

OFFICIAL



Our ref: DHS/22/08060
Your ref: 16611872

Hon Nicola Centofanti MLC
Parliament House
North Terrace
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Office of the Chief Executive

Level 8 North
Riverside Building
North Terrace
Adelaide SA 5000

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Adelaide SA 5001

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Tel: 08 8413 9050
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ABN 11 525 031 744

Sent by email: centofanti.office@parliament.sa.gov.au

Dear Ms Centofanti

I refer to your application under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991* (the FOI Act), received by the Department of Human Services (DHS) on 19 September 2022, seeking access to:

A copy of all documents (including but not limited to hard copy or electronic briefings, minutes, reports, emails, letters, meeting agendas, diary entries, placemats, event attendance records and any other correspondence) between Department of Human Services and the Minister for Human Services (including directly with staff within the office of the Minister for Human Services), relating to autism.
Timeframe: 21/03/2022 – 19/09/2022

I apologise that DHS did not make a determination within 30 days as required by the FOI Act. However, DHS has continued to process your application outside of this timeframe. Section 19(2)(a) of the Act provides that an agency can release documents outside of the thirty-day timeframe, and this is still taken to be a determination under the FOI Act.

Your office was advised that an initial search undertaken using the term 'autism' captured a very large amount of documentation and would likely exceed the \$1000 of free processing afforded to Members of Parliament. Your advisor, Ms Narelle Hards, subsequently advised that the scope of the request be amended from 'autism' to the more specific 'Autism Education Advisory Group' and 'Autism Inclusion Strategy'.

Eighteen documents were located that fit within the scope of your request and I have determined to release two documents in full and sixteen in part.

Please find enclosed a copy of the documents released and a document schedule containing a brief description of each document and determination in summary form.

Released in full

Documents 17 and 18 contain no exempt information and are being released to you in full.

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Released in part

Documents 1 – 12 relate to correspondence written by members of the public to the Premier's Office. These documents contain the personal information of the respective members of the public and I consider it would be unreasonable to disclose this information.

Documents 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 14 and 16 contain the mobile phone numbers of government staff members. I consider this information to be the personal affairs of the respective staff members and it would be unreasonable to disclose this information.

I have determined documents 1-14 and 16 to be exempt pursuant to clause 6(1) of Schedule 1 of the Act which states:

A document is an exempt document if it contains matter the disclosure of which would involve the unreasonable disclosure of information concerning the personal affairs of any person (living or dead).

Information that is not relevant to your request has been redacted from documents 4, 15 and 16.

In accordance with section 20(4) of the Act, I consider that you would wish for access to documents 1 – 16 after exempt information is removed and am therefore releasing these documents to you in part.

Review rights and FOI disclosure log

If you are dissatisfied with my determination, you can seek an internal review by writing to the Chief Executive, DHS, as the Principal Officer of the agency. Your request should be sent within 30 days of your receipt of this letter.

In accordance with the requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular PC045, details of your FOI application, and the documents to which you are given access, will be published on the agency's disclosure log. A copy of PC045 can be found at <https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/resources-and-publications/premier-and-cabinet-circulars>

If you disagree with publication, you will need to advise the Senior FOI Officer within two weeks of the date of this determination.

If you have any questions in relation to this matter, please contact Fiona Braendler, Senior FOI Officer, on telephone 8413 9094 or by email at DHSFreedomofInformation@sa.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Eamonn Maloney
ACCREDITED FREEDOM OF INFORMATION OFFICER

20/12/2022

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SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS – DHS/22/08060

Freedom of information application from the Hon Nicola Centofanti MLC seeking access to:

A copy of all documents (including but not limited to hard copy or electronic briefings, minutes, reports, emails, letters, meeting agendas, diary entries, placemats, event attendance records and any other correspondence) between Department of Human Services and the Minister for Human Services (including directly with staff within the office of the Minister for Human Services), relating to the Autism Education Advisory Group or Autism Inclusion Strategy.

Timeframe: 21/03/2022 to 19/09/2022

No	Author	Date	Description of document	Determination	Exemption clause
1.	Lois Boswell Chief Executive, DHS	22/04/2022	Briefing – Premier's correspondence on behalf of a member of the public regarding State Autism Strategy	Released in part	Clause 6(1) – personal affairs
2.		19/05/2022	Attachment to briefing (document 1) – letter	Released in part	Clause 6(1) – personal affairs
3.		3/04/2022	Attachment to briefing (document 1) – email	Released in part	Clause 6(1) – personal affairs
4.	Lois Boswell Chief Executive, DHS	22/04/2022	Briefing – Premier's correspondence from a member of the public regarding autism respite and State Autism Strategy	Released in part	Clause 6(1) – personal affairs Information not relevant to the application removed
5.		3/07/2022	Attachment to briefing (document 4) – draft letter	Released in part	Clause 6(1) – personal affairs
6.		3/04/2022	Attachment to briefing (document 4) – email	Released in part	Clause 6(1) – personal affairs
7.	Lois Boswell Chief Executive, DHS	2/05/2022	Briefing – Premier's Correspondence from Mark Cheesman regarding Autism State and Education	Released in part	Clause 6(1) – personal affairs
8.		undated	Attachment to briefing (document 7) – response letter	Released in part	Clause 6(1) – personal affairs
9.		13/04/2022	Attachment to briefing (document 7) - email	Released in part	Clause 6(1) – personal affairs
10.	Lois Boswell Chief Executive, DHS	11/05/2022	Briefing – Premier's correspondence from a member of the public regarding an Autism Friendly state	Released in part	Clause 6(1) – personal affairs
11.		8/7/2022	Attachment to briefing (document 10) – draft letter	Released in part	Clause 6(1) – personal affairs
12.		2/04/2022	Attachment to briefing (document 10) – email	Released in part	Clause 6(1) – personal affairs
13.	Ksharmra Brandon Director Social Inclusion, DHS	12/08/2022	Email – Fwd: Diagnosis rates	Released in part	Clause 6(1) – personal affairs
14.	Lois Boswell Chief Executive, DHS	16/08/2022	Briefing – Meeting request – Autism SA (Attachment not in scope)	Released in part	Clause 6(1) – personal affairs Information not relevant to the application removed
15.	DHS	7/9/2022	Agenda – Weekly Briefing	Released in part	Information not relevant to the application removed

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SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS – DHS/22/08060

No	Author	Date	Description of document	Determination	Exemption clause
16.	Ksharmra Brandon Director Social Inclusion, DHS	9/9/2022	Email – South Australian Autism Strategy discussion paper – final 7 Sep 2022	Released in part	Clause 6(1) – personal affairs
17.			Attachment to email (document 17) Paper – South Australian Autism Strategy discussion Attachment to email	Released in full	
18.	Ksharmra Brandon Director Social Inclusion, DHS	9/9/2022	Text message	Released in full	

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22MDIS/0124

**TO: MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES****RE: PREMIER'S CORRESPONDENCE ON BEHALF OF** CI 6(1) **REGARDING STATE AUTISM STRATEGY**

Decision/action required by:...../...../.....

Reason:.....

Recommendation	Response
1. That you note the content of this briefing.	Approved / Not Approved / <u>Noted</u>
2. That you approve the draft response to CI 6(1) regarding the State Autism Strategy.	<u>Approved</u> / Not Approved / Noted

Comments:

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Hon Nat Cook MP

19 / 5 / 2022

PURPOSE

To brief you on correspondence received by the Premier from CI 6(1) regarding the State Autism Strategy and to seek your approval of a draft response to CI 6(1)

KEY POINTS

- CI 6(1) has written to the Premier seeking information about the Labor Government's election commitment to develop a State Autism Strategy.
- CI 6(1)
- The development of a State Autism Strategy will be led by the Department of Human Services (DHS) in partnership with the Department for Education and the Department for Health and Wellbeing.

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- A key component in the development of this work will be consultation with South Australians with lived experience of autism and key partner agencies, including Autism SA.

RISKS/SENSITIVITIES

Nil.

