



# How to meet and lobby your MP guide

Better Together, Inclusion for All



If you are a family member or advocate of a person with disability, you understand the struggles of people with disability regarding education, housing, transport and employment. It's time to make our voices heard and demand that politicians commit to ending segregation. We need to ensure that every one has the opportunity to secure a better future.

This guide will provide you with the necessary steps to make sure your message is heard and to advocate for the support our families and friends deserve. Let's work together to create a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

## STEPS FOR ACTION

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### 01

Visit our campaign website and send our email template to your local NSW MP

### 02

Organise a meeting

### 03

Prepare for your meeting

### 04

During the meeting

### 05

After the meeting

### 06

Prepare templates and review our briefing paper for conversation ideas



The "Better Together, Inclusion for All" campaign aims to ensure people with disability have access to inclusive education, employment, housing, transport and community so we can create a more inclusive society.

# MEETING YOUR LOCAL MP

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## Organise a meeting

Send an email to request a meeting. If you don't hear back within 10 days, send a friendly reminder or give them a call. Be politely persistent.

## Prepare for your meeting

Research your politician. Find out if/how they've previously voted on these issues and what their interests are, so you can connect with them on a personal level.

## During the meeting

Remember to always be respectful, clear and concise. Introduce yourself and share your family's story. If you have other parties present, make sure there is a clear understanding of their role.

### **Most importantly, state your ask:**

I support the 'Better Together, Inclusion for All' Campaign and call on you and your party to endorse the Position statement on Inclusive Education from the Disability Royal Commission Final Report Recommendations and support the expectation that the NSW Government's response must:

1. Accept Recommendations 7.1 – 7.13 which address the major reforms needed to overcome barriers to safe, equal and inclusive education.
2. Accept Recommendation 7.14 to gradually phase out and end segregated education.

These must be implemented with clear timelines, transparency around the process and co-design with people with disability, their families and representative organisations.

If they refuse, thank them for listening and assure them that these are voting issues for constituents like you and your family. You can also ask them if they can connect you with other community groups, so that you can share these issues with them.

## After the meeting

Send a follow up email to the politician and hold them accountable on anything they agreed to. Please email an update to [communications@family-advocacy.com](mailto:communications@family-advocacy.com)

# TEMPLATE 1: WRITING AND SENDING AN EMAIL TO YOUR MP

**Clearly state the issue and your 'ask' in the first paragraph. Here's an example:**

*As a constituent in your electorate, I ask you to support the Better Together, Inclusion for All campaign in response to the Disability Royal Commission's recommendations regarding inclusive education.*

*The Disability Royal Commission heard overwhelming evidence that people living in segregated settings are more likely to experience violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. All Commissioners agreed that "Education is the starting point for an inclusive society", that mainstream schools need major reforms to overcome the barriers to safe, equal and inclusive education plus reforms are required to ensure that no one is forced to participate in settings designed exclusively for people with disability.*

*I feel strongly about inclusive education. As my representative, I encourage you to support the expectation that the NSW Government:*

- 1. Accept Recommendations 7.1 – 7.13 which address the major reforms needed to overcome barriers to safe, equal and inclusive education.*
- 2. Accept Recommendation 7.14 to gradually phase out and end segregated education.*

*These must be implemented with clear timelines, transparency around the process and co-design with people with disability, their families and representative organisations.*

*I call on the government to give significant weight to the three Commissioners Galbally, McEwin and Bennett who made Recommendation 7.14 as they have lived experience of disability, it aligns with Australia's international human rights obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031, and the NDIS Review recommendations (Action 2.5), and NSW Inclusive Education Policy. It acknowledges the legitimacy of disabled people's perspectives, and the potential concerns of parents and teachers.*

*This recommendation proposes a phased and responsible transition, complete with practical, time-bound targets and budgets. Whilst I understand the longer timeframe of ending segregation by 2051 is intended to ensure sufficient time for implementing reforms in mainstream education, the suggested timeframe is unduly conservative and risks leaving two more generations of children behind. I strongly recommend that the government tightens this timeframe so less children are impacted negatively by continued segregation.*

*I seek a meeting to discuss this issue with you and share my lived experience and why this is important to me. I also respectfully request that you forward my view to the Minister for Education and Early Learning, Prue Car MP, mindful the government must respond by the end of March, 2024.*

*I look forward to receiving your response from the Minister for Education and Early Learning.*

# TEMPLATE 2: CALLING YOUR LOCAL MP

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Calling a politician is a quick and easy way to let them know what matters to you. You can find their number on their website. Most times, you won't speak with the actual politician but rather one of their staff. Either way, what you are saying will be noted.

## Here is an example:

*Hello, my name's [name] and I live in [electorate].*

*I am a (person with disability, parent, or family member of a person with disability). Right now, people with disability in NSW do not have the same access to inclusive education. We need to eliminate the discriminatory practice of segregation and create a universally accessible, high-quality, and inclusive education system.*

*(Share how these issues have affected you or the person with disability you care for.)  
[Share their/your lived experience].*

*Inclusive education can only be achieved through ongoing enhancement of mainstream practices alongside a phased and responsible transition away from segregated approaches. Whilst there was a suggested timeframe to do this by 2051 as part of the Royal Disability Commission Report, the timeframe is unduly conservative and risks leaving two more generations of children behind. I strongly recommend that the government tightens this timeframe so less children are impacted negatively by continued segregation.*

*A commitment to these issues will guarantee my vote in the next election.*

*Thank you for your time.*





# BRIEFING PAPER

## OUR VISION

Family Advocacy's 'Better Together, Inclusion for All' campaign in response to the Disability Royal Commission's Recommendations aims to ensure people with disability have access to inclusive education, employment, housing, transport and community so we can create a more inclusive society.

