

Mr & Mrs R Clarke
4 Cowrang Ave
Terrey Hills NSW 2084

21st June, 2007

Mr Rob Stokes
Member for Pittwater
1725 Pittwater Road
Mona Vale NSW 2103

Dear Mr Stokes,

I am writing to you on behalf of my wife and I regarding the funding for a teachers aid for our disabled son, Daniel, as we prepare for his entry into High School in 2009. As you may be aware, preparing for a disabled child's transition into a school takes years of planning and with only 18 months away from Daniels' High School years we are commencing the necessary preparations.

Daniel is 10 years old and has moderate Cerebral Palsy and uses a manual wheelchair to provide his mobility needs. Daniel currently is a pupil at **Terrey Hills Public School** (THPS) where he has been since Kindergarten. Throughout his primary years he has received the dedication of a teacher's aid for all of his time at school.

As we prepare his integration into High School we are faced with a dilemma, our school of choice for Daniels needs, is **Northern Beaches Christian School**, however due to it not receiving the same funding as a public high school we are faced with Daniel not receiving the necessary personal assistance required for a child with Cerebral Palsy.

Northern Beaches Christian School (NBCS) is the most appropriate choice for Daniels' needs for the following reasons;

- Closest to home
- Disabled ramps already established
- Undercover walkways already established
- Disabled toilets already established
- Ground is flat enabling access to all areas of the school
- Easy access to all classrooms
- New Library to be completed in the next two years includes an elevator
- NBCS have a Wheel Chair access bus to enable Daniel to be included on school excursions
- Excellent Christian values and personal standards

NBCS, as an independent Christian school, only receives between \$5,000 - \$7,500 towards a teacher's aid, depending upon the level of support Daniel is assessed to require.

At THPS the funding received towards his teachers aid, through the public system, is \$22,000 per annum. This means we are facing a shortfall of necessary funding of approximately \$17,000 per annum.

Alternatively, if we were to choose the nearest public school to our home it would be **Davidson High School** which would require similar 'disabled' modifications for which **Terrey Hills Public School** received when preparing for Daniel to commence primary school. After discussing

Daniel's requirements with Davidson High School they have confirmed the school is **not equipped for disabled access** and specifically indicating the following would be required:

- A disabled toilet would require to be designed and constructed
- All walkways would need to be covered – currently no walkways are covered
- Many of their buildings are two storey which means **each building** would require an elevator so as not to disadvantage Daniel from attending specific classes.
- Ramps are required for access in/out of many buildings
- Guard rails would need to be erected (OH&S)

As I have been the President of the School Council for **Terrey Hills Public School** for the last five years I am in a position to provide an informed estimate of at least \$1,000,000 in capital expenditure required in order to perform the modifications to Davidson High School for them to accommodate Daniels' personal requirements.

It would stand to reason that a maximum investment for Daniels immediate needs of approximately \$22k per annum on a teacher's aid, in an independent school, would be a considerably better investment.

As we have been residents of the Northern Beaches for most of our lives, and currently reside in Terrey Hills, we are seeking your assistance in helping to resolve this situation to ensure Daniel receives the most appropriate education and attention in his high school years at a location convenient to his home.

I look forward to hearing from you so please do not hesitate to contact either my wife or I should you require further information or clarification on the above.

Yours sincerely,

Rodney Clarke MPD (AIPM), JP

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