

Media Release

The Hon Martin Foley MP

Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Equality
Minister for Creative Industries



Getting Things Done.
Making Things Fair.

Thursday, 14 December, 2017

SUPPORTING VICTORIANS LIVING WITH AUTISM

The Andrews Labor Government will invest more than \$22 million as an immediate response to the *Inquiry into Services for People with Autism Spectrum Disorder*.

Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing Martin Foley today announced the funding would cover eight priority areas of action to be addressed as part of a comprehensive *Autism Plan*.

That money will be used to improve support for children with autism in the early years and throughout their schooling.

More than \$19 million has been set aside for education initiatives, including:

- Further training and scholarships through the Autism Teaching Institute for government teachers
- Piloting a new funding model for schools to meet the needs of students with disabilities
- A boost to all Victorian specialist schools to better support children with autism.

Other initiatives include developing a public education campaign, creating new sport and recreation opportunities, strengthening support for young girls and women, and peer support for Victorians in rural and regional areas.

The education campaign will help inform the broader Victorian community about people living with autism and their diverse needs – based on age, gender, cultural identity and the nature of their autism.

The *Autism Plan* will align with the *State Disability Plan 2017-2020* to ensure a consistent vision and approach to disability inclusion across Victoria.

To respond to the Inquiry, the Government established a stakeholder advisory group to provide the autism community with an opportunity to provide feedback on the report's recommendations.

The Government will continue to work closely with Victorians with autism, their families and advocates to develop and implement the *Autism Plan*.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing Martin Foley

"People living with Autism Spectrum Disorder deserve to lead a normal life – and for too long the supports they need haven't been available."

"Things need to change – that's why our Autism Plan will look at new initiatives and strategies to support Victorians of all ages and backgrounds who are living with autism."

Quote attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"This is about giving every Victorian every chance to succeed and making sure students living with Autism Spectrum Disorder have the same opportunities as everybody else."

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