



28 August 2025

Senator the Hon. Jenny McAllister

Senate

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

This is a public letter to Minister Jenny McAllister,

Re: Questions following “*Minister responds to questions about cutting kids from NDIS*”

We, the undersigned Regional Autistic Engagement Network on behalf of our communities, Autistic families, and working in collaboration with a growing coalition of DPROs and disability organisations, are writing to you following your response to Senator Jordan Steele-John’s questions in “*Minister responds to questions about cutting kids from NDIS*”.

We are deeply concerned in a matter that directly affects the Autistic community, a community that values honesty and direct communication, we did not receive clear or direct answers.

We live in a democracy, where transparency and accountability are fundamental. Autistic people and our families deserve respect, and respect means clear answers, in plain language, without political spin.

Let us be absolutely clear. We do not need background lessons on the history of NDIS reform. We know this context already. Many of us are highly educated and deeply engaged in this area. We would appreciate direct answers to direct questions about the future of our communities’ supports and lives.

Part 1: These are “yes” or “no” questions. As such, please only answer with a yes or no.

1. Does the government intend to remove Autistic children from the NDIS with a diagnosis of Level 1- "Requiring Support" (Note this language is in accordance with the DSM-5-TR: Neurodevelopmental Disorders)?



2. Does the government intend to remove Autistic children from the NDIS with a diagnosis of Level 2- "Requiring substantial support" (Note this language is in accordance with the DSM-5-TR: Neurodevelopmental Disorders)?
3. Does the government intend to remove Autistic children from the NDIS with a diagnosis of Level 3- "Requiring very substantial support" (Note this language is in accordance with the DSM-5-TR: Neurodevelopmental Disorders)?
4. Does the government intend to change the NDIS access eligibility criteria for Autistic adults?
5. Under the apparent "Thriving kids", will Autistic children and their parents/families have **direct access**, with no gaps or out-of-pocket costs, to the following supports:
 - a. Clinical supports currently funded under the NDIS, including but not limited to: Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Psychology, Developmental Educator, and Dietitian supports
 - b. Creative therapies, including but not limited to Art therapy, Music therapy, and Gaming therapy (run by clinical supports).
 - c. Consumables, and Assistive Technology
 - d. Support co-ordination
 - e. Support work
 - f. In-home supports such as cleaning and gardening
 - g. Respite
 - h. Other supports we may require based on individualised needs
6. Was the Autistic community, our families and/or our representative organisations specifically consulted—prior to the National Press Club announcement—about the "Thriving Kids?"

Part 2:

This is where you can expand on any details you might wish to add from above. Please note that we would appreciate this section to be kept direct. This section is intended to be separate from Part 1 to allow for clear communication. Please do not combine these two sections. We yet again emphasise that there is no need to discuss the history or the perceived requirement to reform NDIS.

7. If Autistic children are **not** being removed from the NDIS, is part of their support being removed and replaced with "thriving kids"?
8. If Autistic children are being removed from the scheme, at what age or developmental milestone will they be deemed as meeting eligibility again? As many in our community



have clearly stated, Autism is a lifelong and permanent disability (Potvin, D., & Ratto, A., 2019).

9. In the above questions, what age is classed as “children” for the purpose of these answers? Furthermore, what is the rationale behind this?
10. Further to question 6, please specify any person, entity or organisation who was consulted on the development of the “Thriving Kids” program. Please ensure you clearly define their role and why they have been consulted.

We look forward to your response and engaging further to accomplish our shared goal of supporting Australia’s Autistic Community.

Hannah Reeve

Vice President, Secretary.

On behalf of the Regional Autistic Engagement Network

info@raentasia.com.au

References:



Potvin, D., & Ratto, A. (2019). *Children with disabilities: Autism Spectrum Disorder* (8th ed., chapter 18). Baltimore, Maryland ; London ; Sydney.

Steele-John, J. (2025) *Minister responds to questions about cutting autistic kids from NDIS* [video]. Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHknit3C200>.