



Quality Schools

Fairer funding for students with disability

Funding for students with disability will continue to grow from 2018

Over the next decade, the Australian Government will grow its record level of funding for schools from \$17.5 billion in 2017 to \$30.6 billion in 2027.

The Government will invest \$242.3 billion for schools recurrent funding from 2018 to 2027. Of this, an estimated \$21.2 billion will be provided for the students with disability loading.

On average, funding for students with disability will grow by 5.9 per cent each year.

Current funding for students with disability is inconsistent

Funding for students with disability is currently provided to students that are eligible for support in the state in which they live.

Each state has a different definition of disability which means a student with the same disability can currently be funded in one state but not another.

The current loading is a flat rate for all students with disability regardless of the impact of their disability. Yet we know that the level of support needed for each student with disability to participate fully in school can vary considerably.

From 2018, funding for students with disability will be fairer

New funding arrangements will focus on student need with a Schooling Resource Standard, as recommended by the 2011 Review of Funding for Schooling, led by Mr David Gonski AC. A base amount will be provided for every student with additional funding for disadvantage, including a funding loading for students with disability.

The Gonski Review recommended that the disability loading should be based on a national definition of disability, with greater levels of funding for students with higher levels of need.

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) gives us a national definition of a student with disability. The NCCD also groups students with disability by the level of support they need to access and participate in learning.

From 2018, the student with disability loading will be based on the national collection, which will mean fairer and better targeted funding for students with disability.

Using NCCD data recognises the professional knowledge, practice and judgements of teachers and school staff who know best the educational needs of their students. Through the collection, teachers make evidence-based decisions about: students who are receiving support to access education because of disability and the level of support being provided for each student with disability.

The current student with disability loading provides a flat rate of 186 per cent of the base per student amount for students with disability attending mainstream schools, and 223 per cent for students with disability attending special schools. This flat loading does not reflect the broad spectrum of students with disabilities and the differentiation in costs.

Under the new arrangements, funding will be informed by the NCCD and based on a per student amount at each of the three levels of additional support needed by a student with disability – supplementary, substantive and extensive.

The NCCD captures a fourth level of support, defined as ‘support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice’, which means a student requires monitoring and support from the teacher and school staff; for example personalised learning but this can be done without the need for additional funding.

Students that are counted in the top three levels of the NCCD will get the loading, regardless of the state in which they live. There will be three different loading amounts so that funding for a student will more closely reflect the level of support they need to participate fully in school.

Further consultation

The Australian Government will further consult to ensure the record level of funding for students with disability is delivered in a way that best supports the needs of these students, particularly those with the greatest needs.

The new national collection provides nationally consistent information and the Commonwealth is working with states and the non-government sector to continue to improve this important collection.