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Queensland Faces Push to Scrap New Special Schools Plan

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Australia’s Disability Discrimination Commissioner urges Queensland to abandon its plan to build six new special schools, citing a breach of inclusive education commitments, while the state defends the move due to rising demand.

Australia’s Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Rosemary Kayess, has called on the Queensland Government to halt its plan to construct six new special schools, arguing it contradicts the state’s commitment to inclusive education, as reported by ABC News on August 4, 2025. The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) emphasized that Queensland’s \$1 billion investment in segregated education, announced in the June 2025 state budget, undermines the National Roadmap for Inclusive Education, which all Australian governments endorsed. Kayess expressed deep concerns to Premier David

Crisafulli and Education Minister John-Paul Langbroek, stating that special schools perpetuate an outdated model that limits opportunities for students with disabilities.

Queensland's Education Minister John-Paul Langbroek defended the initiative, highlighting a 38% surge in special school enrolments since 2019, per a statement to ABC News on August 4, 2025. He argued that the new schools address parental demand for specialized education options, ensuring families have choices that suit their children's needs. The state's Department of Education website confirms its obligation to provide equitable access under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992, but critics, including educator Loren Swancutt, labeled the plan a "moral and human rights failure," citing Queensland's nation-leading inclusive education policy that lacks implementation.

Kayess, in her letter to Queensland officials, underscored that inclusive education in mainstream schools improves academic outcomes, reduces social exclusion, and enhances employment prospects for students with disabilities, according to the AHRC on July 25, 2025. She argued that funds for new special schools could instead bolster mainstream schools' resources, aligning with the Disability Royal Commission's recommendation for systemic reform. However, posts on X, like one from @stephgot on July 28, 2025, reflect public division, with some supporting parental choice and others decrying segregation.

The Queensland Government remains firm, with Langbroek emphasizing practical needs over ideological shifts. As teacher strikes loom over unrelated bargaining disputes, the debate over