

14 August 2023

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP
Minister for Education

Open Letter to the Minister for Education

Dear Minister,

As disability organisations we are deeply concerned about the proposed cuts to Visiting Teachers.

The proposed cuts mean students with disability lose 80+ front line teachers and will be the only students to be directly impacted by budget cost saving measures.

Visiting Teachers have been an integral part of the Victorian education system for more than 40 years. They provide in-classroom support to thousands of students with disability across the state every year.

Visiting Teachers have specialist skills and qualifications that provide essential support to student learning and bolster the inclusive practice of all teachers and schools.

We understand that while some hearing and vision Visiting Teachers will continue, the cuts will still result in less support for students who are Deaf/hard of hearing and those who are Blind/low vision. Students with physical disability, chronic health issues and autism will all be negatively impacted.

We are concerned by comments that Visiting Teachers duplicate newly created roles as part of the Disability Inclusion Reforms. Disability Inclusion represents an investment to address the identified lack of support for students with disability at school. The new Inclusion Outreach Coaches will play an important role in building the capability of schools, but they were never intended to replicate or replace the role of Visiting Teachers.

The proposed cuts are in stark contradiction to the Government's election and budget commitments to better support students with disability.

We call on you to continue the Visiting Teacher program.

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