



**Senator the Hon Anne Ruston**

**Minister for Families and Social Services**  
**Senator for South Australia**  
Manager of Government Business in the Senate

Ref: MS19-001385

Mr Terry Burke and Mr Paul Micallef  
Co-Chairs  
Australian Autism Alliance  
[terry.burke@autismtas.org.au](mailto:terry.burke@autismtas.org.au) and [aspergersfromtheinside@gmail.com](mailto:aspergersfromtheinside@gmail.com)

Dear Mr Burke and Mr Micallef

I am writing to seek your organisation's support to implement the *National Guideline for the Assessment and Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorders in Australia* (the Guideline).

The Government is committed to improving the outcomes of children and adults with autism and other neurodevelopmental and behavioural conditions, including through implementation of the Guideline. While take up of the Guideline has been encouraging, the continued contribution of individuals and organisations with expertise in autism assessment and diagnosis, such as the Australian Autism Alliance (the Alliance), is critical to inform the work of the Department of Social Services (the department) to implement the Guideline in clinical settings. I would like to acknowledge the Alliance's contribution to the development of the Guideline.

The department is establishing an Expert Reference Group (the Group) to support the Government to implement the Guideline. Initially, the Group will be tasked with identifying, and leading the development of, profession-specific resources to build the competency of professionals in best practice autism assessment, as described by the Guideline.

Given your organisation's network across the autism community, in particular with autism specific service providers which have a significant role in assessment, diagnosis and treatment, I am inviting you to nominate an individual to participate on the Group. The nominated representative should be familiar with the systems and processes that interact with autism assessment, and able to provide strategic advice, informed by consultation with their broader networks including your organisation. Further information about the purpose and operation of the Group is outlined in the enclosed draft Terms of Reference, which the department will finalise with the Group, once established.

A Membership Pack is also enclosed, for completion by your nominated representative. Please ask your nominee to return this pack to Ms Diana Lindenmayer, Director, Early Childhood Intervention and Autism, at [diana.lindenmayer@dss.gov.au](mailto:diana.lindenmayer@dss.gov.au) by 4 September 2020. For further information on the establishment of the Group please contact Ms Lindenmayer on (02) 6146 3021.

Yours sincerely

Anne Ruston

24.8.2020

Enc. Draft Terms of Reference for the Expert Reference Group and Membership Pack