

Re: Inquiry into the funding and operation of the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement

Dear Committee Members,

I write to you as an Australian concerned about Human Rights for people with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs).

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare cite ASD as the disability most likely to result in severe impairment.

Sadly, outcomes are poor for Australians with ASDs in terms of education, employment, independent living and quality of life. This correlates with Australia's paucity of health and disability services addressing ASDs.

For example the Victorian DHS report *Responding to people with multiple and complex needs* in July 2003 identifies the;

"lack of targeted responses to individuals with autism spectrum disorders, particularly Asperger's Syndrome. These people are often identified as falling into service gaps, frequently deemed ineligible for both mental health and intellectual disability services."

It is profoundly unjust that the Commonwealth States and Territories Disability Agreements do not to make adequate provision for Australians with ASDs.

If Australia is fair dinkum about a fair go for people with disability, the CSTDA will

- a) formally recognise Autism Spectrum Disorders as a distinct category of disability
- b) compel the States and Territories to provide effective disability services for Australians of all ages with ASDs.

I formally request that the Members of the Senate Community Affairs References Committee take steps to ensure this happens.

Yours sincerely,
Catherine Kennedy