

Further notes for the Select Committee on Autism:

Following up on my submission to the Select Committee on Autism, below are some further notes for the consideration of the committee:

In my experience, the most accepting people to work with are individuals who have had personal experience with an autistic individual. These people also make great advocates for support and awareness building. It is important to include individuals with autism, or individuals that have a close connection to autism, with individuals that have studied autism as consultants on any decisions.

There are still highly inappropriate and offensive conversations at workplaces about autism. This includes gross misconceptions and misunderstandings that make autistic people feel isolated and discriminated against. These examples are constant and often so ingrained that people do not realise when they speak.

The current trend of advertising people with autism as possessing exceptional computer programming skills, is creating another generalized stereotype for autistic individuals. There are other skills that people with autism possess, and in addition, everyone with autism is unique.

There is a long history of highly achieving people who were diagnosed or are believed to have been autistic. These people, their achievements and contributions as well as their autism, should be celebrated.

It is important that children (and adults) have positive autistic role models. A National Autism Strategy should keep this point in mind.

A National Autism Strategy should, at its core, center around advocacy, awareness, and knowledge building campaigns. It should secondly outline ways to increase the input of the autism community to the economy and identify ways to improve quality of life.

Current discourse on how to refer to members of the autistic community distracts from more pressing issues. While I agree that labels and terms are important, there must be a point where I am able to refer to myself and my autism in whatever manner I chose. This cannot be dictated by someone else. Generally accepted reference labels are not finite.