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To the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of my daughter [REDACTED] who has dyspraxia and is 5 years old. Specifically I am writing to inform you of her communication difficulties and the impact this has had on our lives. When she was 2 years old we realised there was a problem as she could only say 2 words clearly. We attended regular private speech therapy for year at our own expense and placed her on the Yarra community health waiting list. During this time I was told that she has behavioural problems and communicates and gets her way purely by stamping her feet and having tantrums. We have paid for many paediatrician appointments and then a second private speech therapist who actually broke through to her at age 3. She was 3 years old and had 5 words she could use to communicate. She was unable to communicate with other children or adults that did not know her as they could not predict her needs and wants.

She was finally called in to the public system and began weekly speech therapy from 3-5 years old. The speech therapist is amazing and has really helped her come a long way. She was tested and diagnosed as having dyspraxia and a phonological disorder.

She began regular occupational therapy through the public system then had 6 months of intensive private occupational therapy to help get her ready for school.

Last year was one of the most emotionally draining and upsetting years of my life. I was trying to work out what would be best for my child who does not QUALIFY for sufficient aiding to go into a normal school, would not benefit from repeating kinder and yet WOULD NOT survive being thrown in the deep end at a "Normal" state primary school. This is because she CAN NOT be understood by unknown speakers due to the lack of clarity of her speech. SHE WOULD NOT be understood by a class teacher who also has 20-29 other pupils in the classroom. SHE WOULD NOT be understood by her class mates. I have rung the education department many times to be told since she has normal IQ and understanding there is nothing they can

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do about it. WELL I decided to do something about it. I looked into all schooling options and opted to send her to a EXPENSIVE private school in Kew called Andale that is for children like mine. They do not qualify for a "special school" receive no or little funding at a normal school and thereby the parents are forced to pay so their child actually has a chance to access a "normal education" which we are all supposedly entitled to but in her case - are not provided with.

Speech problems have greatly effect her ability to function in a "normal classroom" this NEEDS to be recognised as a problem. If a person can't communicate with others they may as well be alone as the frustration it gives the child is NOT FAIR. Why not send a committee member to <sup>school and let</sup> ~~an overseas country and let~~ the students speak to them in english then insist the committee member speak to them in a language they can not <sup>understand.</sup> ~~themselves speak~~. Tell me after one whole day if the person found it acceptable.

Myself and my family have experienced extreme stress over her inability to communicate with others. She is highly strung and highly frustrated with herself due to not being able to communicate effectively. I am greatly worried what impact her inability to communicate will have on her future. This disability needs to be more recognised and better funded.