



GREENS COMMIT \$750,000 TO AUTISM TASMANIA

As Bartlett Government Rejects Funding Applications

Cassy O' Connor MP

Greens Health and Human Services spokesperson

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www.mps.tas.greens.org.au

The Tasmanian Greens today announced a 'Ready to Deliver \$750,000 funding commitment' to Autism Tasmania over four years to sharply improve the delivery of early intervention and support services to Tasmanians with autism and their families.

Greens Human Services spokesperson Cassy O'Connor MP said it is a damning indictment on the Bartlett government that the state's peak body supporting Tasmanians with autism and their families receives no state funding for the vital work it does.

"The Bartlett government has manifestly failed to recognise the enormity of the challenge Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) represents to Tasmanians now and into the future," Ms O'Connor said.

"As a consequence too many children with autism are missing out on timely diagnosis, early intervention and tailored social literacy and education programs."

"Adults with autism who did not benefit from early intervention in the past, represent a huge area of unmet need."

"Many are housed in supported accommodation in the care of staff who lack the specialised skills in ASD care. Tragically some adults with autism end up in the criminal justice system."

"These Tasmanians with ASD are clearly not being empowered to realise their full potential as citizens."

"Families with children with ASD face extreme daily coping pressures and too many end up in crisis because the State government has failed to recognise and adequately fund their support needs."

"With minimal staffing and a network of overworked volunteers Autism Tasmania is seeking to reach these people no matter where they may live in Tasmania."

"It provides outreach and support to families with children with ASD and is developing a comprehensive social literacy program tailored to meet intellectual needs and to equip people with ASD to meet the challenges and daily life interacting as members of a community."

"This work is core to a meaningful social inclusion agenda, yet the State government in January rejected all applications made by Autism Tasmania for funding under the Community Grants program."

"The Tasmanian Greens believe the capacity of Autism Tasmania must be strengthened through recurrent State government funding."

"We are committed to delivering \$750,000 over four years in the first instance to Autism Tasmania to carry out its important work and to work with government and service providers on improved service delivery."

"We also recognise that there is a shortage of expertise in ASD in Tasmania. This situation can be turned around over five to ten years through dedicated courses provided via the University of Tasmania and in skill based training through the Polytechnic."

"Tasmania can become a national centre of excellence in the development of a skilled ASD specific workforce and by investing more in early intervention and ongoing social literacy programs."

"The Greens believe this is not only possible, it is an absolute necessity if we are to ensure Tasmanians with autism and their families feel supported and enabled to achieve their full potential."

"The cost to individuals, families and the wider community of maintaining the status quo is simply unacceptable."

"We are ready to deliver better outcomes for Tasmanians with ASD and their families," Ms O'Connor said.

Ms O'Connor said that today's commitment to Autism Tasmania is on top of, and compliments, the Greens' earlier recurrent funding commitment to maintain the highly successful A-Team program (for children with Aspergers).