DISCUSSION

CI 6(1) has written to the Premier seeking information on the inclusion of people with lived experience of autism, both male and female, in the governance and development of the Autism Strategy.

In her email, CI 6(1) expresses her belief that current interventions and supports for people with autism are not 'neuro-affirmative' in nature. She is concerned that neurodiverse people are being 'trained' to abide by social norms driven by outdated 'behavioralist' approaches that do not view people holistically.

The South Australian Government has committed to develop a State Autism Strategy that operates within Inclusive SA (the State's Disability Inclusion Plan) and requires all public sector agencies to sign up to Autism SA's Autism Friendly Charter. This is part of broader commitments to make South Australia the 'Autism Friendly State,' including by:

- investing \$17.15 million to appoint an Autism Lead Teacher in every public primary school with clear outcomes and accountabilities.
- seeking to increase the number of autism-qualified staff in preschools.
- working with service providers including Autism SA to offer early intervention services in children's centres.
- investing \$50 million to fund 100 additional speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists and counsellors for access in the public school system.

The State Autism Strategy will align with the principles and objectives of Inclusive SA and Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031.

The development of an Autism Strategy and requirement for government agencies to sign up to Autism SA's Autism Friendly Charter will build awareness and understanding to improve the way government services interact with people with autism and support better access and inclusion.

It is proposed that signing schools up to the Autism Friendly Charter be prioritised ahead of the commencement of qualified autism lead teachers in government primary schools from 2023. This activity will be led by the Department for Education. The Autism Strategy could commence development while this is occurring.

Signing up to the Autism Friendly Charter will also be included as a state-wide commitment under Inclusive SA and translated into deliverables in each State authority's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

DHS is committed to engaging with people living with disability and their families and carers in the development of all social inclusion policies and programs. While only one consultation mechanism, DHS' 12-member Disability Engagement Group was recently re-established to ensure greater representation of people with lived experience in the development of new initiatives.

Community and sector consultation for the Autism Strategy will reflect the diversity of people with lived experience, including women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and those living regionally and remotely.

A draft response to **CI 6(1)** has been prepared for your consideration.

BUDGET

Are there financial considerations

No

Division	Inclusion and Reform		
Director Social Inclusion	Ksharmra Brandon	Approved via email <i>signature</i>	20/04/2022
A/Executive Director Inclusion and Reform	Liana France	Approved via email <i>signature</i>	20/04/2022
Chief Executive	Lois Boswell	 <i>signature</i>	22/04/2022 <i>date</i>

ATTACHMENTS

- Letter to **CI 6(1)**

Contact Officer: Ksharmra Brandon, Director Social Inclusion
CI 6(1) / ksharmra.brandon2@sa.gov.au

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22MDIS/0124

HON NAT COOK MP
Minister for Human Services

GPO Box 2832
ADELAIDE SA 5001

E: ministerhumanservices@sa.gov.au
T: (08) 8463 6560

CI 6(1)

Dear CI 6(1)

Thank you for your correspondence to the Premier of South Australia, the Honourable Peter Malinauskas MP, regarding the Labor Government's election commitment to develop a State Autism Strategy (the Strategy) and related community consultation. The Premier has asked me to respond on his behalf as this falls under my portfolio responsibility.

The Strategy is part of the new Government's broader commitment to make South Australia the 'Autism Friendly State' and will be led by the Department of Human Services in partnership with the Department for Education and the Department for Health and Wellbeing.

A key component of developing the Strategy will be listening to diverse South Australians with lived experience of autism and their families. This will ensure that the Autism Strategy is grounded in people's experience of neuro-diversity and takes an holistic view of what people need to reach their full potential. I recognise that gender is an important factor in how neurodiversity is both experienced and responded to.

The Strategy will operate within the State's Disability Inclusion Plan ([Inclusive SA](#)) and require all public sector agencies to sign up to Autism SA's Autism Friendly Charter. The Charter is an initiative designed to assist businesses, organisations and venues to create autism friendly places and services for people of all ages which is a great starting point.

Implementation of the Autism Strategy will also involve:

- investing \$17.15 million to appoint an Autism Lead Teacher in every public primary school with clear accountabilities of outcomes.
- seeking to increase the number of autism-qualified staff in preschools.
- working with service providers including Autism SA to offer early intervention services in children's centres.

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- investing \$50 million to fund 100 additional speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists and counsellors for access in the public school system.

Our commitment to genuine social inclusion involves creating opportunities for the voices of those with lived experience to be heard and to shape the Government's response.

I trust that this information addresses your queries and I encourage you to become involved as the Strategy is developed. DHS manages Disability Talk, an email subscription group comprised of people living with disability, their families, carers and members of the community who are invited to participate in various consultations. If you would like to be added to this list, please email your details to DHSDisabilityInclusion@sa.gov.au

My office will also keep your contact details on record as we may reach out to you in the future, during the community consultation phase of the development of our State's Autism Strategy.

I wish you and your family well into the future.

Yours sincerely



Hon Nat Cook MP
MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES

19 / 5 / 2022

Cc Hon Peter Malinauskas MP, Premier

Braendler, Fiona (DHS)

From: CI 6(1)
Sent: Sunday, 3 April 2022 9:07 PM
To: DPC:Premier
Subject: Re. Autism policy

Hi Peter,

I am writing in regard to your Autism policy and I am wondering a few points,
I have not been able to access the outline of the policy itself so I thought I would ask a couple of questions.

Do you have autistic people who are able to and advocating for the needs of the autistic community on the board? And also, are you seeking Autistic guidance on the direction it is taking, both male and female perspectives as CI 6(1) happen to present rather differently?

I ask because I am concerned about the current behaviorist approaches and would not want to see your policy simply prop up an outdated system as opposed to forging a new Neuro-affirmative pathway, with the support and foundation people truly need.

CI 6(1)

CI 6(1) In a lot of cases CI 6(1) what I have observed is unfortunately a system that is out of date and using approaches that are not neuro-affirmative in nature. Which is to say that I see a lot of ND people being 'trained' to fit into social and emotional norms that are driven by outdated behaviorist approaches that do not treat people holistically.

I am also of the opinion that the entire schooling system is not designed in a child friendly way and is inherently damaging to our children, which I guess is not for this policy to contend with, however you would be great indeed to explore more play based and activity driven models.

With warm regards

CI 6(1)

CI 6(1)

CI 6(1)



Disclaimer:

This email and any attachments transmitted with it are intended solely for the named addressee, are confidential and may contain privileged information. The copying or distribution of them or of any information they contain, by anyone other than the addressee, is prohibited. If you have received this email in error, please let us know by telephone, and then delete the email and any attachments from any computer. Although we have a virus scanner, we cannot guarantee that this email and any files transmitted with it are free from a virus. We accept no liability for any damage caused by this email or its attachments due to viruses, interception, corruption or unauthorised access.

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22MDIS/0126



TO: MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES

RE: PREMIER'S CORRESPONDENCE ON BEHALF OF CI 6(1) [REDACTED]
REGARDING RESPITE FOR PARENTS/CARERS OF PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

Decision/action required by:...../...../.....

Reason:.....

Recommendation	Response
1. That you note the contents of this briefing on respite options for parents/carers of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder.	Approved / Not Approved / <u>Noted</u>
2. That you approve the draft letter to CI [REDACTED] CI 6(1) [REDACTED] on behalf of the Premier Mr Peter Malinauskas MP.	<u>Approved</u> / Not Approved / Noted

Comments:

.....

N Cook

 Hon Nat Cook MP
 2 / 6 / 2022

PURPOSE

To brief you and provide a draft response to correspondence received by the Premier from CI 6(1) [REDACTED] a carer advocate with concerns about carer respite options in South Australia and the development of a State Autism Strategy for South Australia.

KEY POINTS

- You have been asked to respond on behalf of the Premier to CI 6(1) [REDACTED] who has raised concerns about respite support for carers of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in an email sent on 3 April.
- CI 6(1) [REDACTED]

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- **CI 6(1)**
- Information about carer respite options is outlined below, including background on Auricht House, referenced by **CI 6(1)** in his correspondence.

