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MONEY NEEDS TO FOLLOW MOUTH

The Territory Government needs to put its money where it mouth is in respect to funding services for children with disabilities, says Dr Richard Lim, Acting Shadow Minister for Employment, Education and Training.

In a media release to mark the beginning of a three day conference on Down Syndrome, the Minister claims “The Territory Government is strongly committed to the provision of services for students with disabilities.”

“If only that was the case,” says Dr Lim.

“The fact is the Department of Education suffers from an acute shortage of psychologists, speech therapists and audiologists to provide specialist help for children with disabilities.

“In some cases children with disabilities in Territory schools have to wait more than 12 months just to get an appointment with an Education Department specialist.

“That time-frame is too long, by a long way.”

In his speech, the Minister highlighted “the importance of early intervention strategies to better meet the educational and social needs of Territory children and adolescents with Down Syndrome.”

“I couldn’t agree more, which is why it’s so disappointing that the Territory Government is failing to provide that early intervention.

“I sincerely hope the Minister takes heed from this conference and improves the speed of delivery of specialist assistance to children with disabilities in Territory schools.

“I look forward to the Minister’s commitment in next week’s budget.”

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