

FEDERAL ELECTION

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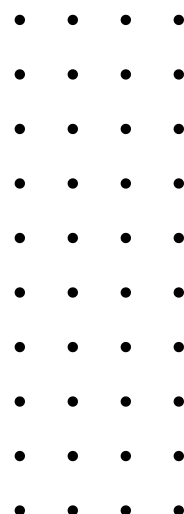
ELECTION BREAKDOWN

Inclusive Education Policy



sa4i

**STUDENT ALLIANCE
4 INCLUSION**





WHO ARE WE?

We are the **Student Alliance 4 Inclusion**, a **community organisation** made up and led by **students with lived experience of disability from Australia** with the common goal of ensuring that students with disability are **guaranteed their right to high quality, accessible and inclusive education**.

This document is our election breakdown on how **some** of the Australian political parties and political candidates align with the goal of inclusive education, so **Australian voters can be more informed on where their politicians stand on this important issue**.

WHAT IS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION?

Inclusive education is a fundamental human right of ALL children and young people. It's guaranteed to all disabled people in countries that have signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Australia is one of these countries, so all disabled Australians should be guaranteed this right.

Essentially, inclusive education is underpinned by the following concepts:

disabled and non-disabled students learning in the same general classroom

universal design for learning

academic and social support for all

ending segregation

co-design with students and families

WHAT DO WE CALL FOR?

We call for policies that help Australia move towards a future where inclusive education is standard practice in all schools, where every student has their needs met and is and feels genuinely included in every classroom.

1. National Roadmap to Inclusive Education

The SA4I wants the Australian government to lead the adoption, with all States, of a National Roadmap to Inclusive Education. This roadmap outlines, with a timeline, the policy and practical actions that should be taken to transition Australia to a fully inclusive education system and phase out segregated education for students with disability. The SA4I supports adopting the Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education (ACIE) Roadmap (www.acie.org.au).

2. Legal Right to Inclusive Education

The SA4I calls on the government to ensure there is a legally protected right for students with disabilities to receive an inclusive education in Australia. Education and disability discrimination legislation must include a strong and clear statutory right for students with disability to have an inclusive education - while the CRPD was ratified in 2008, there is still no domestic legal protection at national or State level.

3. Resourcing Schools to Realise Inclusion

Schools have to be properly supported and funded so they have the resources to include students properly. That means re-directing funding away from segregation and towards inclusion, and ensuring that all schools (especially public schools which have been historically underfunded, as identified by the Gonski review) receive adequate funding support inclusive practice.

4. National Body to Ensure Compliance

There must be a national body properly and specifically empowered to ensure the right to inclusive education is upheld. There must be robust and transparent investigations of violations of the rights and prompt and effective remediation and accountability for violations of the right, to ensure real compliance.

5. Data Collection to Ensure Equal Outcomes

Data should be collected to monitor the participation and successes of students with disability. Schools need to be collecting disaggregated data to see how students with disability are being included relative to their non-disabled peers. This data on matters like attendance, suspensions, exclusions and school enjoyment levels allows schools to monitor whether they are meeting the required standard of a high quality, inclusive education, but also allows schools to see the data of other schools that are meeting the standard, to see how they can improve their own practices.



OUR POSITION IN SUMMARY...

The Student Alliance 4 Inclusion calls for the **progressive realisation of inclusive education**.

What do we want specifically?

national roadmap to inclusive education

legal right to inclusive education

resourcing schools to realise inclusion

national body to ensure compliance

data collection to ensure equal outcomes

WHY DO WE CALL FOR THIS?

Our positions are strongly backed by international human rights standards, and what the peak bodies of disabled Australians are calling for. Primarily, we have formed our positions based on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the recent findings of the Royal Commission into the Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS?

As a disabled Australian, your human right to an inclusive education is recognised Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. But what does Article 24 actually say?

HUMAN RIGHTS

ARTICLE 24 OF THE CRPD

Article 24.1 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) provides:

“State Parties [including Australia] recognise the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, State Parties **shall ensure an inclusive education system**.

UN General Comment No. 4 on Article 24 says:

Inclusion involves a process of systemic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers with a vision serving to provide all students of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences. Placing students with disabilities within mainstream classes without accompanying structural changes to, for example, organisation, curriculum and teaching and learning strategies, does not constitute inclusion. Furthermore, integration does not automatically guarantee the transition from segregation to inclusion.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN AUSTRALIA

Essentially, Article 24 of the CRPD guarantees all disabled Australians the right to education in inclusive regular classrooms where they receive the supports they need and are not segregated on the basis of disability. It has been 17 years since Australia ratified the CRPD in 2008, and yet disabled Australians are still being denied an education system where inclusive education is the norm for ALL students, not hard-fought or a privilege for some.