RISKS/SENSITIVITIES

Nil.

DISCUSSION

In **CI 6(1)** correspondence, he raises the critical value of respite and refers to a purpose built respite home called Auricht House. The facility was opened in Elizabeth North in 2005 as a respite centre for children with intellectual disabilities. Run by Centacare, it accommodated up to ten children. The House was named after mountain climber Mark Auricht who attempted to climb Mt Everest in 2001 to raise funds for a new respite service. Mr Auricht died during the climb and Centacare named the House in his honour. Auricht House operated as recently as 2018 but is now closed. According to **CI 6(1)** this was due to a lack of ongoing funding. Due to the timing, the service may have been impacted by the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

There are a number of support options outlined below that can be accessed to support people with ASD and more specifically respite for family/carers, as part of the NDIS, in addition to state strategies. These include the following:

Autism SA

Autism SA provides an extensive range of support and therapeutic services for individuals with autism, as well as parents, carers and families. The organisation's Kandu Day Options supports individuals with ASD to meet the goals in their NDIS Plans.

Information for community members about Autism SA services is available via My Pathways on 1300 288 476 or mypathways@autismsa.org.au

National Carer Gateway

During 2019-20, Commonwealth funding for services including the National Respite for Carers Program, Mental Health Respite and Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres, previously delivered by SA carer service providers, transitioned to the Integrated Carer Support Service. These services are now delivered through the national Carer Gateway and via Regional Delivery Partners (RDPs) in each state. Carers SA is the South Australian RDP.

Carers SA, and their partners Dementia Australia, Skylight, Life Without Barriers and NPY Women's Council, provide Commonwealth-funded RDP services for unpaid family carers including:

- Once off practical support - Financial assistance to enable carers to access support. This includes practical items that directly support carers to access education or employment.

- Carer Directed Packages - Financial packages for a range of practical supports to assist carers over a 12-month period. These packages may be used for planned respite, assistance with shopping, taxi transport to medical appointments and other services.

DHS - Community Connections Program

Under SA Home and Community Care (HACC), DHS historically funded specialist carer service providers to deliver services for unpaid carers in South Australia. Following major national reforms including the launch of the Commonwealth Integrated Carer Support Service, My Aged Care and the NDIS, the SA HACC program ceased, and the Community Connections Program (CCP) was launched in 2021. CCP is a new program designed to support people who are at risk of experiencing social isolation and disconnection from services and communities and are not eligible for federal programs.

Through the CCP, Carer Support Partners support people to engage socially beyond the home, actively participate in local community activities, and increase social connection, community participation and inclusion. Additionally, Carer Support Partners deliver age-appropriate supports to young Carers under the age of 18, outside of the CCP. Carer Support partners are also funded to deliver breaks for Carers – which is different to the Gateway respite services - due to reported support limitations in Commonwealth-funded respite activities. This funding supports Carers SA as the centralised, single-entry point for all respite-type services in South Australia.

Funding is as follows:

Organisation	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
Carer Support and Respite Centre Inc	\$789,043	\$769,798	\$764,620
Carers Association of SA Inc (Carers SA)*	\$1,524,242	\$1,487,065	\$671,503
Carers and Disability Link	\$271,379	\$264,760	\$656,968
Northern Carers Network (part of Centacare Catholic Family Services)	\$652,637	\$636,719	\$1,065,252
Total	\$3,237,301	\$3,158,342	\$3,158,343

* Includes \$750,000 pa for 2021-22 and 2022-2023 as the only state funded provider in South Australia for breaks for carers.

DHS-funded ASD services

DHS currently funds Autism SA to provide a diagnostic assessment service and to facilitate a pathway into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) for people with suspected ASD. This funding ceases on 30 June 2022 and discussions are underway regarding the continuation of this service and most effective use of available funding.

DHS also funds a range of providers that support people with an autism diagnosis through the DHS Exceptional Needs Unit. This funding is used for supports including financial contributions to accommodation, case management, mentoring, allied health assessments, and the administration of the Voluntary Out of Home Care (VOHC) Program. Almost all (95%) of VOHC clients are on the autism spectrum.

State Autism Strategy

The Government of South Australia has committed to develop a State Autism Strategy that operates within Inclusive SA and requires all public sector agencies to sign up to Autism SA's Autism Friendly Charter. This is part of broader commitments to make South Australia the 'Autism Friendly State,' including by:

- investing \$17.15 million to appoint an Autism Lead Teacher in every public primary school with clear outcomes and accountabilities.
- seeking to increase the number of autism-qualified staff in preschools.
- working with service providers including Autism SA to offer early intervention services in children's centres.
- Investing \$50 million to fund 100 additional speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists and counsellors for access in the public school system.

The Autism Friendly Charter is an initiative from Autism SA that has been designed to assist businesses, organisations and venues across Australia to create autism friendly places and services for people on the spectrum of all ages. Training to establish agencies as Autism Friendly can also be translated into South Australia's actions under Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 and into Disability Access and Inclusion Plans under Inclusive SA. A briefing to outline work to progress the development of the strategy will be provided shortly, after a meeting with Ministerial staff to discuss options.

BUDGET

Are there financial considerations No

Is there a budget impact No

Division	Inclusion and Reform		
Director, Social Inclusion	Ksharmra Brandon	Approved via email <i>signature</i>	19/04/2022
A/Executive Director	Liana France	Approved via email <i>signature</i>	19/04/2022
Chief Executive	Lois Boswell	 <i>signature</i>	22/04/2022 <i>date</i>

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft response to CI 6(1)

Contact Officer:	Mary Leaker, Senior Manager CI 6(1) / mary.leaker@sa.gov.au
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Government
of South Australia

Hon Nat Cook MP

Prem ref: fB280286
Our ref: 22MDIS/0126

CI 6(1)

Dear CI 6(1)

On behalf of the Premier, Hon Peter Malinauskas MP, thank you for your email regarding respite options for parents and carers of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The Premier has asked me to respond on his behalf as this matter falls within my portfolio responsibilities. I apologise for the delay in responding.

CI 6(1)

As you have pointed out in your correspondence, Auricht House is no longer operating as a respite service, however there are a number of other services for people with ASD and their families. Autism SA provides a range of support and therapeutic services for people with autism, as well as parents, carers and families.

Services are also available under the new national Carer Gateway and can be accessed through Carers SA, which provides services for unpaid carers including:

- Once off practical support – financial assistance to enable carers to access support, education or employment.
- Carer Directed Packages – financial packages for a range of practical supports to assist carers. Carers may be able to access funds over a 12-month period. These packages may be used for planned respite, assistance with shopping, taxi transport to medical appointments and other services.

The South Australian Government, through the Department of Human Services, funds services that support unpaid family carers through the Community Connections Program. Services are available across South Australia, with local program partners working with participants to determine the type of support they need to reach their personal and practical goals.

The Government has committed to making South Australia the 'Autism Friendly State' and to developing a State Autism Strategy that requires all public sector agencies to sign up to Autism SA's Autism Friendly Charter.





Government
of South Australia

The Autism Friendly Charter is an Autism SA initiative designed to assist businesses, organisations and venues to create autism friendly places and services for people of all ages. Training to establish agencies as Autism Friendly can also be translated into South Australia's actions under Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 and into statewide Disability Access and Inclusion Plans under Inclusive SA (the State's Disability Inclusion Plan).

Social inclusion is an important theme in Inclusive SA which values the contributions and rights of people living with disability, their families and supporters. CI 6(1)

CI 6(1) and I would be happy to join you to talk about how our government is working toward a more inclusive South Australia.

My office may also reach out to you during the community consultation phase for our State Autism Strategy.

I trust that this information is helpful. I wish you and your family all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

N Cook

Hon Nat Cook MP
MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES

3 / 7 / 2022

Braendler, Fiona (DHS)

From: CI 6(1)
Sent: Sunday, 3 April 2022 6:39 PM
To: DPC:Premier
Subject: Autism Spectrum Disorder Respite

Hello Premier,

CI 6(1)

Anyway purpose of my message is back in the 2000s through Centacare we built a purpose built respite home called Auricht House up in Elizabeth for families who have a child with ASD.

