

Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders

ACN 085 018 408

Communiqué from the Board meeting and AGM –November, 2007

- The **Directors** of the Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders met by teleconference on November 23, 2007 for the AGM followed by a Board meeting.
- The Board elected **2008 Office Bearers** - Adrian Ford AUTISM SPECTRUM AUSTRALIA (Chairperson), Mick Clark AUTISM TASMANIA (Deputy Chairperson), Penny Beeston AUTISM QUEENSLAND (Secretary), Jon Martin AUTISM SA (Treasurer). The remaining Directors are Alison Bird AUTISM NT, Alison Byrne (AUTISM VICTORIA) & Bob Buckley AUTISM ASPERGER ACT. Secretariat support is provided by Julie Hook ASPECT.
- The Board welcomed Alison Byrne to the Board. Alison will be replacing Amanda Golding as AUTISM VICTORIA'S representative. Amanda has made a significant contribution in her time as Director of the Board and the former Autism Council of Australia and was warmly thanked.
- On 3 October 2007, the then Prime Minister, announced details of the Australian Government's autism package, **Helping children with autism**, delivering \$190.7 million in new funding over five years. A number of initiatives will be implemented nationally by the Departments of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), Health and Ageing (DoHA), and Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

Adrian Ford, Jon Martin and Penny Beeston are representing the AAB on the ASD Advisory Group (ASDAG) set up to drive this initiative. This funding provides an unprecedented opportunity to improve the access to services for young children with ASD and their families, as well as access to training and support for teachers and families. Further information is available from the *Helping children with autism* Inquiry Line on 1800 289 177 and TTY 1800 260 402. Enquires can also be emailed to asd@facsia.gov.au

- Fifteen applications were received for the **Apex Research grants**. This year the applications were more numerous and of a much higher calibre than in previous years. The final recommendation of the Professional Committee was to make the following grants. .

\$8,000 – Dr Mark Nielson, Lecturer, School of Psychology, University of Queensland for a research Project entitled "*Synchronic Imitation in Children with ASD: Imitation and the Social Deficit Hypothesis*".

\$7,000 – Dr Jill Ashburner, Research & Development Officer, Autism Queensland for a research Project entitled "*The introduction of keyboarding to students with autism spectrum disorder: a help or a hindrance?*"

- The Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders is to establish a **Reference Group** comprising key professionals with specific expertise in autism spectrum disorders. Membership of this group will finalised by the end of January, 2008.
- Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) and the Advisory Board will co-host the **Asia Pacific Autism Conference 2009** (incorporating the **Biennial Australian Conference on ASD**). The conference will be held from **20th to 22nd August, 2009** at the Darling Harbour Convention Centre, Sydney.
- **May 2008** has been deemed **Autism Spectrum Month**.
- The next Board meeting will be in Sydney on **11th and 12th January 2008**.

Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders –

www.autismaus.com.au

Contact can be made with the Advisory Board via your respective state or territory Autism organisation -

