



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Social Services**

MC17-006035

Mr Bob Buckley  
Convenor  
Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia (A4)  
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Dear Mr Buckley

Thank you for your email of 29 March 2017 to the Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability Services, the Hon Jane Prentice MP, regarding Disability Support Pension (DSP) eligibility for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The Assistant Minister has asked me to reply to you on her behalf.

As stated in my previous correspondence of 28 March 2017, DSP is designed to give people an adequate means of support if they have a permanent physical, intellectual or psychiatric impairment which attracts at least 20 points under the *Tables for the Assessment of Work-related Impairment for Disability Support Pension* (the Impairment Tables). The person must also be assessed as being unable to work for 15 or more hours a week, for at least the next two years.

The Impairment Tables contain 15 individual Tables that are specifically designed to assess work-related impairment. The Tables are consistent with the World Health Organization's *International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health*. As such, they are function-based rather than diagnosis-based and describe functional activities, abilities, symptoms and limitations that affect an individual's ability to work.

The general description of 'impairment' for DSP purposes includes 'a permanent physical, intellectual or psychiatric impairment' and does not exclude people with ASD. A number of people with ASD can and do qualify for DSP. As part of the DSP claim process, individuals provide information about their health conditions. Currently more than 9,500 DSP recipients listed an Autistic Disorder as one of their health conditions, and an additional 6,800 DSP recipients have Asperger's Disorder recorded as one of their health conditions. I note that there may be additional DSP recipients with ASD, however, this has not been noted as one of their health conditions. I note also, that whether a person with ASD will qualify for DSP depends on the level of functional impairment their condition causes, and whether the person meets the other eligibility criteria, rather than on a diagnosis alone.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Russell de Burgh'.

Russell de Burgh  
Branch Manager

20 April 2017