Unfortunately this home did not get ongoing funding and reduced it services and I am led to believe this centre is in mothballs now.

If you want to be serious about ASD you need to be serious about respite for parents/carers and more importantly the other siblings. This creates so much Mental Health issues, which then leads to other issues. CI 6(1)

CI 6(1)

CI 6(1)

Anyway, happy to discuss further. CI 6(1)

Warm Regards

CI 6(1)

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22MDIS/0169

**TO: MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES****RE: PREMIER'S CORRESPONDENCE FROM CI 6(1) [REDACTED] REGARDING AUTISM STATE AND EDUCATION**

Decision/action required by:...../...../.....

Reason:.....

Recommendation	Response
1. That you note the content of this briefing regarding the State Autism Strategy in South Australia.	Approved / Not Approved / <u>Noted</u>
2. That you approve the attached letter of response to CI 6(1) [REDACTED] regarding the State Autism Strategy in South Australia	<u>Approved</u> / Not Approved / Noted

Comments:

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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "N Cook".

Hon Nat Cook MP

9 / 6 / 2022

PURPOSE

For you to note the correspondence received by the Premier from CI 6(1) [REDACTED] regarding the State Autism Strategy and for you to approve the draft response to CI 6(1) [REDACTED]

KEY POINTS

- CI 6(1) [REDACTED] has written to the Premier seeking information about the Labor Government's election commitment to make South Australia an autism friendly state.

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- CI 6(1) [REDACTED]
- The development of a State Autism Strategy will be led by the Department of Human Services in partnership with the Department for Education and the Department for Health and Wellbeing.
- A key component in the development of this work will be consultation with South Australians with lived experience of autism and key partner agencies, including Autism SA.

RISKS/SENSITIVITIES

Nil.

DISCUSSION

CI 6(1) [REDACTED] has written to the Premier acknowledging the Labor Governments election commitment to make South Australia an autism friendly state through the development of the State Autism Strategy. CI 6(1) [REDACTED]
CI 6(1) [REDACTED]

The South Australian Government has committed to the development of a State Autism Strategy that will operate under Inclusive SA (the State's Disability Inclusion Plan) and will require all public sector agencies to sign up to Autism SA's Autism Friendly Charter. This is part of broader commitments to make South Australia the 'Autism Friendly State,' which include:

- investing \$17.15 million to appoint an Autism Lead Teacher in every public primary school with clear outcomes and accountabilities
- seeking to increase the number of autism-qualified staff in preschools
- working with service providers including Autism SA to offer early intervention services in children's centres
- investing \$50 million to fund 100 additional speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists and counsellors for access in the public school system.

The State Autism Strategy will align with the principles and objectives of Inclusive SA and Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031. The Social Inclusion Directorate will provide a briefing regarding next steps in the development of the Strategy in near future.

The development of a State Autism Strategy and the requirement for government agencies to sign up to Autism SA's Autism Friendly Charter will build awareness and understanding to improve the way government services interact with people with autism and support better access and inclusion.

It is proposed that signing schools up to the Autism Friendly Charter be prioritised ahead of the commencement of qualified autism lead teachers in government primary schools from 2023. The Social Inclusion Directorate have commenced work to scope this in consultation with the Department for Education.

Signing up to the Autism Friendly Charter will also be included as a state-wide commitment under Inclusive SA and translated into deliverables in each State authority's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

BUDGET

Are there financial considerations

No

Division	Inclusion and Reform		
Director Social Inclusion	Ksharmra Brandon	Approved via email <i>Signature</i>	28/04/2022
Executive Director Inclusion and Reform	Katherine Hawkins	Approved via email <i>Signature</i>	28/04/2022
Chief Executive	Lois Boswell	 <i>Signature</i>	02/05/2022 <i>date</i>

ATTACHMENTS

- Draft response to CI 6(1)

Contact Officer:	Ksharmra Brandon, Director Social Inclusion CI 6(1) / ksharmra.brandon2@sa.gov.au
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OFFICIAL



22MDIS/0169

HON NAT COOK MP
Minister for Human ServicesGPO Box 2832
ADELAIDE SA 5001E: ministerhumanservices@sa.gov.au
T: (08) 8463 6560

CI 6(1)

Email: CI 6(1)

Dear CI 6(1)

Thank you for your correspondence to the Premier of South Australia, the Honourable Peter Malinauskas MP, regarding the Labor Government's election commitment to develop a State Autism Strategy (the Strategy). The Premier has asked me to respond on his behalf as this falls within my portfolio responsibility.

CI 6(1)

The Autism Strategy is part of the Government's broader commitment to make South Australia the 'Autism Friendly State' and will be led by the Department of Human Services (DHS) in partnership with the Department for Education and the Department for Health and Wellbeing.

A key component of developing the Autism Strategy will be listening to South Australians with lived experience of autism and their families. This will ensure that the Autism Strategy is grounded in people's experience of neurodiversity and takes a holistic view of what people need to reach their full potential.

The Strategy will operate within the State's Disability Inclusion Plan (<https://inclusive.sa.gov.au/>) and require all public sector agencies to sign up to Autism SA's Autism Friendly Charter. The Charter is an initiative designed to assist businesses, organisations, and venues to create autism friendly places and services for people of all ages, which is a great starting point.

Broader government commitments to improve the inclusion of people with autism include:

- investing \$17.15 million to appoint an Autism Lead Teacher in every public primary school with clear accountabilities of outcomes.
- seeking to increase the number of autism-qualified staff in preschools.

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- working with service providers including Autism SA to offer early intervention services in children's centres.
- investing \$50 million to fund 100 additional speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists and counsellors for access in the public school system.

Our commitment to genuine social inclusion will provide opportunities for the voices of those with lived experience to be heard and to ensure new pathways and systems developed are what people truly need.

Thank you for sharing some of your experiences and I wish you well into the future.

Yours sincerely

Hon Nat Cook MP
MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES

/ / 2022

Braendler, Fiona (DHS)

From: CI 6(1)
Sent: Wednesday, 13 April 2022 2:29 PM
To: DPC:Premier
Subject: To Hon. Premier Peter Malinauskas

To Hon. Peter Malinauskas,

I was very impressed to read that you would like to make South Australia an Autism Friendly State. CI 6(1)

CI 6(1)

CI 6(1)

CI 6(1)

CI 6(1)



Hope you read this yourself. I would greatly appreciate a reply and maybe any help you are able to give me.

Thanks heaps and all the best in your new, important position,

CI 6(1)



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22MDIS/0175

**TO: MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES****RE: PREMIER'S CORRESPONDENCE FROM [REDACTED] REGARDING
AUTISM FRIENDLY SA**

Decision/action required by:...../...../.....

Reason:.....

Recommendation	Response
1. That you note the information in this briefing regarding correspondence received by the Premier from [REDACTED] regarding an Autism Friendly state.	Approved / Not Approved / <u>Noted</u>
2. That you approve and send the draft response to [REDACTED] on behalf of the Premier (Attachment 1).	<u>Approved</u> / Not Approved / Noted

Comments:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Hon Nat Cook MP

16 / 5 / 2022

PURPOSE

To provide you with information regarding correspondence received by the Honourable Peter Malinauskas MP, Premier of South Australia, from [REDACTED] regarding an Autism Friendly South Australia, and to provide you with a draft response to [REDACTED]

KEY POINTS

- The Premier received email correspondence from [REDACTED] on 2 April 2022.
- [REDACTED] is seeking to meet with the Premier [REDACTED]

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- CI 6(1) correspondence relates to the Government of South Australia's commitment to develop a State Autism Strategy and make South Australia an Autism Friendly state.
- A draft response has been prepared for you to CI 6(1) on the Premier's behalf, acknowledging her experiences and providing further information on the development of a State Autism Strategy (Attachment 1).

