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To Whom It May Concern:

While there have been improvements in the education of students with disability in terms of enrolment, participation, curriculum delivery, accreditation and delivery, student support services and elimination of harassment and victimisation, there are still those educators who are not aware of the Disability Standards for Education or do not comply with them. My submission is based on anecdotal evidence from my experience providing professional development to in-service teachers, through research into Victorian in-service teachers' attitudes, concerns and feelings of self-efficacy in relation to inclusion of students with additional needs, through conversations with the pre-service teachers I work with and discussions about their placement experiences and also my personal experience with a 7 year-old family member with a disability. I taught in Victorian secondary schools for 27 years. I was a mainstream English teacher and coordinator of programs for students with additional needs in the 4 schools in which I worked. I moved to Monash University as a lecturer in inclusive and special education in 2013. I make this submission as an individual and not on behalf of Monash University.

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data has made educators more aware that all teachers are accountable and responsible for teaching all students and that students who require adjustments need to have that acknowledged in their pedagogical approach. It has also removed the confusion surrounding the nature of a child being funded under the Program for Students with Disability and those not and reminded teachers that a student does not require a formal diagnosis to obtain adjustments. But when delivering professional development, the vast majority of teachers were totally unaware of the NCCD. Principals need to be more acutely aware of their responsibilities and hold staff accountable and support staff to develop in this area of inclusive practices. This is so blatantly not the case at times and students are still encountering teachers and principals with discriminatory attitudes. I believe that it must be mandated that principals attend briefings on their responsibilities as leaders and this attendance cannot be delegated to anyone else.

In 2019 when my 7 year-old family member presented with challenging behaviours at school, the school's first reaction was to constantly send him home as they stated that they didn't have the staff to provide any other options. I attended the Student Support Group meetings to act as an advocate for my family. We constantly had to request meetings, with only one SSG being agreed to per term by the school, even when going through the diagnostic process. The

Behaviour Support Plan was completed totally over email, as that was all the school 'had time for'. I advised my relative to contact the regional manager to make a complaint and it was only when this was stated that the principal called a meeting – one meeting! There was so little accountability from the school in terms of supporting a Positive Behaviour Support or strength-based approach. This was only last year! During COVID and remote learning, a request was made for support from the teacher's aide and this was refused.

While overseas in 2019 researching inclusive practices in international schools and the complexities that come with a transient staff and student population, it became apparent that our DSE do not need to be observed by Australian international schools. The American international schools are compelled to enrol students with diverse needs as the No Child Left Behind Act follows the school and the American student. But the Australian international schools were very upfront about refusing enrolment to students with even minor disability and when I questioned about the Australian legislation of the DDA and the DSE, they stated that they do not apply to Australian international schools.

The Standards do need to be applicable to students in all Australian schools, whether that be here in Australia or overseas. Otherwise, I believe that the Standards do not need changing; it is a respectful piece of legislation. What is needed is for more people to be aware of the Standards and in regard to schools, principals need to be held more accountable for understanding and implementing the Standards.

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