# A picture containing black, darkness Description automatically generated

# Australian Government Response to the Senate Select Committee on Autism report:

# Services, support and life outcomes for Autistic Australians



## Easy Read Version

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|  | About this document |
| Icon for Easy Read - from The Easy Read Toolbox. | This document is written in an easy to read way.  We call it **Easy Read**. |
| Man hand on head looking confused. | You might not know some words.  The first time we use those words they are blue.  We tell you what they mean. |
| Icon for Word List - from The Easy Read Toolbox. | Words in blue are in a [list at the back of this document](#_heading=h.gjdgxs).  You can check what they mean there. |
| Icon of a thick document pointing at icon for Easy Read. | This is a **summary** of a **response** to a report.  A summary is a shorter version of something. |
| A long document. above it are speech bubbles with ticks and crosses. | A response says what we think about each recommendation. |
| Parliament house with a speech bubble containing an icon of a long document. | The response was written by the **Australian Government**.  It was published in December 2022.  The Australian Government makes decisions about what happens to all Australians. |
| Parliament house with a speech bubble containing an icon of an easy read document. | This Easy Read summary was also written for the Australian Government. |
| People holding a large sign with a picture of Parliament House, and saying We. | When we say we, we mean the Australian Government. |

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|  | 1. About this response |
| Map of Australia covered in small icons of people with large rainbow infinity symbol on top. | The Australian Government wants to help **Autistic** Australians.  Autistic people have a disability called autism. |
| 2 people talking to each other. They each have large question marks above their heads and their hands up. One is wearing a t-shirt with an infinity symbol. | Autism is a disability that may affect how an Autistic person:   * thinks and feels * communicates and connects with others. |
| A short haired person looking sad. An arrow points up to the same person looking very happy. | We want to **improve** the lives of Autistic Australians.  To improve means to make them better. |
|  | We asked for **research** into how to better help Autistic Australians. |
| Researchers standing behind a sign saying Research. | Research is when people study a topic and they:   * Learn a lot about the topic * Find out new information on the topic. |
| Icon of a report with a speech bubble above containing a street sign with the words "what to do". | We have a report with **recommendations** to improve the lives of Autistic Australians.  It gives us ideas of:   * what we should do * how we should do it. |
| Silhouette of four people talking. The speech bubbles are rainbow. | The report was written by the Senate Select **Committee** on Autism.  A committee is a group of people who meet to:   * talk about   and   * work on something together. |
| The symbol of the Australian Greens party. A speech bubble above contains a street sign with the words "what to do". | The Australian Greens Party also gave us recommendations. |
| Government icon. Above is a speech bubble saying "What to do" with a green tick. | We **support** many of the recommendations.  This means that we agree to do it. |
| A tick, but only part of it is green. | We **partially support** some of the recommendations.  This means we agree to do part of it. |
| A tick, but only part of it is green. | We support some recommendations **in principle.**  This means we think that it is a good idea. |
| Government icon. Above is a speech bubble saying "What to do" with a red cross. | There are a few recommendations we do not support. |
| Icon of Easy Read response with a speech bubble saying "We will...". | We wrote a response to the report.  This summary of the response tells you what we will be doing. |

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|  | 2. A National Autism Strategy |
| Icon of a report with a speech bubble above containing a street sign with the words "what to do". | Many recommendations were about creating a National Autism **Strategy**.  A strategy is a plan of:   * what we will do * how we will do it. |
| Document saying National Autism Strategy with an infinity symbol, surrounded by a rainbow background. | We will create a National Autism Strategy to **improve** the lives of Autistic Australians. |
| An arrow pointing from a calendar saying one year to the National Autism Strategy. | We will:   * create the Strategy |
| Two hands shaking in agreement. A document with the Parliament House and an outline of Australia with the State and Territories names and borders is underneath. | * work with state and territory governments |
| The National Autism Strategy with a speech bubble saying we have. A one year calendar with a circular arrow around it. | * say what is happening regularly |
| The National Autism Strategy under a magnifying glass. A speech bubble asking if it is working. Three one year calendars with a circular arrow around them. | * check the Strategy to make sure it is working well. |
|  | The Strategy will **include** the needs of all Autistic people. |
| Icons of people surrounded by a circle. Four icons outside of the circle each have an arrow pointing from them to inside the circle. | To include is to make sure everyone can be part of something. |
| The outline of a child coloured rainbow with an infinity symbol and a male gender symbol on the shirt. The child is inside the same circle as used to designate inclusion. | In the past, many people thought only young boys were Autistic. |
| Outlines of five adults inside the same circle as used to designate inclusion. | The Strategy will also make sure there are supports for Autistic:   * adults |
| The symbol indicating female gender inside the same circle as used to designate inclusion. | * women and girls. |
| Young woman crying | We will include **vulnerable** Autistic people.  Vulnerable means they are more likely to be hurt.  They need more support to be safe. |
| A rural setting. | They might:   * live far away from cities |
| The symbols used to indicate transsexuality, gender fluidity and gender queerness. | * have a different gender identity |
| A series of male and female outlines with symbols designating attraction to men, women, both men and women, no-one or everyone. | * have a different sexuality |
| Man smiling in a wheelchair. | * have other disabilities. |