RISKS/SENSITIVITIES

Nil.

DISCUSSION

Background

In her correspondence to the Premier, CI 6(1)
CI 6(1)

State Autism Strategy

The Government of South Australia has committed to the development of a State Autism Strategy that will operate under Inclusive SA (the State's Disability Inclusion Plan) and will require all public sector agencies to sign up to Autism SA's Autism Friendly Charter. This is part of broader commitments to make South Australia the 'Autism Friendly State,' which include:

- investing \$17.15 million to appoint an Autism Lead Teacher in every public primary school with clear outcomes and accountabilities
- seeking to increase the number of autism-qualified staff in preschools
- working with service providers including Autism SA to offer early intervention services in children's centres
- investing \$50 million to fund 100 additional speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists and counsellors for access in the public school system.

The State Autism Strategy will align with the principles and objectives of Inclusive SA and *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031*.

The development of a State Autism Strategy and the requirement for government agencies to sign up to Autism SA's Autism Friendly Charter will build awareness and understanding to improve the way government services interact with people with autism and support better access and inclusion.

It is proposed that the Department for Education signing up to the Autism Friendly Charter be prioritised ahead of the commencement of qualified autism leads in government primary schools from 2023. The Social Inclusion Directorate has commenced work to scope this in consultation with the Department for Education. Signing up to the Autism Friendly Charter will also be included as a state-wide commitment under Inclusive SA and translated into deliverables in each State authority's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

Additional supports for autism

Should CI 6(1) attend a South Australian Government school, she may be eligible for school-based autism supports through the Department for Education. This includes the Inclusive Education Support Program (IESP), which is a functional needs-based funding model for preschool and school students with disability. The school may also consider additional or alternative supports, such as a behaviour support coach, speech pathology, psychology, a special educator, or a social worker.

Additionally, Autism SA provides support and guidance for individuals with autism and their families to apply for and use National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funding to access appropriate programs, therapies and interventions.

Autism SA also has a range of free resources, including an Autism SA library and information line. CI 6(1) is encouraged to access these resources for additional support, advocacy, and information on how to access autism supports CI 6(1)
CI 6(1)

BUDGET

Are there financial considerations

No

Division	Inclusion and Reform		
Director Social Inclusion	Ksharmra Brandon	Approved via email <i>signature</i>	04/05/2022
Executive Director Inclusion and Reform	Katherine Hawkins	Approved via email <i>signature</i>	04/05/2022
Chief Executive	Lois Boswell	 <i>signature</i>	11/05/2022 <i>date</i>

ATTACHMENTS

- Draft Response to CI 6(1)

Contact Officer:	Ksharmra Brandon, Director, Social Inclusion CI 6(1) ksharmra.brandon2@sa.gov.au
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22MDIS/0175

HON NAT COOK MP
Minister for Human Services

GPO Box 2832
ADELAIDE SA 5001

E: ministerhumanservices@sa.gov.au
T: (08) 8463 6560

CI 6(1)

Email: CI 6(1)

Dear CI 6(1)

Thank you for your correspondence to the Premier of South Australia, the Honourable Peter Malinauskas MP, regarding discrimination against autistic people. The Premier has asked me to respond on his behalf as this matter falls within my responsibilities and I apologise for the delay in responding.

CI 6(1)

CI 6(1)

This feedback is important to me and will help to shape the development of a new State Autism Strategy (the Strategy).

The Strategy is part of the Government of South Australia's broader commitment to make South Australia the 'Autism Friendly State' and will be led by the Department of Human Services (DHS) in partnership with the Department for Education and the Department for Health and Wellbeing.

A key component of developing the Strategy will be listening to South Australians with lived experience of autism and their families. This will ensure the Strategy is grounded in people's experiences of neurodiversity and takes a holistic view of what people need to reach their full potential.

The Strategy will operate within the State's Disability Inclusion Plan, Inclusive SA, and require all public sector agencies to sign up to Autism SA's Autism Friendly Charter. The Charter is an initiative designed to assist businesses, organisations and venues to create autism friendly places and services for people of all ages, which is a great starting point.

I am pleased to advise that, in addition to the development of the Strategy, the Government of South Australia has made a number of important commitments to improve the inclusion of people with autism including:



- investing \$17.15 million to appoint an Autism Lead Teacher in every public primary school.
- seeking to increase the number of autism-qualified staff in preschools.
- working with service providers, including Autism SA, to offer early intervention services in Children's Centres.
- investing \$50 million to fund 100 additional speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists and counsellors in the public school system.

Additionally, should Cl 6(1) attend a South Australian Government school, she may be eligible for school-based autism supports through the Department for Education. This includes the Inclusive Education Support Program (IESP), which is a functional needs-based funding model for preschool and school students with disability. The school may also consider additional or alternative supports, such as a behaviour support coach, speech pathology, psychology, a special educator, or a social worker. Cl 6(1) school will be able to determine whether she is eligible for IESP and can help you apply. To find out more about this support, you can contact Cl 6(1) teacher in the first instance.

You can learn more about IESP here: www.education.sa.gov.au/parents-and-families/health-and-disability-support/health-and-disability-programs/inclusive-education-support-program-iesp-disability-funding-students-and-children

If you are not already connected with Autism SA, I encourage you to reach out to them. Autism SA provides support and guidance for individuals with autism and their families to apply for and use National Disability Insurance Scheme funding to access appropriate programs, therapies and interventions. Autism SA also has a range of free resources, including an Autism SA library and information line. You can learn out more at www.autismsa.org.au/supports-services/.

My office will also keep your contact details on record as we may reach out to you in future during the community consultation phase of the development of our State's Autism Strategy.

Thank you again for writing to the Premier. I trust this information is helpful and I wish you and your family all the best into the future.

Yours sincerely

N/look

Hon Nat Cook MP
MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES

8 / 7 / 2022

Braendler, Fiona (DHS)

From: CI 6(1)
Sent: Saturday, 2 April 2022 7:32 PM
To: DPC:Premier
Subject: Autism friendly SA

Categories: Blue Category

Good evening Premier,

My name is CI 6(1)

CI 6(1)

I would love nothing more than to meet with you, CI 6(1) and know what CI 6(1) face, the hardships, the wait times, the lack of funding and the blatant discrimination faced by people in the spectrum.

Please feel free to contact me via return email, or on my mobile CI 6(1) if you would like to discuss this further.

Thank you for your time,

CI 6(1)

Braendler, Fiona (DHS)

From: Brandon, Ksharmra (DHS)
Sent: Friday, 12 August 2022 5:26 PM
To: Smith, Kyall (DHS)
Subject: Fwd: Diagnosis rates

FYI

Ksharmra Brandon (she/her)

Director, Social Inclusion

Department of Human Services | Government of South Australia

Riverside Centre (Level 9 North East), North Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000

t ^{CI 6(1)} | e Ksharmra.brandon2@sa.gov.au

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Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Brandon, Ksharmra (DHS)" <Ksharmra.Brandon2@sa.gov.au>
Date: 10 August 2022 at 5:17:00 pm ACST
To: "Shaw, Ella (DPC)" <Ella.Shaw@sa.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Diagnosis rates

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi Ella

Thanks again for the conversation this morning – it was great to get clarity around expectations so that we can shape the discussion paper for the Strategy development, project plan for delivery and also ensure expedited delivery of a new Autism Charter.

I note that Emily is chairing the Advisory Committee that has been established to deliver the education commitments and wonder, based on our conversation about better connecting work, whether this is an opportunity to have it more broadly cover the Strategy, since the activities should be connected. This would support Emily's oversight of the entire strategy, reduce effort (ie one advisory group, instead of two), while still ensuring a focus on education deliverables as the first tangible outcomes (in addition to a Charter).

I will be having a conversation with my counterparts in Education to talk through the above but wanted to test it with Emily as the leader in this space. Regardless of scope, I think DHS need to be represented on the group, in addition to the Australian Autism Alliance to ensure connection and expertise are well represented.

