

From: LNP Media [LNP.Media@opposition.qld.gov.au]

Sent: Friday, 2 April 2010 7:31 AM

Subject: MEDIA RELEASE - Early intervention the key to unlock autism barriers

Andrew Cripps MP

Shadow Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs

Member for Hinchinbrook

2 March 2010

Early intervention the key to unlock autism barriers

Early intervention programs are the key to unlock the barrier of autism and improve community interaction and life quality, LNP spokesman for Disability Services Andrew Cripps said today.

Mr Cripps said today's World Autism Awareness Day celebrations were the perfect opportunity for the Bligh Labor Government to announce more support for people with autism.

"We need to see an increased focus on early intervention to improve outcomes for people with autism," Mr Cripps said.

"The early years are an essential time in every child's life for their academic and social development — this is the time when a child grows, learns and acquires interaction skills.

"When a child has undiagnosed, unrecognised or untreated autism, those years become much harder and the opportunity for tackling the problem early is lost.

"Support for children learning to live with autism can and does make a huge difference."

Mr Cripps said the diagnosis of autism was rapidly increasing but services to provide early diagnosis and support were not keeping pace.

"Between the year 2000 and 2004, autism diagnoses more than doubled in school-aged children from 33.3 students in every 10,000 to 72.8 students.

“In pre-school aged children, these figures grew from 66.7 to 114.1 out of 10,000 children.

“With more and more children being diagnosed with autism, increasing availability to support services is vital.

“It is important to increase awareness and understanding of autism to ensure all our children are given the opportunity to develop to their full potential.”

Media contact: Andrew Cripps 0407 741 997