

CENTRE FOR NEURODIVERGENCE

FREE SUPPORT FOR NEURODIVERGENT CANBERRANS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

The Greens want Canberra to be a place where everyone can live their lives to the fullest.

That means supporting people to have choice and control, and early access to supports, to achieve their life goals.

But we need to restore confidence in the ACT's support system. It is too often dependent on first receiving a medical diagnosis, for which there are long wait lists, and is unaffordable for thousands of Canberrans who cannot access an NDIS plan.

The Greens' Centre for Neurodivergence will fill known gaps in our local support system, to give Canberrans the type of care they want, when they need it.

Whether you are a parent wondering if your child might be neurodivergent, a teacher wanting to support a student's learning, someone wanting to work with the strengths of a neurodivergent colleague, a carer for someone with complex or co-occurring needs including neurodivergence, or you're seeking information about your own possible neurodivergence, there will be information, resources, and peer networking spaces for you.

The Centre will also facilitate and provide diagnosis and connection into additional health care and support services.

THE ACT GREENS WILL:

- ▲ Establish a Centre for Neurodiversity
- ▲ Provide free advice, support, assessment and diagnosis
- ▲ Connect peer groups with each other and with supports to improve their lives.

A STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH

Neurodivergent people and their families, friends, carers, educators, and employers in Canberra want to take a strengths-based approach to working with neurodivergent people.

But our systems of support for health care, education, employment, and social connection are built around neurotypical assumptions.

When people seek support or flexible approaches to enable better outcomes for neurodivergent people, current systems often require a medical diagnosis and an individualised plan, leading to time and resources spent on bureaucracy before any real support can be provided for the person who needs it.

FREE ADVICE AND SUPPORT

The Centre for Neurodivergence would provide, at no cost to the person seeking advice or support:

- Information and resources about neurodivergence, including autism and ADHD, for neurodivergent people, their families and friends, carers, educators from early childhood through to tertiary education, and employers.
- Space for peer groups to meet and provide support to each other, including neurodivergent people, as well as families and carers.
- Assessment and diagnosis for people of all ages.
- Early intervention allied health supports such as speech therapy,

occupational therapy, and counselling, without the requirement for diagnosis first.

- Improved access to GP, psychology, and psychiatry services.

The Centre for Neurodiversity will be person-centred, and work within a social model of disability and health care rather than a medical model.

It brings together and expands access to some existing services, such as the Child Development Service and existing Canberra Health Services, along with additional resources in health, education, employment, and peer and carer support.

CO-DESIGNED WITH COMMUNITY

The Centre's physical design and service model will be co-designed with people with lived experience of neurodivergence, carers, healthcare professionals, educators of neurodivergent students, academic researchers, and community advocates.

The intention is that it will bridge current gaps in supports and resources, as well as future needs resulting from NDIS reforms and the Disability Royal Commission recommendations.

The Centre will be a fit-for-purpose building (either a new build or a refit of an existing building) centrally located and easily accessible by bus or light rail.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

The Greens estimate capital expenditure in the order of \$15 million to establish the Centre, as well as approximately \$5 million per year in recurrent funding, to employ psychiatrists, psychologists, GPs, speech therapists, occupational therapists, social worker, counsellors, peer workers, and administrative staff.

Further detailed costing work will be completed before the election.

WHAT COMES NEXT

The Greens support a social model of disability, and a person-centred approach to support.

We want Canberrans to be able to access the services they need in Canberra, without having to travel interstate or go through time-consuming and difficult bureaucratic processes.

Additional services for Canberra will support people with particular needs at different stages along their journeys, accessing the right supports at the right time as needed.

We are committed to working alongside people with lived experience and passionate advocates in the community to deliver innovative services to better support choice and control for Canberrans in how they achieve their goals.