



Briefing Note: Meeting with Autism New Zealand on 21 October 2021

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	20 October 2021	Priority:	Low
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1274264
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

This briefing provides you with background information to support your upcoming meeting with Autism New Zealand on Thursday 21 October at 4.15 pm.

Summary

You have been invited to attend a zoom meeting with Autism NZ so that they can take you through a demonstration of the Autism Connect app which they have developed.

Proactive Release

It is recommended that you **agree** that the Ministry of Education release this briefing in full once it has been considered by you.



Dr David Wales
Poutohu Matua Te Hāpai Ō Rāngai
Te Pae Aronui

20/10/2021



Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

20/10/2021

Background

1. The Learning Support Action Plan priority 4 is a commitment to providing flexible supports for neurodiverse children and young people. The focus in this priority is on building the understanding and capability of early learning services, schools and kura to teach and respond to neurodiverse children and young people to progress their learning at an appropriate depth and pace.
2. Autism NZ is a national organisation which provides services and support, education, and information on autism for autistic people and family/whānau, caregivers and professionals who engage with them.
3. The Ministry has a number of contracts with Autism NZ to support neurodiverse ākonga.

Funding Agreements

National Autism Programme

4. The Ministry has a contract with Autism NZ to provide an education programme to teams of teachers and parents to support tamariki aged 5-12 years who have autism.
5. Through the contract, Autism NZ provides a minimum of 35 two-day courses per year of their Tilting the Seesaw for Teams programme. The aim of Tilting the Seesaw is to lift teachers', parents', whānau and other key support people's understanding of autism, supporting them to work together to develop the skills and strategies to support tamariki with autism.
6. Tamariki with autism are supported to learn, and to use their strengths and interests to fully participate in their school, home, and community. The programme strives to ensure ākonga are supported to thrive in their education setting and are able to transition across different education contexts.
7. Feedback received from the course has been consistently positive. The courses are often full, with a waitlist. The course can be flexibly delivered, online as well as face to face, which allows schools in more rural regions to connect in and get PLD for their staff.

Tilting the Seesaw for Learning Support Coordinators

8. Autism NZ have provided Tilting the Seesaw training for Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs) to build their understanding of autism and to develop their skills and strategies to support learners with autism in collaborative ways. They facilitated training to groups of LSCs in Term 2 and Term 4 2020, and Terms 1 and 2 2021. It is estimated that 160 of the 600 LSC's have completed the training.
9. Tilting the Seesaw has enabled LSCs to build understandings, tools and strategies to support ākonga with autism. Feedback from LSCs indicated that the training met their needs for increasing knowledge, confidence, and skills. Strengthening Tilting the Seesaw content for Te Ao Māori perspectives and cultural responsiveness are areas for ongoing improvement of the programme.

Early Intervention Service

10. Autism NZ is one of the Ministry's 11 Early Intervention Specialist Service Providers (EISSP). This service outcome for the EISSP contract is that children in early childhood (birth to school entry) with high learning needs are supported to be present, participating, engaged, achieving and belonging in early childhood services.

Autism Connect App

11. The Autism NZ website says '*Autism connect is a web-based tool for connecting our community together. Created for autistic people and those who make up their support network- so that they can connect, share learnings and journey together.*'
12. The tool aims to connect people with the Autism NZ team and outreach coordinators throughout the country based on their specific areas of interest and expertise, tailoring support to needs.
13. There is a chat function that allows for private and public chat forums to connect with other like-minded people.

Risks

14. 9(2)(ba)(i) [REDACTED]
15. 9(2)(ba)(i) [REDACTED]