

# Shane Rattenbury MLA



Member for Kurrajong

Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability  
Minister for Justice and Consumer Affairs  
Minister for Corrections  
Minister for Mental Health

Mr Bob Buckley  
Chair  
Speaking Out for Autism Spectrum Disorder  
[chair@sofasd.org.au](mailto:chair@sofasd.org.au)

Dear Mr Buckley

*Bob*

Thank you for your email of on 3 June 2018 regarding detainees with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) and what supports are available for detainees with ASD.

The management of people in the AMC with Autism Spectrum Disorder is undertaken collaboratively by ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) and Justice Health Services (JHS).

As part of the induction process, detainees may self-identify as having a disability, which may refer to physical or intellectual disabilities, or development conditions such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This information is captured in the ACTCS Induction form.

JHS and ACTCS recognise the disadvantages facing people in custody who have ASD in particular qualitative impairments in social communication and social interaction. ACTCS offer a supported environment and care coordination for detainees with identified complex needs. JHS provides care and treatment for all detainees with ASD and their co-occurring health needs. The provision of health care to detainees is undertaken by a team comprising of general practitioners, nurses, psychiatrists, mental health nurses, psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists.

ACTCS do capture data on the number of detainees with autism, however not in a format that allows for the data to be easily extracted. At this time ACTCS are unable to provide the definitive number of current detainees who have self-identified as having autism. I recognise that this is an area that needs addressing and have asked ACTCS and JHS to work collaboratively on improving the data collection and storage processes at the AMC.

## AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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One important part of this work is the development of a new ACTCS electronic information system from which reports on detainee numbers and identifying factors, including disability status, may be generated.

In addition, the ACT Government has committed to the development of an ACT Disability Justice Strategy as part of a continuing commitment to people with disabilities under the National Disability Strategy. Issues such as screening, data collection and support services for people with a disability in a correctional setting, including those with ASD, will be considered through this process.

Thank you for raising this important matter with me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shane Rattenbury', written over a faint circular stamp.

Shane Rattenbury MLA  
Minister for Mental Health

6 JUL 2018