



House of Assembly

Wednesday 18 May 2011

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

AUTISM SERVICES

Mr PICCOLO (Light) (15:01): My question is to the Minister for Families and Communities. Can the minister tell the house how the state government is helping South Australian families stay living safely together?

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE (Wright—Minister for Families and Communities, Minister for Housing, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability) (15:01): I thank the member for his question and appreciate his ongoing advocacy on behalf of South Australians with a disability. The rate of autism spectrum disorder within our community is on the rise. As part of our 2010 election commitment to provide support, we committed an extra \$4.2 million over four years to increase assessments and provide additional early intervention services.

The first \$1 million of this is being delivered this financial year and will be directed in two main areas: an additional \$500,000 per year to SA Health for a multidisciplinary assessment team to work across the Women's and Children's Hospital, the Lyell McEwin Hospital and the Flinders Medical Centre; plus an additional \$500,000 per year funding to Autism SA for assessment and early intervention services.

The extra funding for Autism SA will achieve the following: a statewide autism services project as part of a partnership with Disability, Ageing and Carers. Autism SA will receive a total of ... \$357,000 to manage the project across non-government sectors. It will look at the current scope of services for children and adults with autism spectrum disorder and develop recommendations for improvement in services. In addition, Autism SA has committed \$30,000 of commonwealth funding to this project.

The recommendations arising from the project will inform the ongoing allocation of additional \$500,000 recurrent funding after June 2013.

Autism SA's diagnostic assessment service will also receive an additional \$513,750 over two years and this will clear their current waiting list and boost the availability of its diagnostic services across a range of ages.