that all children - those with and without - disability achieve best in inclusive schools, not in special schools, separate classrooms, not schooling part-time, and not doing a separate – or worse, no – curriculum.

“The Disability Royal Commission presents an opportunity for Australia to right its wrongs and start providing children with disability the inclusive education they are entitled to – it is their human right.

“Australian society – and, in fact law - emphatically says no to discrimination when it comes to gender, race and religion. So why does it remain acceptable to discriminate when it comes to disability? It’s more than time to stamp out ableism in Australia.”

Local case studies for states: Can be provided upon request for QLD, NSW, SA, VIC.

For interviews, information and case studies, media contact:

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