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MEDIA RELEASE

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**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO EDUCATING
STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR SPECIAL NEEDS**

The Nationals Shadow Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli would like to make all parents aware that the NSW Parliament is currently conducting an inquiry into the provision of education to students with a disability or special needs.

“This is an important inquiry, particularly given the changes that have been made by the Government across in this area over the last 12 months,” Mr Piccoli said.

“2009 saw the NSW Government announce the axing of 2000 Support Teacher Learning Assistant positions – then NSW Labor said there would be a review.

“NSW Labor announced the closure of the Dalwood Centre and the Palm Avenue School, and then new Premier Keneally said there would be a review.

“Late last year Kingsdene Special School at Telopea closed, and parents of special needs students across the State were left uncertain as to what program or school was next in line to be axed.

“This inquiry will look at the provision of education to students with a disability or special needs attending primary or secondary schools in NSW, with a particular focus on what can be learned from International, Commonwealth and interstate approaches.

“It is a chance for the community to have its say after a tumultuous year in Special Education, so the timing is excellent,” Mr Piccoli said.

Mr Piccoli said the terms of reference should be consulted prior to making a submission, and these are available on the Parliament’s website www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/gpsc2

“There is a link to the inquiry on this webpage, and the closing date for submissions is Friday 19th February 2010,” Mr Piccoli said.

“Submissions to the inquiry can be made online, by email or in writing to the Committee, with all contact details available on the website.

“I would encourage all parents of children with disabilities and special needs, education stakeholders and the general community to make submissions to the inquiry so that their voices can be heard,” Mr Piccoli said.

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