



The Hon Christian Porter MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Industrial Relations
Leader of the House

MC20-014114

Mr Ken O'Dowd MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
petitions.committee.reps@aph.gov.au

Dear ~~Mr O'Dowd~~ 

Thank you for the Committee's correspondence of 9 April 2020 regarding petition EN1285. The petition requests that the government recommend to the Australian Human Rights Commission or to the relevant Parliamentary Committee that they launch an inquiry into the community treatment and understanding of those on the Autistic Spectrum. I appreciate the time you have taken to bring this matter to my attention.

The Australian Government believes all people are entitled to respect, dignity and the opportunity to participate in society regardless of their personal attributes, and recognises that to enjoy civil and political rights on an equal basis with others, people need to be able to do so free from discrimination.

I note your concerns about the misunderstanding and negative treatment that those on the Autistic spectrum can experience in community settings. The Commonwealth anti-discrimination laws, including the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, make discrimination and harassment on a number of protected grounds, including disability, unlawful in a wide range of areas of public life.

On 27 November 2019, the Senate resolved to establish a Select Committee on Autism to inquire into and report on the services, support and life outcomes for autistic people in Australia and the associated need for a National Autism Strategy. The inquiry is intended to go beyond diagnostic services and the National Disability Insurance Scheme to also ensure access to a range of inclusive services such as health, education, housing, justice, rights and employment.

The terms of reference of the inquiry includes particular attention to international best practice with regards to diagnosing, support services and education, effectiveness, cost and required intensity. There is also reference to the social inclusion and participation of autistic people within the economy and community.

The Select Committee on Autism are calling for individuals with autism to participate in the inquiry. Submissions to are currently open and due to close on 17 July 2020. The committee is to present its final report on or before the first sitting day of October 2021.

More information regarding the inquiry and the submission process can be found at the following link:

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Autism/autism

Thank you again for bringing this petition and the concerns raised to my attention.

Yours sincerely



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