



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

MC17-009292

Mr Bob Buckley
Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia (A4)
convenor@a4.org.au

Dear Mr Buckley

Thank you for your email of 2 July 2017 to the Minister for Social Services, the Hon Christian Porter MP, regarding the recent appointments to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Independent Advisory Council (IAC). The Minister has asked me to reply to you on his behalf.

I acknowledge the important advocacy work conducted by Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia. Like you, the Government is committed to ensuring that all people with disability have a voice in making decisions on matters which affect them.

Since its establishment in 2013, the IAC has provided invaluable advice to the NDIA Board ensuring that the views and insights of people living with disability, carers and sector experts are considered in the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) nationally.

In appointing members to the IAC, The Minister for Social Services is bound by the IAC appointment provisions under the *National Disability Insurance Act 2013* including the composition requirements. The legislative provisions also state that the IAC can only consist of the Principal Member and up to 12 members and the Minister consult all state and territory governments to seek their support for appointments.

In recognising the importance of the critical work that the IAC is undertaking, the Minister has appointed the full number of Council members allowed under the legislation to ensure a broader range of representation. The IAC's composition has been carefully considered in line with the legislative provisions, consultation with the Principal Member and state and territory governments (through seeking nominations and approval of proposed candidates).

It is important that matters relating to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are included in IAC discussions. I am advised that one of the continuing IAC members, Ms Sylvana Mahmic is a representative of the peak body for early childhood intervention in Australia and a significant portion of the people her organisation assists are people with autism.

To ensure that all major stakeholders are represented in the IAC's deliberations, the NDIA has also engaged five expert advisers to supplement the IAC's membership. One of the expert advisers, Mr Ross Joyce, is the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) that has a membership base of national and state organisations run by and for people with disability and their families. One of AFDO's

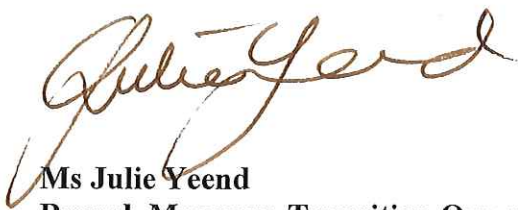
member organisations is Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia. The Expert Advisers have the same responsibilities as members and, with the involvement of their member organisations, will substantially further the breadth of information provided to the NDIA Board.

Once again, I wish to thank you for your contribution to the IAC and for ensuring that the needs of the ASD community are represented in future discussions regarding the NDIS.

Yours sincerely

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in brown ink, appearing to read 'Julie Yeend', written in a cursive style.

Ms Julie Yeend
Branch Manager, Transition Oversight and Governance

25 July 2017