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|  | 3. Better information about autism |
| Document saying National Autism Strategy with an infinity symbol, surrounded by a rainbow background. | The Strategy will help everyone to understand and work with and support Autistic people better. |
| People collecting, reading and studying information. | The information will come from:   * research |
| Outlines of a mix of different people coloured rainbow. Speech bubbles above say 'My autistic experience' and 'Our autistic experience'. | * Autistic people and their families and carers. |
| Icons representing Auslan, Easy Read, Disability Access and the World Wide Web. | The information will be **accessible.**  Accessible means everyone should be able to use, read and understand something. |
|  | This includes: |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Flags | * **First Nations People** of Australia   First Nations people are also called Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. |
| Outline of people with flags of different countries inside. | * people from different cultures and languages. |
| A group of people holding signs that say 'Listen to our needs' and 'Hear our voices'. | We will help Autistic people with **advocacy**.  Advocacy is telling other people what you think and what you need. |
| Outline of a figure using a walking frame coloured in rainbow with an infinity symbol. A speech bubble says 'I need'. | Advocacy can be done by:   * you |
| Outline of an adult figure in front of a child. The outline of the child is coloured in rainbow with an infinity symbol. A speech bubble says 'My child needs'. | * people connected to you |
| A person writing on a clipboard. A speech bubble says 'This person needs'. | * **professionals** who support you   A professional is someone that has trained to do a particular job. |
| A person at a laptop speaking not a phone. A speech bubble says 'These people need'. | * advocacy organisations |
| Parliament House with two hands above outstretched in a giving gesture. One has stacks of hundred dollars notes and the other binders containing pages of printed information. | We will keep giving **resources** to support advocacy. |
| Circles containing people, money and an alarm clock. | Resources are what you need to do something.  Like:   * money * time * people with the right skills * information on how to do it. |
| Two hands shaking in agreement. A document with the Parliament House and an outline of Australia with the State and Territories names and borders is underneath. | We will write a plan to help people with disabilities to advocate.  We will work with state and territory governments to write the plan. |

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|  | 4. Easier diagnosis for Autistic people |
| Person writing on a clipboard. A speech bubble has a rainbow infinity symbol in it. | A diagnosis is when a professional writes a report saying you have a disability. |
| Parliament House with two hands above outstretched in a giving gesture. One has stacks of hundred dollars notes and the other binders containing pages of printed information. | We will give more resources to:   * help more people be diagnosed * make it faster to be diagnosed. |
| Person writing on a clipboard. A speech bubble has a rainbow infinity symbol next to an outline of a toddler. | We agree that Autistic people should be diagnosed earlier.  This means they can get support earlier. |
| Icon of a toddler. A clipboard in front says Health check. | Young children have health checks.  These checks should be better at looking for autism.  This could mean earlier diagnosis. |

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|  | 5. More support for Autistic people |
| A speech bubble from someone out of screen with a rainbow infinity symbol in it to indicate an autism diagnosis. The person hearing it is shrugging in confusion. | After diagnosis, many people and their families and carers do not know:   * what this means to them * what they should do about it |
| Parliament House with a hands above outstretched in a giving gesture containing binders containing pages of printed information. A speech bubble contains icons representing Auslan, Easy Read, Disability Access and the World Wide Web. | We will help them have better information. |
| Four filled in outlines of figures. A diploma saying skilled is in front of them. | Autistic people need **skilled** workers to support them.  To be skilled is to know how to do something well. |
| Four outlines of figures, only one of which is filled in. The other outlines are dashed indicating absence. A diploma saying skilled is in front of them. | There are not enough skilled workers. |
| Document saying National Autism Workforce Plan with people and an infinity symbol, surrounded by a rainbow background. | We will write a plan to have enough skilled workers. |
| Four filled in outlines of figures. A diploma saying skilled is in front of them. An arrow from the group points into an outline of Australia. | We will make it easier for skilled workers from other countries to come to Australia. |

