

## Recommendations of the 2024 Parliamentary Inquiry into Children and Young People with Disability in New South Wales Educational Settings

A report from this inquiry was released on August 22. The Committee Chair indicated that the Committee was unanimous in recommending that the NSW Government works towards enabling more children with disabilities to be enrolled in mainstream schools but did not suggest that special schools or classes should be phased out. In relation to the issues included in the submission made by InSpEd to the Inquiry, the Committee found that:

- Initial teacher education courses are not sufficient in preparing teachers to work with students with disabilities (Finding 12).
- There are not enough teachers with the qualifications needed to work in special education roles in schools (Finding 13).
- There is a lack of incentive for students to gain special education qualifications (Finding 14).

Recommendations from these findings, of particular interest to InSpEd, were that the NSW Government should:

- Increase the requirements for accrediting initial teacher education courses to include content addressing the needs of students with disability (Recommendation 7).
- Increase incentives for teachers to undertake postgraduate courses in special education e.g., increase in the number of scholarships, relief for study purposes, increase in pay for those with qualifications in special education (Recommendation 9).

Sadly, many recommendations by parliamentary inquiries have been ignored by the NSW Department of Education in the past (e.g., inquiries in 2011 and 2017). We can only hope that many of the excellent recommendations made by the 2024 Committee will be implemented, in particular those that relate to requiring universities to include content relevant to the teaching of students with disabilities in their courses and the inclusion of incentives for teachers to gain post-graduate qualifications in special education.