



ON A MISSION



Picture Jackson Flindell

Teen wins support for dyslexia campaign

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Education Editor

A schoolgirl's crusade to help children who struggle to learn because they have dyslexia has won support from Education Minister Sue Ellery.

Jade Wheeler, 14, is campaigning for universities to improve teacher training by making it compulsory for all undergraduates to study a module on dyslexia.

In her heartfelt letter to politicians and vice-chancellors, the All Saints College student said she remembered struggling to learn to read when she first

started school. "I couldn't cope with maths and I was teased and bullied for my lack of knowledge of simple spelling words," she wrote.

Jade said that after she was diagnosed at the age of eight, her mother would book a meeting at the start of every school year to educate her new teacher on dyslexia and how simple adjustments could help her improve.

"I only remember one of my teachers even knowing what the word 'dyslexia' meant," she said. "I was one of the lucky ones whose parents went outside the school system to

get me help from trained professionals that taught me phonics and eventually how to read more than a few words on a page.

"Talking to teachers, they say there is little or no teaching on dyslexia and very little time spent on how to teach literacy properly using evidence-based approaches in Australian universities."

Ms Ellery said she met Jade recently to talk about her campaign to have more teachers trained to identify and support students with dyslexia.

"As a result I have written to the Federal Minister for Education, Dan Tehan,

and the vice-chancellors of all WA universities," she said. "I have told them about my support for Jade's campaign, saying that I agree that teacher quality and capacity is the key to better supporting students with dyslexia."

"I have asked Mr Tehan to investigate what action can be taken to improve university training for teachers to develop their understandings of dyslexia. And I have said to the universities that I am interested to know how they train students undertaking a teaching degree to identify and support students with dyslexia."