## CURRENT SITUATION

The Disability Royal Commission (DRC) heard overwhelming evidence that people with disability in segregated settings are more likely to experience violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. All Commissioners agreed that reforms are required to ensure that no one is forced to participate in settings designed exclusively for people with disability. Importantly, the six Commissioners made the key point: "Education is the starting point for an inclusive society".

Sadly, many children and young people with disability are currently segregated from their peers and set up on a life pathway with poor employment outcomes and social isolation from the general community. This is in conflict with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability and Australia's Disability Strategy 2021 to 2031.

## THE SOLUTION

We call on the NSW government to:

1. Accept Recommendations 7.1 – 7.13 which address the major reforms needed to overcome barriers to safe, equal and inclusive education.
2. Accept Recommendation 7.14 to gradually phase out and end segregated education.

These must be implemented with clear timelines, transparency around the process and co-design with people with disability, their families and representative organisations.

# WHY IS INCLUSION SO IMPORTANT?

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Inclusion is important because it sees every Australian thrive in our community.

All Commissioners in the Disability Royal Commission Report agreed that "Education is the starting point for an inclusive society", that mainstream schools need major reforms to overcome the barriers to safe, equal and inclusive education and reforms are required to ensure that no one is forced to participate in settings designed exclusively for people with disability.

There is an overwhelming amount of evidence-based research that supports people with disability learning alongside their peers or working in paid meaningful employment. Some of these benefits include:

## **Benefits for students who experience disability:**

- greater academic and vocational outcomes
- greater social interaction, resulting in more opportunities to establish and maintain social connections
- increased development of speech.

## **Benefits for all students:**

- elevated self-esteem
- improved behavioural development, with less 'disorderly' behaviour
- empathy and understanding
- opportunities to engage with friendships with a better understanding of how to include people of all abilities
- equitable education and care.

Children who engage in school alongside people with disabilities have also been found to benefit academically, with equal or improved outcomes than their peers in non-inclusive settings.

## **Benefits for teachers and educators:**

- professional growth
- increased personal satisfaction
- confidence in delivering the curriculum.

## **Benefits for families and the community:**

- greater psychological and economic wellbeing for parents
- parents may feel more supported and confident to return to work
- greater community engagement

# FAQ SHEET: A DISCUSSION GUIDE ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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## Campaign FAQs/objections

Question/objection: Why does this matter?

**Response: Schools provide children with their first relationship with the world outside of their families, enabling the development of social relationships and interactions. Respect and understanding grow when a range of different students from diverse backgrounds play, socialise, and learn together.**

Question/objection: Children with disabilities need special support and attention which they can only get in special schools or support units OR Special schools and support units have better resources for dealing with kids with disabilities

**Response: Every child learns differently and need to be supported throughout their education to reach their potential. Our local public schools must be able to accommodate all students. Education systems that exclude and segregate perpetuates discrimination. When education is more inclusive, so are our communities.**

Question/objection: Children with disabilities will be bullied by other kids or socially isolated in mainstream schools

**Response: Everyone, regardless of who they are, can enjoy being a valued part of a school community. When our schools reflect the diversity of our communities, everyone benefits.**

Question/objection: Teachers in mainstream schools aren't trained to teach kids with disabilities

**Response: In order to make our schools truly inclusive, all teachers must be equipped with the skills to support every student. We need to remove the barriers that exclude children with disabilities from their local school. That's why we want to ensure that educators have the training, flexibility, and resources to teach students with diverse needs and learning styles.**



Question/objection: Class sizes are already too large - adding kids with disabilities to the mix will make it harder for teachers and disadvantage all students

**Response: Every child deserves a place in their local school, one that is well-equipped to support all of its students, and the NSW Government can make this a reality. The Government must commit to providing teacher and staff training; improving infrastructure, learning materials, and equipment; and revising curricula to implement inclusive education successfully.**

Question/objection: If not enough kids enrol in special schools or support units, they won't be able to stay open then staff lose their jobs

**Response: We can't rely on an outdated system that separates children with disabilities from their peers. There will always be opportunities for well-trained teachers in our classrooms.**

Question/objection: It's too hard to change the system for a new one that we aren't sure works.

**Response: We know that schools that provide supportive, context-appropriate conditions for learning demonstrate better outcomes for every child. Across the world, and here at home, children with disabilities are thriving in inclusive classrooms.**

Question/objection: Isn't the standard curriculum inaccessible for children with disabilities?

**Response: Ensuring our children grow up in an environment that values their education is everyone's responsibility. That's why we need educators, social workers, parents, and students—to work together and participate in the design, delivery, and monitoring of education in our classrooms.**



**ALL people in NSW, no matter their circumstances, should have access to an inclusive education, housing and employment opportunities.**

**Better Together, Inclusion for All**

# LET'S GET SERIOUS ABOUT INCLUSION



Better Together, Inclusion for All

FAMILY  
ADVOCACY

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