

AFSA RESPONSE TO THE VICTORIAN AUTISM PLAN



The **Victorian Autism Plan** (the Plan) released by the Victorian Government on 6th December 2019 is a major disappointment.

Comprehensive submissions from many groups including AFSA in 2016, a detailed Parliamentary Committee Report in 2017 and ongoing 'consultations' with autism groups, autistic people and the families of those with autism in 2018 have not been translated into a real and meaningful **plan for action**.

There is little in the Plan for people with autism who have complex and/or high support needs.

This is a largely unfunded Plan; the substance fails to address properly many well-identified and urgent needs.

Those needs and major gaps in services include health care, education, workforce growth and development, housing, adult services, crisis support and the operation of the justice system.

Advocacy and counselling services for families, support in communication and elimination of restrictive practices are other areas requiring action.

There is a desperate need to improve availability, quality and integration of services for people with autism.

A long promised comprehensive education strategy for students with autism is missing from the Plan.

Minister Donnellan and DHHS officials appear to have attempted to get some better outcomes in the Plan but the collective response of the Victorian Government falls well short of what is required. It is essential that the Plan is modified to better reflect the supports required by those with complex and/or high support needs.

The government must provide funding in the 2020 State Budget to resource, at the very least, those areas that are articulated in the Plan.

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<http://www.statedisabilityplan.vic.gov.au/victorian-autism-plan>