

**Senator the Hon Anne Ruston**  
Minister for Families and Social Services  
Minister for Women's Safety  
Manager of Government Business in the Senate

**Senator Hollie Hughes**  
Senator for New South Wales

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **A National Strategy for Autism**

A re-elected Morrison Government will develop a National Autism Strategy aimed at improving service integration and access, increasing community and professional understanding and building workforce capability.

Minister for Families and Social Services, Anne Ruston, said it would be informed by a strong evidence base and help develop autism-specific services.

"A re-elected Morrison Government will commit \$1 million over the next 12 months to develop a National Autism Strategy, as recommended by the Select Committee on Autism," Minister Ruston said.

"1 in every 30 school-aged Australian children are diagnosed on the autism spectrum, with many experiencing loneliness, isolation, exclusion and discrimination.

"This comes at an enormous personal, social and economic cost to these Australians and their families.

"For too long people on the autism spectrum and their families have been left to navigate services to cater for their needs. This strategy will help better integrate services that change lives."

Liberal Senator for New South Wales and Chair of the Select Committee on Autism, Hollie Hughes, said the strategy would have clear reporting mechanisms and focus on educating the wider public about autism.

"From diagnosis through to adulthood, we want to provide the right supports for the 200,000 Australian people with autism," Senator Hughes said.

"This is why we are also committing \$1.3 million to continue the work of the Autism Cooperative Research Centre as a trusted independent source of evidence for best practice in Autism."

The Morrison Government's National Autism Strategy will:

- Identify actions to drive better integration between federal and state service systems, including a roadmap to better integrate mainstream services.
- Identify actions to increase community understanding of autism. This will include consideration of a public education campaign that portrays the diversity of the spectrum and helps improve inclusion across a range of settings, including schools, workplaces and in the general community.
- Identify actions to promote awareness of, and access to, quality, evidence-based information about autism for autistic people, their families, and professionals in autism-related sectors.
- Include measures to allow for monitoring and reporting of the social inclusion of autistic people within the community.
- Ensure the supply of a suitable and appropriate workforce to deliver services for autistic people. With accompanied clear and measurable outcomes, to improve data around current and future workforce gaps and shortages; attract, train and retain workers in identified areas of shortage.
- Include actions to integrate, promote and prioritise the employment of autistic people compatible with the Disability Employment Strategy.

Only the Morrison Government has a plan to deliver a strong economy and a stronger future that will benefit all Australians.