



Media Release For Immediate Release

Tuesday 14 January 2025

A cautious win for Autistic people

-STARTS-

Amaze welcomes the release of Australia's first National Autism Strategy 2025 - 2031 (NAS) and associated First Action Plan 2025-2026, as a significant first step towards improving the quality of life of all Autistic people and creating a safe and inclusive society where Autistic people are supported and empowered to thrive.

Amaze has been a passionate advocate for a National Autism Strategy for many years and acknowledges the work that has been undertaken by the Oversight Council, Strategy working groups and many other Autistic people, families and carers and stakeholders that have contributed to its development.

Chief Change Officer, Alex Lazarus-Priestley acknowledges Amaze's many years of commitment as an active advocate for a NAS.

"We've been dedicated to advancing a National Autism Strategy since 2019 through our collaboration with the Australian Autism Alliance and impactful submissions to government bodies," said Ms Lazarus-Priestley.

We welcome the Strategy's focus on driving change across four key outcome areas: social inclusion; economic inclusion; diagnosis, services and supports; and health and mental health (via the [National Roadmap to Improve the Health and Mental Health of Autistic People](#) currently being developed by the Department of Health and Aged Care).

We are pleased the Strategy recognises the diverse perspectives, experiences and needs of Autistic people and identifies priority cohorts in need of targeted actions (including Autistic First Nations People, Autistic Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people and Autistic people with very high support needs). While we welcome the inclusion of targeted actions for these cohorts in the First Action Plan, greater targeted investment and actions will be needed to address their unique needs and reduce inequalities, particularly for Autistic people with very high support needs and their families. We will continue to advocate for the Strategy's implementation to be informed by a diversity of perspectives and experiences to ensure its actions are meeting the needs of all Autistic people and their families and carers.

The First Action Plan provides welcome investment and immediate actions to improve the lives of Autistic people. In particular, the investment of almost \$20 million (over 4 years) to improve access to peer support (tailored to the diverse needs of the Autistic and autism community) has the potential to change lives.

“We welcome the new funding that can meaningfully shift the systems Autistic people depend on—particularly the boost for peer support and the creation of a knowledge translation body, which is a visionary way to bridge the gap between lived experiences and research,” said Ms Lazarus-Priestley.

The investment of almost \$1 million in public education initiatives provides a valuable opportunity to improve understanding and the inclusion of Autistic people, building on the achievements of the Victorian Government’s Change Your Reactions campaign.

We also welcome the investment in resources for Autistic people and their families pre- and post-diagnosis, actions to improve employment opportunities and supports for Autistic people in the workplace, and actions to improve data collection, research and knowledge translation. The investment in a study to identify the true prevalence of autism is an important first step towards identifying the true needs of our community.

However, significantly more investment will be needed to “shift the dial” and achieve the Strategy’s objectives, particularly in education and employment. The investment of almost \$1 million over 2 years to improve employment opportunities and supports for Autistic people in the workplace, while welcome, will be inadequate to address the complex barriers to workplace inclusion and empower Autistic job seekers.

“While \$915,000 for employment initiatives is a welcome start, it’s a tiny drop into the ocean for genuinely improving employment outcomes,” said Ms Lazarus-Priestley.

“We need to move beyond narrow approaches that simply place Autistic people into certain roles, and ensure focus is on genuinely inclusive workplaces.”

We look forward to the timely release of an Evidence, Evaluation and Reporting Framework to ensure robust accountability, transparency and measurements of success. This Framework must be informed by a diversity of perspectives and experiences and the autism sector.

Today is an exciting day for Autistic people and their families and carers. We hope they can see themselves in this Strategy and how it may begin to improve their day to day lives.

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Media contact

For more information, advice and to request an Amaze spokesperson for interviews, please contact: Alexandra Lazarus-Priestley, Chief Change Officer at Amaze on 0481 561 240

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