

Review of the loading for students with disability 2019–public submission

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Stakeholder type: Research person/body

Jurisdiction: Western Australia

Summary

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the National School Resourcing Board's review of the loading for students with disability. My submission addresses two issues:

- The inconsistency of the approach adopted in the NDIS to the funding of disability and that take in the NSR's funding of students with disability;
- The large variation between state and territory public schools' data.

Submission

Inconsistency with the NDIS

The principles underlying the National Disability Insurance Scheme, adopted by the governments of Australia through the NDIS Act, in that:

- people with disability are assumed, so far as is reasonable in the circumstances, to have capacity to determine their own best interests and make decisions that affect their own lives (section 17A(1));
- people with disability will be supported in their dealings and communications with the Agency so that their capacity to exercise choice and control is maximised (section 17A(2)); (see also communicating with people with disability).

At present the information that schools provide in regard to the level and category of adjustments, and the nature of the imputed disability, is not disclosed to the students or their representatives without the need to make formal application.

If the NCCD is to continue to operate as the main funding allocative mechanism, there must be sufficient transparency and openness to allow for students with disability to be informed joint decision makers on the adjustments to be provided.

Variation between state school systems

A review of the available data (from 2017 NCCD via the ACARA website, <https://acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia-data-portal/school-students-with-disability#SWD>) shows that the range of funded students with disability (i.e., those with a level of supplementary, substantial or extensive) ranges amongst the larger states from a high of 14.9% in NSW of enrolments to a low of 11.6% in Victoria and Western Australia (not including the smaller territories such as NT with 20.2% and Tas with 8.3%).

Given the large student populations in Government schools in the major states (e.g. NSW nearly 800, 000; Victoria 620,000, WA 290,000) and the findings of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4429.0main+features100302009>) this difference is not only statistically significant but also represents a large difference in the funds that each state/territory systems attracts while there is little evidence to suggest such differences in the rates of disability for school aged children and adolescents.

Given this variation, and resulting inequity of resourcing, consideration should be given to applying a moderation measure that 'averages out' the state allocations till such time the NCCD can be shown to be a valid and reliable estimate of adjustments made in schools.