This federal election we call on all Parliamentary parties and candidates to not only commit to inclusive education but to ensure that the right to inclusive education of students with disability is protected in our domestic law, so it can be realised for all Australians.



Inclusive Education Election Breakdown

ROYAL COMMISSION

RECOMMENDATION 7.13

a. The Education Ministers Meeting should publicly release a 'National Roadmap to Inclusive Education' for students with disability.

The roadmap should:

- detail the outcome measures, targets, actions and milestones for delivering the Royal Commission's recommendations for inclusive education
- provide public transparency on how the recommendations will be implemented and progress tracked and publicly reported.

b. State and territory education ministers should report annually to the Education Ministers Meeting on progress against agreed milestones and associated outcome performance measures in the roadmap. Annual progress reports should outline actions to overcome identified barriers to progress and be publicly released.

c. The Education Ministers Meeting should identify the National Roadmap to Inclusive Education in its 2024 report to National Cabinet as one of its priorities and include it in its workplan.

HOW DO WE CREATE OUR ELECTION BREAKDOWN?

In our election breakdown, we analyse the following:

- prior commitment to inclusive education
- prior action on inclusive education
- any prior attitudes towards disability inclusion

We provide information on the above in the form of:

- a short summary on the party's/candidate's policy position and commitments
- provide a yes/no answer on whether they have a commitment to inclusive education
- provide a ranking on a scale of 'strength of commitment' to inclusive education

See scale below:

commitment? no	no commitment
commitment? no	no outright commitment, touched on subject at some level
commitment? unclear	no commitment technically but other policies align strongly with inclusion
commitment? yes	technically committed but it has been a while or it is a very weak commitment
commitment? yes	there is a commitment but it is not a policy priority or often discussed issue
commitment? yes	there is a strong commitment and it is a policy priority

REC. 7.13 IN AUSTRALIA

The Royal Commission found that many disabled Australians were not having their right to an inclusive education met under the current systems. As such, they have recommended the use of a National Roadmap to Inclusive Education to ensure that the government and education system remain on track to progressively realise inclusive education in Australia.

Student Alliance 4 Inclusion endorses the Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education Roadmap (ACIE Roadmap) which can be accessed [here](#), or by scanning the QR code below.

A national roadmap would enable progress to be tracked to ensure that disabled students have their rights met.



DISCLAIMER: logos on the following pages are used for identification and commentary purposes only, and do not imply affiliation with or endorsement of parties or candidates.



Inclusive Education Election Breakdown

THE LABOR PARTY

How does the ALP measure up?



In 2019, prior to that year's election, the ALP announced their commitment to the following policies:

- a **National Inclusive Education Strategy**
- **\$300 million investment** in the first 3 years of a Labor government to back this strategy
- an **Initial Teacher Education Standards**, which includes an inclusive education framework

However, after an unsuccessful 2019 election, **Labor has not re-committed to any of these promises.**

The ALP **backed the Disability Royal Commission**, which the disability community had been calling for.

However, when the findings of the Royal Commission were returned to government, **the Labor government only accepted Rec 7.13 (Roadmap to Inclusive Education)** in principle but did not respond to 7.14 which calls for the phasing out and ending special/segregated education:

"notes recommendations 7.14 and 7.15 around the phasing out of segregated education. The Australian Government recognises the ongoing role of specialist settings in service provision for students with disability and providing choice for students with disability and their families. State and territory governments will continue to be responsible for making decisions about registration of schools in their jurisdictions."

The **response to 7.14 does not support the realisation of inclusive education for all students with disability.**

The report did state that the ALP would support "working with state and territory governments in partnership with people with disability to help educators, schools and school systems deliver more inclusive education to improve outcomes for school students with disability". Though **'more' inclusive education is not a commitment to universal access and inclusion.**

commitment?
yes

technically committed to but it has been a while or it is a weak commitment

THE COALITION

How does the Coalition measure up?



In early 2025, the Coalition released 'The Priorities of the Dutton Coalition Government'. **The word disability is not mentioned once in its 44 page election platform**, and there are no policies relevant to inclusive education.

As far as we can tell, the last time inclusive education was discussed by the Coalition in any capacity was 2020, in the NSW Liberal Party's Disability Strategy, **when the NSW Liberals announced they would be encouraging teachers to train in a special/inclusive education diploma.**

However, the concept of 'special education' is often inconsistent with 'inclusive education' under the human rights framework (Article 24 of the CRPD) as it allows segregation. Investment in segregated special education does not lead to inclusive education.