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|  | 6. Autistic people included in schools |
| Map of Australia with the State and Territories names and borders. | State and Territory Governments are in charge of their school systems. |
| Two hands shaking in agreement. A document with the Parliament House and an outline of Australia with the State and Territories names and borders is underneath. | We are working with them to better include everyone in Australian schools. |
| Cover of the Disability Standards for Education. | We want all people with disabilities to be able to go to school.  This includes Autistic people.  [Read about the Disability Standards for Education.](https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/students/easyread/explaining) |

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|  | 7. Health of Autistic people |
| Person looking sad in bottom corner. An arrow points at the same person looking happy in the top corner. | We want to improve Australian **health services** for Autistic people.  A health service helps people with their health. |
| Icons of a cross representing a hospital, a stethoscope, a bottle of medicines and a tooth. | Like:   * doctors * hospitals * pharmacies * dentists * and more. |
| Icon of a document with the title 'National Roadmap for Improving Health Services for Autistic People'. | The Strategy will include a plan to improve services for Autistic people:   * health services * mental health services. |
| Medicare Logo | Medicare helps pay for health services.  You can find out more [on their website](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/medicare). |
| Woman with her finger on her lips looking to the side with two thought bubbles above her head, one with a cross and the other a tick. | There are rules about what Medicare will pay for.  We changed the rules.  This includes the age for Autistic diagnosis. |
| Speech bubble with a rainbow infinity icon to represent autism and a question mark. The icon for a 1 year old has the medicare logo and a tick, as does the icon for a 7 year old. The 14 year old and 25 year old icons have a medicare logo with a cross below it. | In the past, Medicare only paid for Autistic diagnosis for people younger than 13 years old. |
| Speech bubble with a rainbow infinity icon to represent autism and a question mark. The icon for a 1 year old has the medicare logo and a tick, as does the icon for a 7 year old and 1 14 year old. The icon of a 25 year old has a medicare logo with a cross below it. | Now Medicare pays for diagnosis up to 25 years old. |
|  | The changes started on 1 March 2023. |

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| NDIS logo. | 8. National Disability Insurance Scheme We help many people with disabilities through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).  Read more about the NDIS [in these booklets](https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/booklets-and-factsheets). |
| An arrow pointing from a person frowning to a person smiling.Hand with palm up. | We will improve how the NDIS supports Autistic people. |
| A group of people holding signs that say 'Listen to our needs' and 'Hear our voices'. | We will   * listen to Autistic Australians |
| Four figures with a sign in front saying 'Family and carers'. | * support families and carers |
| Two hands shaking in agreement. A document with the NDIS logo and an outline of Australia with the State and Territories names and borders is underneath. | * work with other services like schools and health services |
| Four filled in outlines of figures. A diploma saying skilled is in front of them. | * have staff that understand autism   and   * know how to work with Autistic people. |

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|  | 9. Housing for Autistic people |
| Parliament House with two hands above outstretched in a giving gesture. One has stacks of hundred dollars notes and the other binders containing pages of printed information. | We support people who need help to find **housing**. |
| Person welcoming another person into their home. Art by Sezi, The Easy Read Toolbox. | Housing is somewhere to live like:   * houses * apartments * and more. |
| Person standing inside the outline of a house. People are standing around the outside of the house. | We want to help Autistic people live **independently**.  Independently means they live alone or with people they choose. |
| Speech bubble with rainbow infinity symbol, green tick and a question mark. | We will check that Autistic people can live independently. |
| House with a red cross over it. 2 people stand in front, one in a wheelchair. | Many people who need a lot of support cannot find housing. |
| Two hands shaking in agreement. A document with the Parliament House and an outline of Australia with the State and Territories names and borders is underneath. | We will work with state and territory governments so there is more housing for them. |
|  | 10. Justice and Autistic people |
| Icons of a police badge, a judge's hammer and the scales of justice. | The **justice system** deals with people who break the law.  The justice system includes:   * police * lawyers * courts. |
| Map of Australia with the State and Territories names and borders. | State and Territory Governments are in charge of their justice systems. |
| A short haired person looking sad. An arrow points up to the same person looking very happy. | We want to improve how the justice system works with Autistic people and their families and carers.  We want them to trust each other. |
| Four filled in outlines of figures. A diploma saying skilled is in front of them. | We will ask justice services to help their workers:   * understand autism * know how to work with Autistic people. |

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|  | 11. More inclusion for Autistic people |
| Icons of people surrounded by a circle. Four icons outside of the circle each have an arrow pointing from them to inside the circle. | The Strategy will check if Autistic people are fully included in their community. |
| 1 person is painting a wall. The other is sitting at a desk with a phone and computer. | This means that Autistic people should:   * have jobs |
| 2 people standing together. One has speech bubbles above her head. | * join activities and events * have friends and people to connect with * get support to do this. |
| Parliament House with a hand above outstretched in a giving gesture. In the hand are icons of a firefighter, a manager, a cook, a builder and a medical professional. | It is hard to start work after you leave school.  We support people with disabilities to find their first job. |
| Icon of a document with the title 'Disability Employment Support Model'. | We want to help more people with disabilities find jobs.  We will keep working on a plan. |
| 2 people waving at each other. Image by Sezi for The Easy Read Toolbox. | We want to support Autistic people to:   * meet other Autistic people * and learn from each other. |

