

Question on Notice

No. 141

Asked on Thursday, 14 February 2008

Mr Foley MP asked the Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Seniors and Youth (**MS NELSON-CARR**)–

- (1) Why is funding being made available to people with intellectual disabilities but not for those diagnosed with Autism, which is utterly debilitating but not as visually obvious?
- (2) Does she have any plans to rectify this situation?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government has made a significant investment in autism services across Queensland.

Since 2005-06, Disability Services Queensland has allocated \$2 million under the Autism Early Intervention initiative for Autism Queensland Inc and the Autism Early Intervention Outcomes Unit to establish eight state-wide specialist autism centres for children with autism under six years and their families.

Autism Queensland has expanded its early intervention to regional operations in Rockhampton and Cairns and Autism Early Intervention Outcomes Unit are operating centres at Moorooka, Bray Park and Toowoomba and I will be opening their fourth centre, located in Townsville, on 20 March this year.

Autism Early Intervention Outcomes Unit are also planning to open a centre at Park Ridge on 2 April 2008 and are also planning further centres at the Sunshine and Gold Coasts which will be operational by 2009.

Research shows early intervention initiatives like the Queensland autism initiative can produce significant improvement in children's health, social and cognitive development and help minimise some of the social and physical barriers faced by children with autism.

Disability Services Queensland's strategies provide significant assistance to help strengthen family capacity and reduce the long-term care and support costs for families who care for children with autism.

Disability Services Queensland is well placed to build upon these services and is keen to work with the new Commonwealth Government, to implement its proposed strategies for helping children with autism.