



Better autism services and more inclusion recommended

The Victorian Parliament's Family and Community Development Committee has recommended access to better diagnostic and clinical services for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and a more inclusive approach in planning and delivering services.

In its report tabled in Parliament today, the Committee has made 101 recommendations following a comprehensive inquiry that heard from people across Victoria, including people with autism, families living with autism, and service providers.

"Victoria faces many challenges with regard to government-funded services for people with ASD," said Maree Edwards, Committee Chair for the inquiry.

"The Committee is very grateful and expresses our sincere thanks to all who contributed written submissions to the inquiry and to the many people who appeared before the Committee's public hearings, both in Melbourne and across regional Victoria," she said.

"The Committee found that there is a lack of autism services across Victoria including a severe lack of assessment and diagnostic services, a shortage of qualified diagnostic clinicians, and a real lack of early intervention and behavioural support services.

"For both children and adults with ASD, access to education, health and mental health services and programs is limited, with long waiting times for support. There is also a lack of knowledge among education, health, mental health and disability service providers about autism."

Some of the Committee's recommendations include:

- a campaign for community inclusion of people with autism
- update and renewal of the 2009 state autism plan
- centres for autism excellence in regional Victoria
- multidisciplinary teams to provide diagnosis within 3 months of referral
- a public ASD diagnostic service for all Victorians across the state
- a strategy for inclusive education across the state for all students with ASD
- ensuring the National Disability Insurance Scheme has capacity to meet future demand for services
- training for people working with people with ASD to recognise ASD in girls.

“The Committee is keen to see its recommendations implemented so that people living with autism and their families receive the services that meet their health and social needs,” said Paul Edbrooke, the incoming Chair of the Family and Community Development Committee.*

“We will be watching with a keen interest to ensure that the input the Committee received from the community results in improvements to services and the way they are delivered.”

The report is available from the Committee’s [website](#).

Media queries

For media comment contact Maree Edwards MP on (03) 5444 4125 and Paul Edbrooke MP on (03) 9783 9822.

**Paul Edbrooke is the new Chair of the Family and Community Development Committee following the election of Maree Edwards as Deputy Speaker. Maree Edwards remains a Committee member.*

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