



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

MC19-001962

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

Dear Mr Buckley,

Thank you for your email of 18 March 2019 to the Minister for Families and Social Services, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, concerning the National Blueprint for Early Childhood Intervention (the National Blueprint).

As you are no doubt aware, an election has been called. As a result, the Australian Government has assumed a caretaker role. This will continue until the outcome of the election is known. The Minister has passed your letter on to the Department to respond to.

During the caretaker period, the Department needs to follow caretaker conventions which protect the apolitical nature of the public service and avoid the use of Commonwealth resources in a manner that might advantage a particular political party. As a result, my response provides only factual information that may be helpful. You may wish to raise any policy concerns which I have not addressed with the incoming government.

Early Childhood Intervention Australia (ECIA) has been commissioned to develop the National Blueprint. The National Blueprint will focus on understanding the current state of the early childhood intervention sector, including the challenges and opportunities facing the sector due to the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). ECIA will consult with the National Disability Insurance Agency, along with other sector leaders, service providers, parents and carers, to develop the National Blueprint.

Autistic participants are a significant demographic in the NDIS early childhood population. Autism is the largest primary disability among NDIS participants aged 0 to 6 years, accounting for just under 35 percent of all participants in this age group. NDIS reporting information is made available in quarterly reports, which can be accessed at <https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/quarterly-reports>, for example in the document titled *National Dashboard as at 31 December 2018*.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Whitecross', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew Whitecross
Group Manager, NDIS Market Reform

16 April 2019