

15/11/2013

Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells
Suite 1, Level 2,
6-8 Regent Street,
Wollongong, NSW, 2500

Dear Senator,

I write to you requesting a meeting about services and support for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Over the last 20 years the number of people diagnosed with autism has doubled every 5 years. AABASD recognised 1 in 100 Australian children were diagnosed with autism in 2009; and the Government's Carer Allowance data showed 1 in 65 school-age children were diagnosed with autism in 2012.

While some of the increase is likely to be due to better diagnosis, the reason for a significant part of the increase is not known. What is known is the lifelong impact autism has on individuals, their families and community.

In 2007 Synergies Economic Consulting reported on the economic costs of Autism Spectrum Disorder in Australia. Their report concluded that the economic cost was between \$4.5 billion and \$7.2 billion per annum. Their revised report released in 2011 concluded that the economic costs of Autism Spectrum Disorder in Australia rose to between \$8.1 billion and \$11.2 billion.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that people with autism have particularly poor outcomes in key measures such as post-school qualifications and labour force participation.

- Only 22% of people with Autism obtain post-school qualifications compared to 58% non-disabled and 42% for other disabilities.
- Labour force participation for people with Autism is only 34% compared to 83% of non-disabled and 54% for other disabilities.

These 2 indicators I believe are decisive as to the level of government support people with Autism will require over a lifetime. At a time when government services are being reviewed I believe it is an opportunity to look at how taxpayer's money is spent wisely to ensure positive outcomes for People with Autism and the Australian public.

Regards

Peter Hill
<address>