

Osteopathy Australia's submission on the National Autism Strategy

Osteopathy and Osteopathy Australia

Osteopathy Australia is the peak body representing the interests of osteopaths, osteopathy as a profession and consumer rights to access osteopathic services. Our core work is liaising with state and federal government, and all other statutory agencies, professional bodies, and private industry regarding professional, educational, legislative, and regulatory issues. Most registered osteopaths are members of Osteopathy Australia.

Osteopaths focus on the neuromusculoskeletal system - the bones, muscles, nerves and other tissues that support the body and control its movements. Osteopaths provide musculoskeletal and nervous system assessments, manual therapy; clinical exercise programs; and movement, postural, positioning advice and ergonomic assessments. They may also offer therapeutic needling techniques like dry needling, trigger point therapy or acupuncture. An osteopath may also offer ongoing support and educational advice about lifestyle, stress management, diet or other factors that may relate to pain, injury or movement.

Osteopathy Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Department of Social Services on the development of a National Autism Strategy.

Our response to the National Autism Strategy

Osteopathy Australia is overall supportive of the objectives of the strategy, as outlined in the Discussion Paper. We recognise the need for improving the integration of services and support, facilitating coordinated care, and promoting the rights of Autistic people. We agree that there needs to be a focus on strategies to foster social and economic inclusion of Autistic people, and we would particularly like to encourage more innovative thinking about how healthcare and other services can be more effectively delivered to enable Autistic people to make informed decisions about their health.

Osteopathy Australia is supportive of the various roles that allied health professionals may play in supporting Autistic people, which should be recognised and supported. Page 28 of the Discussion Paper outlines that:

“Allied Health professionals have a lack of understanding, knowledge and awareness of co-existing medical conditions with autism (SA Government consultation paper).”

Osteopathy Australia would like to emphasise the importance of providing support for autism awareness training for allied health professionals. This training should be provided to all allied health professionals, including those who may not be directly involved in the treatment of autism. It is important to ensure that Autistic people receive well-coordinated care and support when accessing the broader health system. Specifically, allied health professionals, including osteopaths, should be

supported to access training to improve their understanding, knowledge, and awareness of co-existing medical conditions with autism.

