

Zed Seselja MLA

**Member for Molonglo
Leader of the Opposition**

Steve Dospot MLA

**Member for Brindabella
Shadow Minister for Disability**

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LIBERALS TO BUILD FIRST CANBERRA AUTISM SCHOOL

ACT Opposition Leader Zed Seselja and ACT Shadow Minister for Disability Steve Dospot announced today that if elected, a Canberra Liberals Government will build the ACT's first ever school for children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Mr Seselja said the school will help children with ASD reach their full potential.

"If elected, a Canberra Liberals Government will build a school for up to 40 children with ASD aged between two and a half and six years," Mr Seselja said.

"It would provide a full-time intensive learning program with a very high staff-to-child ratio of 1:2, and would have a dedicated team of speech pathologists, occupational therapists, child psychologists and early childhood teachers.

"This policy is modelled on existing Queensland schools for children with ASD, and would be a first for Canberra.

"The benefits of similar schools in Queensland are compelling, with 75 per cent of children who complete the program successfully transitioning into mainstream schools," Mr Seselja concluded.

Mr Dospot said this Territory-first school is the result of consultation between the Canberra Liberals and Canberra's ASD community over many years.

"The lack of local support for children with ASD, particularly in their preschool years, has forced some families to move interstate," Mr Dospot said.

"As a result, many children with ASD are not diagnosed until they reach primary school, and have already fallen significantly behind.

"The earlier ASD treatments can start, the greater the chance a child has of reaching their full educational and social potential, which is why this school is so important for children with ASD and their families," Mr Dospot concluded.

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