

Attention: The Hon Mr James Merlino
Minister for Education
Victorian Government
Email: james.merlino@parliament.vic.gov.au

3 May 2019

PLEASE BRING THIS LETTER TO THE EYES OF MINISTER MERLINO

Dear Minister Merlino,

Request for urgent assistance in relation to extremely concerning treatment of children with disabilities in Victorian schools

In an article in June 2017 from *The Age* on the extremely concerning practice of restraint and seclusion of children with disabilities in Victorian schools, the Department of Education and Training vowed to start releasing data on restraint and seclusion of Victorian students¹. A recent call to the Department of Education and Training failed to elicit such data.

Given the fact that the restraint and seclusion of students with disabilities in Victorian schools has been raised as a breach of human rights, including a breach of the *Convention against Torture*, by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission since 2012 in its report "*Held Back - Experiences of Students with Disabilities in Victorian Schools*", and in a number of other reports since, we are disturbed that there is no evidence that these practices are now being eliminated.

Indeed, a review of Department of Education and Training behaviour guidelines that was committed to last year has not reported back to stakeholders, despite the feedback to the working group of very serious concerns regarding the ongoing nature of these problems and the inability of any 'guidelines' of the Department to positively affect the situation.

We request your urgent intervention to assist us to access the data on these life-threatening practices, and their public release

We look forward to receiving your positive response to our urgent request as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,



Jan Ashford, Chairperson Disability Advocacy Victoria Inc.

¹ <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/secret-data-on-school-restraint-and-seclusion-to-be-exposed-20170609-gwo8t1.html>