Ngaityalya,
(Kurna, *thank you*)



Ksharmra Brandon (she/her)

Director, Strategic Policy and Partnerships

T: [REDACTED] | E: ksharmra.brandon2@sa.gov.au

Level 9, Riverside Centre, North Terrace | Adelaide SA 5000



I acknowledge Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities.

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From: Shaw, Ella (DPC) <Ella.Shaw@sa.gov.au>

Sent: Tuesday, 9 August 2022 9:54 AM

To: Brandon, Ksharmra (DHS) <Ksharmra.Brandon2@sa.gov.au>

Subject: Diagnosis rates

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hello Kharmra,

Emily has been asking about diagnosis rates in South Australia surrounding Autism. I was wondering if you had any information regarding whether South Australia has the highest diagnosis rates?

I look forward to hearing from you!

Warm Regards,

Ella Shaw

Adviser



Hon. Emily Bourke MLC
ASSISTANT MINISTER TO THE PREMIER

8429 3232 | GPO 2343 Adelaide SA 5001

[EmilyBourkeMLC](#)

Ella.Shaw@sa.gov.au | [REDACTED] | (she/her)

I acknowledge that this land is the traditional land of the Kurna people and respect their spiritual relationship with their country. I also acknowledge the Kurna people as the custodians of the Adelaide region and that their cultural heritage and cultural beliefs are still as important to the living Kurna people today.

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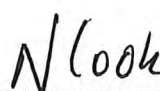
22MDIS/0227

**TO: MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES****RE: MEETING REQUEST FROM CAROLINE WARNCKEN ON BEHALF OF AUTISM SA - REQUEST FOR MEETING WITH CEO HELEN GRAHAM**

Decision/action required by:...../...../.....

Reason:.....

Recommendation	Response
1. Note the information in this briefing to support you in meeting with Helen Graham, the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer of Autism SA.	Approved / Not Approved / <u>Noted</u>

Comments:	 ----- Hon Nat Cook MP 16 / 8 / 2022
---	--

PURPOSE

To support you in meeting with Helen Graham, the recently appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Autism SA, and to provide you with information regarding the state government's commitment to develop a State Autism Strategy.

KEY POINTS


- Helen Graham was announced as CEO of Autism SA on 3 May 2022. Her office contacted you on 17 May 2022 inviting you to meet with her. A meeting has been scheduled between you and Ms Graham for 10 August 2022. This meeting has been rescheduled for week beginning 15 August 2022.
- Autism SA is South Australia's peak body for providing services and advocacy for autistic individuals and their families, carers and support networks.
- The state government has committed to developing a State Autism Strategy (the Strategy) that will operate with the State Disability Inclusion Plan (Inclusive SA) and

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Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 and will require all state government agencies to sign up to Autism SA's Autism Friendly Charter (the Charter).

- Autism SA will be involved in developing the Strategy and in signing up state government agencies to the Charter.

- Out of scope




RISKS/SENSITIVITIES

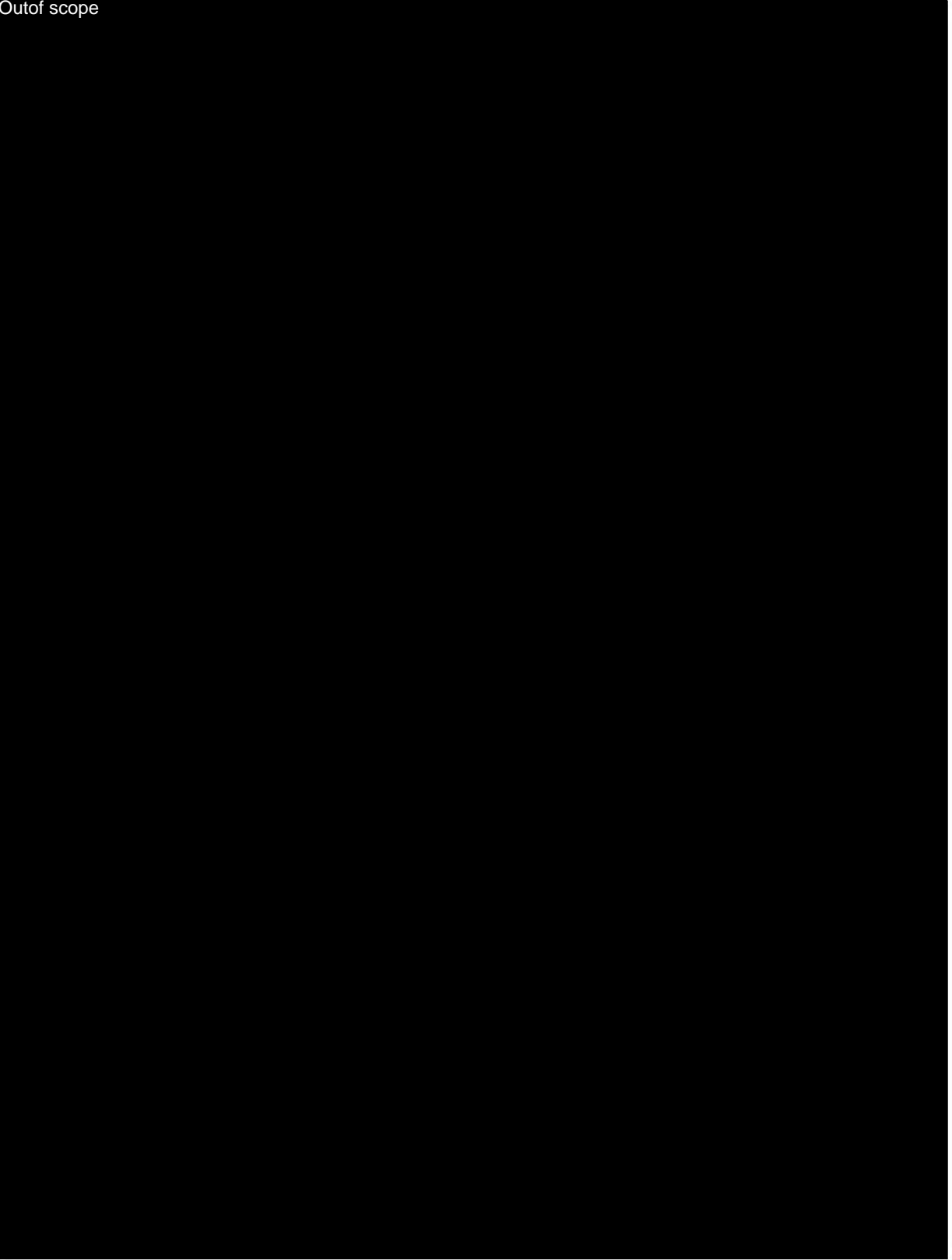
Nil.

DISCUSSION


Out of scope



Out of scope



Out of scope



State Autism Strategy

The development of the Strategy will be led by DHS in consultation with the sector, including Autism SA, and South Australians with lived experience of autism, and their families.

Development of the Strategy is part of broader commitments to make South Australia the 'Autism Friendly State,' which include:

- investing \$17.15 million to appoint an Autism Lead Teacher in every public primary school with clear outcomes and accountabilities
- seeking to increase the number of autism-qualified staff in preschools
- working with service providers including Autism SA to offer early intervention services in children's centres
- investing \$50 million to fund 100 additional speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists and counsellors for access in the public school system.

The Strategy will require all government agencies to sign up to an Autism Charter, which is being scoped at present.

DHS will establish a steering committee to oversee the project to develop the Strategy which will be chaired by DHS and include representation from people with lived experience of autism, the disability sector, the Department for Education and the Department for Health and Wellbeing, with the involvement of other public sector agencies as relevant.

The department has commenced early engagement on the Strategy with the Department for Education directly and other agencies through the South Australian Disability Reform Intergovernmental Committee (SADRIC), which includes membership from more than 10 state government agencies.


Their priorities will be encompassed in the discussion paper being developed to commence the co-design process with the disability sector, people with lived experience and the broader community.

If the Minister wishes, an executive from DHS can make themselves available to attend the meeting with Autism SA to provide insights and further information.

