



Australian Government
Department of Health

Ref No. MC20-042016

Mr Bob Buckley
convenor@a4.org.au

Dear Mr Buckley

I refer to your correspondence of 29 October 2020 to the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, concerning the treatment of children with autism. Your letter has been referred to the Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP. The Minister has asked me to reply.

The event you highlighted is indeed very saddening. In light of that, I wanted to highlight some of the activities the Australian Government is doing to improve the care and treatment of people with disability.

The Australian Government is developing a Primary Health Care 10 Year Plan (10 Year Plan) to make the primary health care system more integrated, accessible and equitable for all Australians. The National Roadmap for Improving Health Services for People with Intellectual Disability (the Roadmap) will form a component of the 10 Year Plan. The Outline of the Roadmap was developed based on the recommendations of an initial stakeholder roundtable was held on 2 August 2019. The Outline was endorsed by the Minister in October 2019, and published on the Department of Health website at:

<https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/national-roadmap-for-improving-the-health-of-Australians-with-intellectual-disability>

The Roadmap is underpinned by an inclusive approach, to meet the needs of all people with intellectual disability, including those who have autism. The Roadmap will include a number of elements relating to: better models of care for people with intellectual disability and their families; better support for health professionals to provide better care for people with intellectual disability; and research, data and measurement to support continuing improvement.

To inform the development of the Roadmap, the Department is currently leading a series of targeted consultations and roundtable discussions. These discussions include people with intellectual disability and their carers, clinical and research experts, peak medical and health professional organisations, disability service providers, and other Commonwealth and state and territory government agencies. For example, the Department recently held a targeted consultation on curriculum development in health care for people with intellectual disability. Participants highlighted many ways to improve the education and training of health professionals so they are better equipped to care for people with intellectual disability.

The outcomes from this consultation, and others, will also be considered as the Roadmap is finalised. We believe that positive changes for people with intellectual disability, including autism, will result as the Roadmap is implemented.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Carrick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B".

Bridget Carrick
Acting Assistant Secretary
Allied Health and Service Integration Branch

4 January 2021