

Subject: the creep is the author

From: Bob Buckley <convenor@a4.org.au>

Date: 26/02/2026, 11:09 am

To: Minister Butler <minister.butler@health.gov.au>, "McAllister, Jennifer (Senator)" <Senator.McAllister@aph.gov.au>

Dear NDIS Ministers Butler and McAllister

no doubt you are aware of the AFR editorial today, *A truly sustainable NDIS must stop autism creep* (see <https://archive.md/4GcDX>). Your government needs to push back on this misinformation immediately if it hopes to preserve any credibility in relation to autism policy.

The creep here is the uninformed author of this article.

There are problems for government relating to autism but this article is very mistaken about the nature of the problems and how they might be addressed effectively.

Government and the disability sector need to recognise that growing numbers of autistic people is a very serious issue. It is worldwide, not just an issue for the NDIS. Autism is also an issue in our education systems, health, and employment systems. And kicking kids off the NDIS will exacerbate the problem ... it won't help.

The Thriving Kids solution - with its plan to "fix" their parents - is not evidence-based ... it makes no sense and will not work. Thiving Kids and Foundational Supports needs proper design - currently these programs are being designed by the people who gave us the failed (for autism) NDIS design, so prospects for getting their new design for autism to work are limited (undetectable) - it fits the "doing the same thing and expecting a different outcome" category. If you continue in this way, the autism sector will judge your government accordingly.

Data collected by the ABS indicated autism diagnoses were growing at >9% p.a. back in 2022. And the data showed that the severity of autism was relatively stable in the autistic population - in other words, the growth in autism diagnoses is *not* due to diagnoses of less severe (that you term "mild to moderate") disability. Increased cost of autism in the NDIS is also due to more autistic Australians leaving school and needing more supports as adults ... which costs the government far more than when they are kids and Informal Carers provide support at little or no (obvious) cost to government. Skimping on support for kids increases cost to support autistic Australians when they become adults. But disability research ignores these issues.

If there really is low quality diagnosis, then government needs to address that. My organisation has been suggesting simple and low-cost ways to fix that issue since the NDIS started, but government so far has ignored all the advice its received on this issue. It's as if government really does not want to fix this problem (if it is a significant contributor).

This article is just the AFR's ableist right-wing rubbish. But it needs a clear and meaningful response from government.

--

Bob Buckley

Co-convenor, *Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia (A4)*

website: <http://a4.org.au/>

A4, a recognised disability representative organisation (DRO), advocates for autistic people, their families, carers and associates. A4 is internet based so that Australians anywhere can participate in and contribute to A4's advocacy for autistic people, their carers and allies.

A4 recognises the Traditional Owners of lands in Australia; we respect their elders past, present and emerging. Sovereignty was never ceded.

Recipients of correspondence from A4, especially politicians and government officials, are all subject to A4's policy on unanswered questions: see <http://a4.org.au/node/1419>.

The autism issue is that autistic people just don't deliver on the plans, dreams and expectations in other peoples' heads.