



**Senator the Hon Jan McLucas
Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers**

MC10-017712

23 DEC 2010

Mr Bob Buckley
Convenor
Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia
cnvnr@a4.org.au

Dear Mr Buckley *Bob,*

Thank you for your email of 6 November 2010 to the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon Jenny Macklin MP, about peak representation for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder and funding for a peak secretariat. As the matter you have raised falls within my responsibilities as Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers, I am responding to your enquiry.

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) manages and administers funds for the National Secretariat Program, an initiative providing financial support for peak bodies to allow them to contribute to government policy and service delivery, and to communicate government information to their membership. This program is reviewed from time to time and currently there are no funds available to support funding to additional peaks. When suitable opportunities become available, they will be advertised in the press and on the FaHCSIA website at www.fahcsia.gov.au.

Currently through the National Secretariat Program FaHCSIA supports a number of peak organisations including Children with Disability Australia which is funded to contribute to government policies about disability issues affecting Australian families and communities, to carry information between government and the community on social policy issues, and to represent constituent views. If you would like to contact Children with Disability Australia, the Executive Officer, Ms Stephanie Gotlib, can be contacted on 03 9815 1094 or by email at info@cda.org.au. Further information regarding Children with Disability Australia may be found on their website at www.cda.org.au.

Also, the National Disability Services (NDS) is the Australian peak body for non-government disability services. Through the provision of information, representation and policy advice, NDS promotes and advances services which support people with all forms of disability to participate in all domains of life. NDS offers membership options for not-for-profit organisations in the disability field. Should you be interested in considering collaboration with NDS, please see www.nds.org.au/about/Membership for more information.

Links are also provided on the FaHCSIA website to a range of alternative funding sources for community organisations (see the 'Grants & Funding' tab from our home page www.fahcsia.gov.au) which you may wish to explore.

As part of the Helping Children with Autism package, FaHCSIA has engaged the Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders in the development of the National Autism Spectrum Disorder Register and has committed to meeting regularly both face-to-face and via teleconferences to focus on strategic issues.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely


JAN MCLUCAS