



AUSTRALIAN  
LAWYERS  
FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS

PO Box A147,  
Sydney South  
NSW 1235  
[info@alhr.org.au](mailto:info@alhr.org.au)

## Media release

For immediate release 12 October 2017

### Restraint of Disabled Children in Schools: A Flagrant Breach of their Human Rights

Australian Lawyers for Human Rights (**ALHR**) is alarmed at a recent report of the restraint of a seven-year-old autistic boy in his classroom in NSW. ALHR is outraged at the use of restrictive practices against children with disabilities in schools, and urges NSW Education Minister, Rob Stokes, to abolish the use of these practices in NSW and implement penalties for their use.

“The use of restrictive practices, such as restraint and seclusion, to manage classroom behaviour is a clear violation of human rights standards. Children with disabilities are entitled to the same human rights as other children and to be treated with respect. ALHR is deeply troubled that children with disabilities are denied their rights to bodily integrity, liberty of person and inclusive education in classrooms across Australia,” says Susan Peukert, Co-chair of ALHR’s Disability Rights Subcommittee.

“ALHR is highly alarmed that restrictive practices are often dressed up as behavioural management techniques to address the challenging behaviours that may be exhibited by children with disabilities. Schools have a responsibility to prevent a child’s behaviour from escalating out of control and the use of restrictive practices is not an appropriate response,” according to Susan Peukert.

“It is the view of ALHR that behaviour management techniques should not include the use of restrictive practices. It is time to get serious about the continued use of restrictive practices against vulnerable children. It is insufficient for the Education Minister to state he will “review procedures and provide more training to teachers”.”

“The use of restrictive practices upon children with disabilities must be abolished and outlawed to ensure that the human rights of these children are respected. Children with disabilities must be protected from these practices and it is the position of ALHR that penalties should be introduced in circumstances where they are applied. It is time to characterise the use of restrictive practices upon children with disabilities as an assault, and for criminal penalties to apply to this outdated and damaging method of dealing with challenging behaviour,” adds Susan Peukert.

**Media Contact: Matt Mitchell      M:      0431 980 365      E: [media@alhr.org.au](mailto:media@alhr.org.au)**

*ALHR was established in 1993 and is a national association of Australian solicitors, barristers, academics, judicial officers and law students who practise and promote international human rights law in Australia. ALHR has active and engaged National, State and Territory committees and specialist thematic committees. Through advocacy, media engagement, education, networking, research and training, ALHR promotes, practices and protects universally accepted standards of human rights throughout Australia and overseas.*