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|  | 12. National research into autism |
| People collecting, reading and studying information. | We need more and better research to understand:   * how to work with and support Autistic people * how to improve the lives of Autistic people * how people with disabilities are supported through services, payments and programs. |
| Document saying National Disability Data Asset. Wheelchair and list icons. | Good research needs good information.  We want to improve how we collect information about people with disabilities. |
| NDRP Icon - A dark blue circle with NDRP written in the middle in light blue. | The **National Research Disability Partnership** will improve disability research.  They are also called the NDRP. |
| Circle to represent inclusion around a map of Australia covered in small icons of people with large rainbow infinity symbol on top. | The NDRP will make sure that research about autism is:   * done with Autistic people * done by Autistic people * on topics that matter to Autistic people. |
| Two yearly calendars saying 2021 and 2022. | You can read [an Easy Read report](https://www.ndrp.org.au/recommendations) of the first 2 years of work on the NDRP. |

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|  | Word List |
| Icons representing Auslan, Easy Read, Disability Access and the World Wide Web. | Accessible Accessible means everyone should be able to use, read and understand something. |
| A group of people holding signs that say 'Listen to our needs' and 'Hear our voices'. | Advocacy Advocacy is telling other people what you think and what you need.  You can advocate for yourself or someone can do it for you. |
| Parliament House. | Australian Government The Australian Government makes decisions about what happens to all Australians. |
| 2 people talking to each other. They each have large question marks above their heads and their hands up. One is wearing a t-shirt with an infinity symbol. | Autistic Autism is a disability that may affect how an Autistic person:   * thinks and feels * communicates and connects with others. |
| Silhouette of four people talking. The speech bubbles are rainbow. | Committee A committee is a group of people who meet to talk about and work on something together. |
| Person writing on a clipboard. A speech bubble has a rainbow infinity symbol in it. | Diagnosis Diagnosis is when a professional writes a report saying you have a disability. |
| Easy Read icon. | Easy Read A document written in an easy to read way. |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait flags. | First Nations First Nations people are also called Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people. |
| Icons of a cross representing a hospital, a stethoscope, a bottle of medicines and a tooth. | Health services A health service helps people with their health. |
| Person welcoming another person into their home. Art by Sezi, The Easy Read Toolbox. | Housing Housing is somewhere to live. Like:   * houses * apartments * and more. |
| A short haired person looking sad. An arrow points up to the same person looking very happy. | Improve Make something better. |
| Icons of people surrounded by a circle. Four icons outside of the circle each have an arrow pointing from them to inside the circle. | Include Make sure everyone can be part of something. |
| Person standing inside the outline of a house. People are standing around the outside of the house. | Independently Living independently means to live alone or with people you choose. |
| Icons of a police badge, a judge's hammer and the scales of justice. | Justice system Thejustice systemdeals with people who break the law.  The justice system includes:   * police * lawyers * courts * and more. |
| Green tick in a circle that is green on one side and white on the other. | Partially support a recommendation To partially support a recommendation means we agree to do part of it. |
| A signpost with ‘what to do’ written on it. | Recommendation A recommendation is an idea of:   * what we should do * how we should do it. |
| People collecting, reading and studying information. | Research Research is when people study a topic and they:   * learn a lot about the topic * find out new information on the topic. |
| Circles containing people, money and an alarm clock. | Resources What you need to do something.  Like:   * money * time * people with the right skills * information on how to do it. |
| Four filled in outlines of figures. A diploma saying skilled is in front of them. | Skilled To be skilled is to have learned to do something well. |

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| Document saying National Autism Strategy with an infinity symbol, surrounded by a rainbow background. | Strategy A strategy is a plan of:   * what we will do * how we will do it. |
| An icon of a thick document points at an icon for Easy Read. | Summary A summary is a shorter version of something. |
| Green tick on a green circle. | Support a recommendation To support a recommendation means we agree to do it. |
| Green tick in a circle that is green on one side and white on the other. | Support in principle To support a recommendation in principle means we think it is a good idea. |
| Young woman crying | Vulnerable Vulnerable means more likely to be hurt. Vulnerable people need extra support and protection. |

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Easy Read report written by Kathryn Carter, Karen Hedley & The Easy Read Toolbox for the Australian Government based on their report.