BUDGET

Are there financial considerations No

Is there a budget impact No

Division	Inclusion and Reform		
Director Social Inclusion	Ksharmra Brandon	Approved via email <i>signature</i>	05/08/2022
Executive Director Social Inclusion	Katherine Hawkins	Approved via email <i>signature</i>	11/08/2022
Chief Executive	Lois Boswell	 <i>signature</i>	12/08/2022

Contact Officer:	Ksharmra Brandon, Director Social Inclusion Out of scope ksharmra.brandon2@sa.gov.au
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Agenda

Meeting:	WEEKLY BRIEFING WITH MINISTER COOK & DHS EXECUTIVES
When:	16:10pm – 17:00pm Wednesday 7th September, 2022
Where:	Via Teams
Attending:	<p>The Hon Nat Cook, Minister for Human Services</p> <p>Michael Hicks, Chief of Staff</p> <p>Kyall Smith, Ministerial Adviser</p> <p>Rhiannon Newman, Ministerial Adviser</p> <p>Lois Boswell, Chief Executive</p> <p>Kelly Biggins, Director, Office of the Chief Executive & Governance</p> <p>Ruth Ambler, A/Executive Director, Inclusion & Reform</p> <p>Joe Young, Executive Director, Disability Services</p> <p>Rita McPhail, A/Executive Director, Community Investment & Support</p> <p>Alex Reid, Executive Director, Community & Family Services</p> <p>Sue-Ann Charlton, Executive Director, People & Performance</p> <p>Nick Ashley, Chief Financial Officer</p> <p>Shelaye Boothey, Director, Communications & Engagement</p>

Items for discussion

1)	<p>Current portfolio issues/hot topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of scope [REDACTED] • Autism Strategy (RA) • Out of scope [REDACTED]
2)	National agenda
3)	Election commitments – status update
4)	Upcoming sector engagement – meetings, events and consultation
5)	Cabinet Forward Schedule (KB)
6)	Any other business

Braendler, Fiona (DHS)

From: Brandon, Ksharmra (DHS)
Sent: Wednesday, 7 September 2022 3:05 PM
To: Smith, Kyall (DHS)
Cc: Centofanti, Melissa (DHS)
Subject: South Australian Autism Strategy discussion paper - final 7 Sep 2022
Attachments: South Australian Autism Strategy discussion paper - final 7 Sep 2022.docx

Importance: High

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Hi Kyall

Please find the discussion paper for the autism strategy attached which we are translating into easy read. I will provide a copy to AM Bourke's advisor also as they have been asking for it.

Once timelines for the strategy are confirmed with the minister this afternoon, it would be good to confirm date for launch event with the Minister for Education and AM Autism so we can lock it in and finalise preparations with Purple Orange. We're thinking the 15th or 16th but will work around what is needed. The paper will be provided at the event for roundtable discussion and the launch will commence the 6 week co-design process with yourSAy, public and targeted forums.

Happy to discuss.

Ngaityalya,
 (Kurna, *thank you*)



Ksharmra Brandon (she/her)

Director, Social Inclusion

T: [REDACTED] | E: ksharmra.brandon2@sa.gov.au

Level 9, Riverside Centre, North Terrace | Adelaide SA 5000



I acknowledge Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities.

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A State Autism Strategy for South Australia

Discussion Paper

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Background and information

What is happening?

On 15 August 2022, the Premier of South Australia announced (in a national first) a state Assistant Minister for Autism to lead positive change and address the challenges and barriers being faced by autistic people.

While improving disability inclusion in general continues to be a priority of the State Government, more dedicated action is required in building public understanding and establishing positive policy improvements for the ¹autistic community.

The Strategy will include key priority areas where autistic individuals face particular challenges and barriers, including health and wellbeing, community attitudes, workforce, education and the interface with the National Disability Inclusion Scheme (NDIS). The Strategy will align to the State Disability Inclusion Plan (Inclusive SA) and play an important role in shaping future policies and strategies.

This commitment of the State Government to develop the Strategy will only succeed if the autistic community is given the opportunity to freely participate and have their voices heard. By working together, the State Government and the community can ensure that people diagnosed with autism will have access to the services and support they need to participate in our society free of barriers.

Why do we need a State Autism Strategy?

A State Autism Strategy is needed to support a dedicated and coordinated effort from government in meeting the access and inclusion needs of the autistic community.

As at 30 June 2022, the National Disability Insurance Agency Quarterly Report for Quarter 4, 2021-2022 indicates that autism is currently the largest primary disability group in South Australia (39%). Nationally, 34% of NDIS participants have autism as their primary disability group.

It is noted there have been significant changes to how autism is diagnosed in the past decade. This, along with our better understanding of autism, may be a contributing factor to the growing number of young people receiving an autism diagnosis when compared to older demographics.

Early intervention is crucial, and that intervention is dependent on early diagnosis and support strategies being in place and working effectively. The State Government has responded by committing to:

- \$28.79 million over four years to appoint an Autism Inclusion Teacher in every public primary school from the beginning of Term 1, 2023
- an increase to the number of autism-qualified staff in preschools
- early intervention services in children's centres
- develop a State Autism Strategy that operates with Inclusive SA and requires all State Government agencies to sign up to an Autism Charter
- investing \$50 million to fund 100 additional speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists and counsellors for access in the public school system.

¹ This document refers to autistic people and people with autism interchangeably to acknowledge the different preferences of the community

The consultation process

Through this public consultation, the State Government wish to invite submissions that respond to key questions that will inform the scope and content of a draft Strategy. There will be a further consultation process to ensure that the actions ultimately proposed in the Strategy reflect the information and feedback provided and will result in meaningful enhancements to the lives of autistic people in South Australia.

There are a number of key steps in the development process for the Strategy, the first of which is this discussion paper which will commence the co-design process.

Targeted focus groups with people with lived experience are also being established, in addition to advisory committees and a public forum to inform the development of the Strategy.

Public Consultation – Discussion Paper

This discussion paper has been prepared to support the public consultation and contains ideas and questions that will help inform the shape of the Strategy and the actions to be pursued by the State Government.

The public consultation gives anyone interested in participating in the development of the Strategy the opportunity to submit responses to questions outlined in this consultation paper. Everyone is invited to offer their feedback, opinions and insights into the current supports and services provided and on the specific issues they feel need to be addressed by the Strategy.

An easy read version of the discussion paper is also available.

Consultation period: *[insert dates]*

Written submissions: *[email address]*

YourSAy survey: *[insert hyperlink]*

Targeted forums: *TBD*

Public Consultation – Draft Strategy

Following the conclusion of the public consultation on this discussion paper, a draft Strategy will be developed that responds to the insights gained from all of the information received.

Once the draft Strategy has been finalised, there will be a second public consultation to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate in the finalisation of actions to be adopted by the State Government.

Topic 1: Defining autism

Every person on the autism spectrum is an individual with unique qualities, strengths and support needs. There is not one way that an autistic individual experiences the world, this is why the term ‘spectrum’ is used – to reflect the fact that every individual’s lived experience of autism is different.

Defining autism for the purposes of the Strategy is a complex issue, but one that is fundamental to supporting community understanding and attitudes over time.

The following definitions have been identified:

Australian Autism Alliance *autism is a complex life-long neurodevelopmental condition resulting from differences in the brain and nervous system. Many people meet the diagnostic criteria for autism spectrum disorder. Autism is characterised by differences in social communication and the presence of restrictive, repetitive and/or sensory behaviours or interests. No two people experience autism in exactly the same way; with individual strengths and difficulties across the areas of social communication, behaviour, language, thinking, learning, processing, and daily living skills.*

To live their best lives autistic people require acceptance, accommodation, participation, and/ or appropriate individualised support that can vary and evolve over time.

Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing

***Autism spectrum disorder** (also simply termed autism) is a persistent developmental disorder, characterised by symptoms evident from early childhood. These symptoms include difficulty in social interaction, restricted or repetitive patterns of behaviour and impaired communication skills. However, these may not be recognised until later, when social demands, such as those related to schooling, become greater.*

There is no definitive test for autism; instead, diagnosis is made on the basis of developmental assessments and behavioural observations. This snapshot explores the prevalence and characteristics of people with autism, and their use of disability support services.

World Health Organisation

***Autism spectrum disorders (ASD)** are a diverse group of conditions. They are characterised by some degree of difficulty with social interaction and communication. Other characteristics are atypical patterns of activities and behaviours, such as difficulty with transition from one activity to another, a focus on details and unusual reactions to sensations.*

Question 1: Which definition, if any, do you think best represents autism?

Question 2: Do you see any problems with the application of these definitions?

Question 3: Has anything been missed, or misused, in the application of these definitions?

Question 4: In your own words, how would you best describe autism?

Topic 2: Community attitudes

Understanding the needs and challenges faced by autistic people is critical to ensuring that all State Government agencies adopt appropriate inclusive policies and practices, and the community is better informed.

Creating an autism affirming society

All people, including autistic people, have the right to enjoy their community and experience the highest level of physical and mental health. However, autistic people are often subject to stigma and discrimination, including limited opportunities to engage and participate in their communities which negatively impacts their physical and mental health.

When a person lives with disability, it does not completely or wholly define who they are. Autism, just like any other disability, is a natural and ordinary part of human diversity and autistic people can live full lives with interests, desires and dreams – just like any other Australian.

Question 5: What are some common misconceptions of autism you have seen/heard?

Question 6: What methods can be used to better inform the community about autism and create a more inclusive community?

Language is important

Person first language aims to put the person before their disability and includes terminology such as ‘person with autism’, ‘people on the autism spectrum’, or ‘individual with autism’.

Identity first language reflects the belief that being autistic is a core part of a person’s identity and includes terminology such as ‘autistic person’, ‘autistic individual’ or ‘autistic’.

Reflecting the diversity of language preferences within the community, both person-first and identity-first language is usually adopted.

Autistic people should not be patronised or objectified through stereotypical pitying portrayals that paint them as sufferers or inspiration-based clichés that portray them as heroes. A person is not automatically vulnerable because of their autism diagnosis. They are individuals who lead valuable and multi-dimensional lives. Likewise, they are not superheroes just because they live with an autism diagnosis.

Question 7: We know the use of language is interchangeable. However, can you advise if you have a preference between person-first or identity-first language and why?

State Autism Charter

The State Government intends to develop a State Autism Charter, that all State Government agencies will be required to adopt. The State Autism Charter will be co-designed with people with lived experience and developed in conjunction with the Strategy. The Charter requires community input to ensure it is responsive to the needs of autistic people and demonstrates appropriate accountability.

It is intended that the State Autism Charter will provide State Government agencies with a series of principles and commitments to ensure that they are responsive to the needs of autistic people

within their unique context and maintain a strong accountability for considering how their services respond to, and interact with, the autistic community.

Principles identified for Inclusive SA that could be adopted for the State Autism Charter include:

- Fundamental human rights, responsibilities and autonomy
- Individual worth and dignity
- Participation in social economic life
- The right to realise physical, social, sexual, reproductive, emotional and intellectual capacities
- The right to make decisions, including supported decisions and to take risks
- Access to information in appropriate forms
- Respect for cultural and linguistic diversity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious beliefs
- Rights to privacy and confidentiality
- Live free from neglect, abuse and exploitation
- Rights to pursue complaints and access justice
- Acknowledge and respect the crucial role of families, carers and friendship activities
- Respect the needs and rights of children as they develop
- Acknowledge and respect the abilities, strengths, goals and needs of people living with disability.

Question 8: Can the above principles be adopted for the State Autism Charter?

Question 9: What other principles should be included in the State Autism Charter?

Question 10: How can State Government agencies ensure they are demonstrating a commitment to the State Autism Charter?

Topic 3: Health and wellbeing

A broad range of interventions, from early childhood and across the life span, can optimise the development, health, wellbeing and quality of life of autistic people, where required. Timely access to early evidence-based psychosocial interventions can improve the ability of autistic people to communicate effectively and interact socially.

Health factors

It is important that, once autism has been diagnosed, children, adolescents and adults with autism and their carers are offered relevant information, services, referrals, and practical support, in accordance with their individual and evolving needs and preferences.

Recent data shows that autistic people have less access to health care, an increased risk for co-morbidities, and have more anxiety and depression, than people without disability.

Furthermore, the healthcare needs of autistic people are often complex and require a range of integrated services, that include health promotion, care and rehabilitation. Collaboration and interface between government services and the NDIS is important to respond to complex needs.

Question 11: What can be done to improve the pathways for autistic people in accessing the support they require and the connection between mainstream government services (eg Education and Health) and the NDIS?

Question 12: What do you understand, or what have you experienced to be the main barriers to accessing health and wellbeing support provided by Government services?

Wellbeing factors

Social exclusion contributes to poor mental health outcomes for autistic people and restricts access to programs and supports that may significantly improve their overall health and wellbeing.

The Strategy, in connection with Inclusive SA, should respond to the wellbeing barriers facing autistic people through the implementation of State Government agency Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs) [Inclusive SA - State authority plans](#).

Question 13: What else should the Strategy include from a practical perspective, to support or promote positive wellbeing amongst the autistic community?

Question 14: What actions would you like to see included in State Government agency DAIPs that respond to the wellbeing of autistic people?

Topic 4: The built environment

The built environment is an influential factor in the quality of life of autistic people. The opportunity for autistic people to autonomously interact with the built environment is often compromised (and sometimes denied) due to constraints arising from the mismatch between their specific needs and the 'built form.'

Several studies have emphasised how the altered perception of sensory stimuli and processing of information coming from the environment is one of the main issues experienced by autistic people, including:

- adverse responses to specific sounds or textures, smells or lighting
- distress at changes to routine, locations, travel, interior design.

The necessity to consider the living environments on the basis of the specific needs of autistic people has gained increasing importance in urban planning and urban design fields over the past decade. Therefore, it is essential to investigate further how the built environment in our existing (and future) infrastructure impacts autistic people and how it can be re-designed or reorganised to promote their autonomy and to enhance their overall quality of life.

Question 15: What are the significant barriers to the built environment you have experienced and how could these have been improved?

Question 16: Are you aware of any points of interest around South Australia where there are dedicated 'autism-friendly' spaces incorporated?

Topic 5: Education and employment

Education

The Department for Education has been tasked to appoint an autism inclusion teacher in every public primary school in South Australia from Term 1, 2023. Up to one day per week funding will be offered to free up teachers to take on the role. Furthermore, there will be an increase in autism inclusion staff in preschools and further allied health supports through the State's children's centres.

These initiatives sit outside the scope of this discussion paper as they are deliverables already in development.

Employment

Participation in the workforce is important for social inclusion and economic independence, however despite the varied and diverse skillset of autistic people which could prove invaluable to an employer, they continue to encounter barriers to entering the workforce.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2018 the unemployment rate for people with autism was 34.1%, more than three times the rate for people with disability (10.3%) and almost eight times the rate of people without disability (4.6%).

Question 17: What barriers have you, or someone you know, faced with applying for jobs?

Question 18: What adjustments could be made to the pathway for employers to consider when a person with autism applies for a position?

Question 19: When in the workforce, what barriers to success have you, or someone you know, faced?

5:02

 4G

Kyall >

Fri, 9 Sep, 11:22 am

Hi Kyall, have we confirmed the 23rd for the launch event?

Fri, 9 Sep, 1:42 pm

Hi Ksharmra I am having one last crack at getting an answer from Boyer.

However, to accommodate Bourke's diary we are now looking at Friday 30th

From 10am at this stage.

5:07

4G



Kyall >

25th for the launch event?

Fri, 9 Sep, 1:42 pm

Hi Ksharmra I am having one last crack at getting an answer from Boyer.

However, to accommodate Bourke's diary we are now looking at Friday 30th

From 10am at this stage.

OK, thanks - fingers crossed for Boyer