

GET SERIOUS ABOUT AUTISM

Autism and the 2022 Election

Autistic Australians need a government that is serious about autism, a government that will give them a fair go. Autistic people and their families will use their votes wisely in 2022 election.

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The time has come for Australia to get serious about Autism

Autistic Australians are being diagnosed in growing numbers and need seriously better outcomes. Issues for the autistic community are:

- **Employment** – Government and private industry anticipate emerging staff shortages. Employment rates for autistic people have always been unacceptably and unnecessarily low. Australia's next government must act to improve employment outcomes for Autistic Australians. Most Autistic adults are unemployed or underemployed. They want meaningful employment that engages them to their capacity.
- **Education** – is the foundation of employment. Australia's education systems fail the majority of Autistic students. Autistic employment will only improve when education is accessible and inclusive of Autistic learning styles.
- **Health** - Autistic people need a Highway to Health. The current health system does not recognise the needs of Autistic people. They need access to a diagnosis, all frontline health practitioners to be trained on autism and recognition of mental health requirements that includes trauma support. Autistic women require focus on their maternal and reproductive health unmet needs. Health, especially mental health, services are often inaccessible for autistic people, poor health outcomes reduce life expectancy.
- **Services and supports** - autism surprised the NDIS by emerging as its largest primary disability type (33% of NDIS participants in 2021), the NDIS resisted recognition of distinct needs of autistic people. Also, NDIS implementation annihilated services for autistic people who are deemed ineligible as NDIS participants. Governments largely ignore the needs of autistic people outside the NDIS.

Autistic Australians need a national autism boulevard – a highway or clear pathway to success in adult life. Autistic people need more than a strategy or good intentions to do better in future. Rather than hoping the above four issues separately deliver outcomes, Australia needs holistic national action delivering improved outcomes for Australia. Existing national disability, employment, health and education strategies ignore specific needs of autistic Australians. This lack of autism-related planning and actions costs the community and the economy dearly. It's bad economics.



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