



Autism SA - Budget Delay - 27 June 2006

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**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** Will the Minister for Health move immediately to provide transitional funding to Autism SA to ensure services are not being undermined by the government's budget delay? I have been contacted by the parent of a child who has been diagnosed recently with Asperger's syndrome. Autism SA has advised this family that, due to the budget delay, the organisation will not have the funds available to provide the necessary support until October.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Families and Communities):** Autism SA is funded through Disability Services. Prior to the last election we increased funding to Autism SA by providing an additional one-off \$180 000 to clear the waiting list. This means we have been able to increase the capacity for assessments from six per fortnight to 12 to 15 per fortnight.

The state government funds early intervention programs, including the Flinders University Early Intervention Program, the Autism SA Early Development Program and IDSC's Early Childhood Service. In the context of the last election we made a further commitment to increase funding to Autism SA, and I think all members will acknowledge that that particular commitment was greeted positively by the autism sector. Like everyone who is awaiting the outcome of the budget, they will have to wait until then to see whether we have met that commitment, but I am very confident that those services will be provided under our next budget.