




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACALISTER

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ADJOURNMENT

Autism Awareness Month

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (6.19 pm): I thought I might bring a bit of positivity to the House this week. I think it has been sorely lacking. I would like to remind the House that, being April, it is Autism Awareness Month. Today, 18 April, Autism Queensland hosts Action for Autism Day—a national day for the community to unite in solidarity to remove barriers, embrace everyone’s unique strengths and perspective, and raise funds for autism awareness. I know that many of my schools get involved. As is my wont, it is this time of year when I update the House on my family’s autism journey.

Hi, Ronan! Ronan is now 10 years old and in grade 5. Having recently read the 2024 National Autism Education Survey, I can confirm that our autism experience mirrors that of the majority of respondents to this survey. He is currently an NDIS participant. Like 64 per cent of the respondents, he has level 2 autism. Like 51 per cent of respondents, he goes to a public school and now, like 70 per cent of children with ASD, he has ADHD as a co-occurring condition. The ADHD diagnosis is new for us. It is something that required a significant amount of testing. Those who have had experience with ASD children would know that a blood test is not a fun experience. He was a brave little man throughout the whole experience and we had all the diagnostic tests done.

As a result of this diagnosis we now have medication for him. The intent of this medication is specifically to help him with his focus at school. His diagnosis is ADHD inattentive. We are really hoping that, as we get to the meaty part of primary school and he gets ready to go on to high school, we can really focus on learning and attention while he is studying. His interests have changed. Trains still interest him, but now he would like to challenge every single one of you to identify the flags of the world. He has managed to beat everyone in his class and all of his teachers. He has an ambition, and I can tell you that as a parent there is nothing better than to see your child, who really struggles with school, have an ambition. His ambition is to be a school captain next year in grade 6. I applaud the number of schools that have decided to include inclusion captains within their school. He would like to mentor the next group of young ASD kids coming through his state school.

This is this year’s self-portrait of Ronan at 10 years old. He has labelled himself as ‘random and wacky’. I table his self-portrait.

Tabled paper: Child’s drawing depicting a self portrait of Ronan aged 10 [632](#).