**Autism Hub - Panel - Q&A**

**TRANSCRIPT**

- It's a compulsory plan that all students in Year 10 do, to start mapping where they're headed and that then drives subject choices and things like that.

- And Michael, I know that the CRC had done some work with employability around some guided SET planning for young people with autism.

- Yeah. So Marina Ciccarelli from the, from Curtin University in Perth, her and her colleagues have put together a program called BOOST-A, which is an online planning tool, which commences in Year 9, following on from your comment about that being an ideal starting point. And that's, the literature suggests, that's the point for that sort of slow burn, preparation, starting those conversations, and so they've got an online planning tool called BOOST-A, which is available. You can access that through the Autism CRC website. And then it'll move on to my way, employability, which is the second stage of the BOOST-A process.

- So I'm working at the moment on a pilot where we're working with a lot of, with eight DES providers and it's actually the parent and young person dynamic, really influences employment outcomes. And so, I think it's really important that the parents are included in these strengths-based discussions, and set and work together to set realistic employment goals and break down those goals. Because sometimes, this is what I'm hearing from providers, that sometimes parents are coming in to a disability employment service with unrealistic expectations. My child wants to be, you know, a computer programmer and he's really good at home. However, he's not ready for that yet. It's a really good goal to have, but he's not ready for that yet. He needs to do some work on other things and work up to that programming job. So, they're either too high, the expectations. Or some parents are really low and they're speaking for their child, they're making all the decisions for their child. And look, I've been a parent through the education system and I do feel that parents become very battle ready. It's just what we do when we've got a school kid. You know, always in there fighting and advocating for them. And then they leave school and that's a whole new domain, this employment space. And we can't be there. We can't be there fighting all of their battles. So it, we do him a disservice if we don't build their independence and have those discussions about their strengths and what that might mean in a work context. And I have to just also say that employers need to take a part in this and employers in Australia are not understanding the strengths in neurodiverse young people. So, you know, that's a whole another discussion, but employers need to start thinking a little bit more creatively as well. And knowing what, you know, an autistic person could bring to their workplace and how it doesn't take a lot of accommodations, just some adjustments in communication, more than anything. It's not that hard, but it's taken some time.

- From my parent experience, the most volatile and problematic period in the school week is lunchtimes and morning tea, and that absence of structure, so providing structured activities where young people can, whether it's clubs, whether it's you know, with minimal support, hopefully you could provide Lego clubs, robot clubs, chess clubs, drawing clubs, creative writing groups. I mean, I know you think, hello another list of jobs to do for teachers at lunchtime, but the motivator or the creator of success in that self-esteem and finding tribe can be eroded so quickly by the negative experiences of group socialisation. So, building that community through letting people show their success, demonstrate their ability to connect with others. A Minecraft club is a great, you know, a great way to allow kids to use tech at school and build society. So not everyone's into tech. Some kids love planting tomatoes. You know, some kids will like pulling apart the lawn mower and never reassembling it. These sorts of things, you know.