

Report calls for action on dyslexia

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NATIONAL recognition of dyslexia as a disability, with improved training and professional development for teachers to deal with the problem, are needed to address a source of poor literacy skills, says a report to the Federal Government.

The report to the federal parliamentary secretary for disabilities and children's services, Bill Shorten, says up to 10 per cent of people struggle to cope with dyslexia.

It says there are no pathways to diagnosis and support for children and adults with dyslexia. "In the education system there are few qualified to diagnose, and the wait time for school psychologists is up to a year," the report by the Dyslexia Working Party says.

"For adults, there is no process through Centrelink for support.

"Individuals therefore have to fund their own diagnosis and support. This leaves pensioners, low-income earners, students and the unemployed with nowhere to go."

The report says that dyslexia should be recognised as a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act through legislation at state and federal level. It also recommends improved training for students studying to become teachers and professional development for those already in the job, to help them identify and support students with dyslexia.

Student teacher training in evidence-based reading techniques is recommended to help them later identify school students at risk of long-term literacy problems. Schools should also have access to teachers with specialist skills in dealing with the problem.

The president of the Australian Education Union, Angelo Gavrielatos, said special education has been neglected by governments and was in desperate need of more resources.

"Special education remains one of the most neglected areas and we intend to put the spotlight on this inadequate level of funding in the lead-up to the federal budget," he said.

This story was found at: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/report-calls-for-action-on-dyslexia-20100122-mqp8.html>