

AMAZE**Amaze welcomes Victorian Government announcement: *Disability Inclusion: Education for All***

All comments are attributable to Fiona Sharkie, CEO of Amaze:

Amaze shares the aspiration of Disability Inclusion: Education for All – we want to see all autistic children and young people welcomed, supported, accepted and able to thrive at their local government school.

Today's announcement is a recognition of the need for dramatic change.

For too long schools have not had the capacity to create learning environments where students with disability can achieve what they are truly capable of.

Around one third of autistic students do not make it past year 10 – with many leaving school even earlier. The gap in education outcomes compared with their peers without disability is enormous and unacceptable.

Today's announcement provides a significant injection of new funds and a range of welcome initiatives. This investment should see our state schools take great strides towards better supporting autistic students and others with disability.

While we are yet to see the full details underpinning the package, critical elements include:

- Improvements to the Program for Students with Disability – with a new strengths based Disability Inclusion Profile tool (to replace the Functional Needs Assessment). This should allow schools to better respond to the circumstances of individual students eligible for PSD funding.
- New funding to schools to assist autistic and other students with disability who do not qualify for individual funding. This should mean better support for more students.
- Support for school leaders and staff to build their capacity and capability in inclusive education, and measures to enable stronger school-family-community partnerships.

Missing from today's announcement are clear targets and indicators. It is important that we are ambitious about lifting outcomes for students with disability – such as Year 12 completion rates. As a community, we need to be able to track the impact of these important reforms.

-ENDS-

For more information and requests for interviews, please contact:

Alexander Baranikow | M: 0438 838 322 | | E: alexander@royce.com.au

About Amaze: Amaze is the peak body for autistic people and their families in Victoria. Amaze builds understanding, engagement and acceptance of autism, and influences positive systemic change to enable autistic people and their families to participate and contribute to society.

