

BRIEFING NOTE: Premier of Queensland, Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk
SUBJECT: Class action lawsuit Chronically Ill students v.s. Department of Education

Purpose:

The purpose of this briefing note is to inform the Hon Grace Grace of a class action lawsuit brought against the Department of Education by 80-critically ill students. The lawsuit claims that these students have not received equity of education as legislated by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.

Current Situation:

- 80 students with critical illnesses have started a class action lawsuit against the Department of Education.
- The lawsuit claims that the students are not receiving their legally mandated access to curriculum-based education and school support.
- The students are suing for \$80million, an estimated \$1million dollar per plaintiff.
- The \$1million per student figure is the estimated social loss of income per person as a result of an inadequate education.
- The students claim that the Department has failed to enact policies to ensure equitable access to education for students suffering from a chronic illness.

Urgency:

- All major Australian news networks will run a news story about this lawsuit
- The student representatives and lawyers will appear on A Current Affair at 7PM tonight

Recommendations for consideration:

- Schedule interviews with ABC's *The Drum* and Channel 9 *The Today Show*
- **Legally we cannot discuss the class action lawsuit.**
- We can discuss a new Department of Education spending initiative, investing in assistive technologies to aid students studying from home.
- Current budget for such an initiative is estimated at \$100 million.
- We have capacity to pledge training to teachers to develop confidence in assistive technologies.
 - Assistive technologies included are: Using Zoom to provide online classes for chronically ill students convalescing at home,
 - Partnering with *MissingSchool* and Meghan Gilmour to purchase additional 'See-Be Telepresence Robots'.