The **NSW Liberals policy seems to have little connection to the Coalition federal election platform.**

There is almost **no information available on a national commitment to inclusive education** from the Coalition.

Apart from inclusive education, **the Coalition stated in 2022 that they would allocate \$100 million to disability advocacy and legal services.**

Inclusive education **does not appear to be a priority** for the Coalition.

commitment?
no

no outright commitment, touched on subject at some level



Inclusive Education Election Breakdown

INDEPENDENTS

How do some of the Independents measure up?



DISCLAIMER: Because independent members do not have the resources and the 'party machinery' to develop and explore policies on all topics in the same way that major parties might, it is often the case that independent members and minor party members will not have policy developed on some specific issues. Therefore, an independent candidate with no developed policy on inclusive education should not immediately be assumed to be unsupportive, however it may be inferred that inclusive education is not a policy priority for them.

Independent candidates **without policy on inclusive education** (as far as we could find) include:

- Hon. Kate Chaney MP
- Hon. Sophie Scamps MP
- Hon. Zali Stegall MP
- Hon. Monique Ryan MP
- Hon. Allegra Spender MP
- Hon. Kylea Jane Tink MP
- Hon. Helen Haines MP

commitment?
no

no commitment

Zoe Daniel: Independent Hon. Zoe Daniel MP has **no explicit mention of inclusive education**, but does have **clear policy stances on adopting the recommendations of the Royal Commission and CRPD** and doing so by listening to Australians with lived experience.

commitment?
yes

committed to in theory by
extension of other policies

THE GREENS

How do the Greens measure up?



Under the Greens' Disability Rights and Services statement, the Greens make a **strong commitment to the realisation of inclusive education**.

Paragraph 33 of the statement reads:

"Education settings to be provided with the necessary funding and resources to **ensure disabled students are educated in inclusive settings in accordance with their rights under Article 24, General Comment No. 4 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and in line with the Australian Greens Education policy.**"

Paragraph 35 of the statement reads:

"The elimination of segregated education in all schools and educational facilities, and the implementation of **system-wide inclusive education** by no later than 2030. This must be supported by a comprehensive rights-based transition plan developed in consultation with the community. This will ensure that **disabled students' needs and rights will be met and protected in all stages of the transition to an inclusive education system that benefits all students.**"

Several members of the Greens have been particularly vocal in making **inclusive education a policy priority**, including Qld Senator Penny Allman-Payne and WA Senator Hon. Jordon Steele-John, who following the suggestion that segregated would be phased out by 2052 commented:

"To put [that deadline] in perspective, that would mean a disabled child born today would be likely...educated in a separate, segregated setting. {...} That is lonely, that is abusive, that is unacceptable."

You can access the Greens' statement on Disability Rights and Services by accessing the QR code below or clicking the link [here](#).

Overall, inclusive education appears to be a policy priority for the Greens.



commitment?
yes

there is a strong commitment
and it is a policy priority



Inclusive Education Election Breakdown

ONE NATION

How does Pauline Hanson's One Nation measure up?



Pauline Hanson's One Nation appears to have **no commitment to inclusive education**.

On the topic of education, Hon. Senator Pauline Hanson stated that **"These children should actually go into a [segregated] special classroom, [be] looked after and given that special attention."**

In regards to other disability policies, Hon. Pauline Hanson was criticised in 2023 by the Disability Discrimination Commissioner Ben Gauntlett after **making offensive remarks about disabled people** following her talk about the NDIS. The Commissioner commented, "Politically motivated and callous use of humour at the expense of people with disability does not improve social policy. Rather, it creates fear, division and resentment."

Essentially, One Nation has no commitment to inclusive education, rather, **they support segregated education**.

commitment?
no

no commitment and support for segregation

VICTORIAN SOCIALIST

How does the Victorian Socialist Party measure up?

VICTORIAN SOCIALISTS

The Victorian Socialist Party appears to make **no explicit mention of inclusive education** in their Disability Justice statement.

However, they do heavily mention their **commitment to ensuring the elimination of barriers to education** for people with disability. They additionally mention **ensuring that disabled people have the right to access all types of education**.

Their statements on education include:

"The elimination of barriers experienced by disabled people must be supported by targeted funding in all areas, including healthcare, housing, education, transport, and social and cultural support."

"Disabled people have a right to access education at all levels."

"Increase funding for specialist and focused school-based support (staff, resources and supports) to ensure that children can learn in an educational setting best suited to their individual needs."

commitment?
unclear

not technically committed but other policies align strongly with inclusion

TRUMPET OF PATRIOTS

How does the Trumpet of Patriots Party measure up?



