

Media Release
NSW Greens Dr John Kaye MLC
19 July 2010

INQUIRY CONDEMNS INADEQUATE FUNDING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A NSW Upper House Inquiry has thrown down the gauntlet to the state and federal governments to provide more money and support for students with disabilities and other special needs in NSW public schools, according to Greens NSW MP John Kaye.

The Standing Committee's report is available at <http://bit.ly/rp100719>.

Dr Kaye said: "Both the Keneally and Gillard governments have failed in their duty to provide the resources needed to provide quality education for children who struggle with intellectual and physical disabilities, autism, mental illness and learning difficulties.

"The Committee heard from hundreds of hard working teachers and desperate parents who were at their wits end trying to compensate for a lack of places and appalling levels of funding support for children with special needs in mainstream classrooms.

"The recommendations are a clear agenda for the federal and state elections.

"The Keneally government's proposed reorganisation of special needs funding came in for stinging criticism from teachers. The Committee was warned that the loss of funding and specialist teachers would make an already difficult situation much worse.

"The Inquiry found that the trial of the so-called School Learning Support program should be independently evaluated. This will inevitably expose a shabby attempt by the NSW government to cut costs on services for some of the state's most vulnerable children.

"The Greens are particularly concerned that the loss of specialist language classes will brutally disadvantage students who are experiencing delays in learning how to talk and comprehend.

"NSW Education Minister Verity Firth and Shadow Minister Adrian Piccoli must commit to deliver more funds for support classes, Schools of Specific Purposes and assistance for children in mainstream classrooms.

"The report offers a yardstick to measure both party's commitment to teachers, parents and students," Dr Kaye said.

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