Issues Paper

A summary of what people told us in response to our Education and learning Issues Paper
How to use this paper

The Disability Royal Commission (the Royal Commission) wrote this paper.

When you see the word ‘we’, it means the Royal Commission.

We have written this paper in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.

We have written some words in bold. We explain what these words mean. There is a list of these words on page 23.

This Easy Read paper is a summary of a paper called ‘Overview of responses to the first Education and learning Issues paper’.

You can find the other paper on our website.

You can ask for help to read this paper. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.
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What is this paper about?

An **issue** is a subject or problem that people are thinking and talking about.

A **response** is what someone has told us about an issue.

The issue we looked at was the education and learning of people with disability.

We have written this paper to tell you what people said about education and learning.

We asked 13 questions in our issues paper.
We share people’s answers to those questions in this paper.

This response paper is about the experience in of people with disability when they are at:

- school
- other places people go to learn.

This includes places like:

- early childhood centres
- primary schools
- high schools
- schools just for people with disability
- universities.
Who responded to our Issues paper?

By 4 May 2020 we had received 49 responses to our education and learning issues paper.

We heard from:

- people with disability
- family members
- people who work at schools
- people who work at universities
- organisations.

We didn’t hear from any people with disability who:

- come from different cultures and backgrounds
- speak languages other than English
- are First Nations people.
First Nations people are also known as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We are working to make sure we hear from people with disability who:

- come from different cultures and backgrounds
- speak languages other than English
- are First Nations people.

Other people told us about the experience of people with disability who:

- come from different cultures and backgrounds
- speak languages other than English
- are First Nations people.
What did people tell us?

People told us that many places where people go to learn use restrictive practices.

Restrictive practices are actions that stop people from:

• moving
• doing what they want.

Restrictive practices include:

• seclusion
• using restraints.

Seclusion is when you put someone alone in a room or a space and stop them from leaving.

An example of seclusion is locking someone in a room for a period of time.
Restraints are ways to stop someone from doing what they are doing.

Bullying is a problem for many students.

**Bullying** is when someone says or does something over and over again to make you feel bad.

Some people feel that the education of students with disability is not seen as important.

People told us that school can be hard for students with:

- find talking hard
- a disability you cannot see.
What affects the experience of students with disability?

Sometimes, students with disability:

- aren’t expected to do very well with their learning
- don’t have all the things they need to do well.

This makes it hard for them to:

- learn things and reach their goals
- feel good about school and learning
- feel good about themselves.
**Discrimination** is when someone is treated badly because of something about them they can’t change.

We were told that students with disability can face more discrimination if they:

- are First Nations people
- come from different cultures and backgrounds
- speak languages other than English
- are girls or women with disability
- believe in a different religion.
Teaching students with disability

People told us that many teachers who work with students with disability don’t get enough:

- training
- support.

Many teachers who work with students with disability can’t get things they need to make their classrooms inclusive.

When something is inclusive, everyone can take part.

People told us many schools don’t work well with the parents of students with disability.
What happens in different places people go to learn?

There are different ideas about whether students with disability should learn at:

- schools that are inclusive
- schools or classrooms just for students with disability.

We sometimes call schools just for people with disability ‘special schools’.

Some people say schools that are inclusive are good for:

- students with disability
- other students.

They say that students with disability want to learn at schools that are inclusive.
They also say that when students with disability learn at schools that are inclusive, they feel good about:

- school and learning
- themselves.

Many students with disability who learn at schools that are inclusive:

- find good jobs
- take part in their community
- become independent.

When you are independent, you can do things:

- by yourself
- on your own.

You are in control of:

- your own life
- the choices that you make.

Some schools teach students with disability in separate classrooms from other students.
Some people say that students with disability who are separated from other students can be more at risk of being hurt.

Other people believe students with disability:

- are better off in special schools or classes
- can do just as well in special schools or classes.

But this means students with disability don’t get to learn with people who do not have disability.
What did people say the issues are?

We don’t have good ways for people to tell us when students with disability are hurt.

We don’t have good ways for people to tell us if students with disability don’t get the things they need to do well at school.

There are barriers that stop people from:

- telling anyone about these things
- doing anything about them.

It can be hard to get information about:

- what to do
- who to tell.

Some students with disability and their parents worry that nobody will believe them.
What did people say could be better?

Teachers need to learn how to support students with disability.

This includes supports for how students with disability behave.

Schools could support students with disability so they learn positive ways to behave.
Students with disability might need better help so they can communicate about:

- what they need to do well
- problems they have.

Teachers might work with people who can speak up for students with disability.

Schools that are inclusive could set up classrooms where students with disability get what they need to:

- learn
- feel safe

Universities could have disability advisors who can:

- support students with disability
- speak up for students with disability.
What can we do to protect students with disability?

People told us about different ways we can protect students with disability from being hurt.

Some ideas people told us are:

- the Australian Government should write a National Action Plan for inclusive education
- stop using restrictive practices
- help schools to include students with disability
- give teachers more and better training about how to support students with disability.
• schools should include all students when they plan for inclusive education

• make sure students with disability can make friends with other students

• give students with disability as much help as we can.

  It doesn’t matter if they are at:
  
  o an inclusive school
  
  o a special school.

We should try to stop sending students with disability to special schools.

We must keep students with disability safe everywhere.
How will we use this information?

We will look closely at all the ideas we have been given.

We will think about what people have told us.

We will think about these ideas when we:

• write our reports

• share our ideas about what we could do to make things better.
Contact us

You can contact us:

- by email
  DRCEnquiries@royalcommission.gov.au

- in the mail
  GPO Box 1422
  Brisbane
  QLD 4001.

Or you can speak to us on the phone:

1800 517 199

(07) 3734 1900

We are available to talk from Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.
Word list

Bullying

Bullying is when someone says or does something to make you feel bad over and over again.

 Discrimination

Discrimination is when you treat someone badly because of something about them they can’t change.

First Nations people

First Nations people are also known as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Inclusive

When something is inclusive, everyone can take part.
**Independent**

When you are independent, you can do things:

- by yourself
- on your own.

You are in control of:

- your own life
- the choices that you make.

**Issue**

An issue is a subject or problem that people are thinking and talking about.

**Response**

A response is what someone has told us about an issue.

**Restraints**

Restraints are ways to stop someone from doing what they are doing.
Restrictive practices

Restrictive practices are actions that stop people from:

- moving
- doing what they want.

Seclusion

Seclusion is when you put someone alone in a room or a space and stop them from leaving.

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