The Trumpet of Patriots Party appears to have **no policy positions on inclusive education**. Further, there don't seem to be policies on disability, which may indicate that inclusive education and disability is not a party priority for the Trumpet of Patriots.

commitment?
no

no commitment

LIBERTARIAN POLICY

How does the Australian Libertarian Party measure up?



The Australian Libertarian Party appear to have **no policies on inclusive education**. They appear to have policies on education - none specifically relating to students with disability, and they don't appear to have no disability policies in general.

commitment?
no

no commitment

Inclusive Education Election Breakdown

PEOPLE FIRST PARTY

How does Gerard Rennick's People First Party measure up?



Gerard Rennick's People First Party appear to have **no policies on inclusive education**. They haven't expressed any policy on disability, inclusion or education. It could be assumed that it is not a policy priority for the People First Party.

commitment?
no

no commitment

AUSTRALIA'S VOICE

How does Australia's Voice measure up?



Australia's Voice appears to have **no policies on inclusive education**. There are no policies on education or disability - which may be due to how new their party is, only being established in late 2024.

There is little information about how they have voted in regards to disability-related issues. Their Senator, Hon. Fatima Payman, **voted against the recent cuts to the NDIS**.

commitment?
no

no commitment

KATTER'S AUSTRALIA

How does Katter's Australia Party measure up?



Katter's Australia Party appears to have **no policies on inclusive education or disability**. Bob Katter has **voted consistently for the development of the NDIS** - which isn't a full indication of his policy on inclusive education, but may be indicative of support for the disability community - though not necessarily inclusive education.

commitment?
no

no commitment

DAVID POCOCK PARTY

How does the David Pocock Party measure up?



David Pocock Party Senator Hon. David Pocock MP also appears to have **no clear policies on inclusive education**.

However, the Senator has thrown considerable support behind **post-school pathways to meaningful employment**, announcing support for abolishing the sub-minimum wage (as low as \$2.90 per hour) in April 2024. While this does not speak to his specific education policy, **it may indicate how he may vote on similar issues concerning meaningful and full inclusion**.

commitment?
unclear

not technically but other policies align strongly with disability inclusion

JACQUI LAMBIE NETWORK

How does the Jacqui Lambie Network measure up?



The Jacqui Lambie Network appears to have **no clear policies on inclusive education**.

The only instances of discussion on the topic of disability in education was when, in 2022, Hon. Jacqui Lambie **criticised the government for cutting funds for both special schools and independent schools** - which may indicate a policy preference towards segregated education, however this is **not explicitly stated**.

Additionally, it is hard to gauge the wider disability policies of the Jacqui Lambie Network, as their MP in the Senate, Hon. Jacqui Lambie, **did not participate in most votes/divisions** on subjects such as the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability or on the recent NDIS amendments.

Overall, inclusive education **does not appear to be a priority** for the Jacqui Lambie Network.

commitment?
no

no commitment



Summarised Findings

OUR FINDINGS

Our key findings from this election breakdown are that, on a broader, national level, inclusive education is not a policy priority for the vast majority of Australian political parties and candidates.

MAKING CHANGE

We encourage you to get involved in your local disability rights organisations that value lived experience, inclusive education and systemic change, and advocate in any way you can for our Parliaments to recognise and realise the right to inclusive education. We also encourage you to take the opportunity to have your say - whether that be attending a meeting of your local disability organisations, or making a short submission in your local law reviews (e.g. WA's recent School Education Act 1999 Review).

POLICY STRENGTH RANKED

Level 1. The Greens

commitment? yes	there is a strong commitment and it is a policy priority
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Level 3. The Labor Party

commitment? yes	technically committed to but it has been a while and it is a weak commitment
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Level 3. Zoe Daniel

commitment? yes	committed to in theory by extension of other policies
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Level 4. David Pocock Party

commitment? unclear	not technically but other policies align strongly with disability inclusion
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Level 4. Victorian Socialist Party

commitment? unclear	not technically but other policies align strongly with disability inclusion
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Level 5. The Coalition

commitment? no	no outright commitment, touched on subject at some level
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Level 6. Mentioned Independents

***applies to the Independents mentioned on page 6

commitment? no	no commitment
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Level 6. Australia's Voice

commitment? no	no commitment
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Level 6. Katter's Australia Party

commitment? no	no commitment
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Level 6. Jacqui Lambie Network

commitment? no	no commitment
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Level 6. People First Party

commitment? no	no commitment
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Level 6. Libertarian Party

commitment? no	no commitment
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Level 6. Trumpet of Patriots

commitment? no	no commitment
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Level 6. One Nation

commitment? no	no commitment and support for segregation
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