

Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders

formerly the Autism Council of Australia

ADVISORY BOARD ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2007

- In early March released the Australian prevalence study on autism spectrum disorders undertaken by Dr John Wray and his team of researchers demonstrating an Australian prevalence rate of one in 160 among children aged 6 to 12 years based on national Centrelink data;
- Following the release of the report the Board undertook a major media campaign supported by a professional advisor which generated the most media coverage ever by the Board for its work;
- Supported the very successful 2007 Biennial Australian Conference in Autism Spectrum Disorders (14 – 16 March) at the Gold Coast which was co-hosted and led by Autism Queensland;
- Held the first nationally coordinated Autism Awareness Week during 13 – 19 May using the theme *Creative Futures* and incorporating such activities as recognition awards for significant people in the autism community and the sale of arm bands;
- Was invited to the launch of the new federal funding program Helping Children with Autism by the then Prime Minister, the Hon John Howard on 3 October in Queensland;
- Was involved in extensive media interviews as a result of the launch of the new federal funding program;
- Released a revised and significantly expanded Call to Action on 4 October to fully reflect the agenda of the Board for the Australian autism community;
- Was involved in advising the *Helping Children with Autism Program* through the representation of three Board members on the national Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Group (ASDAG) for the federal Department of Housing, Families, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA);
- Agreed to hold a national Autism Month as from May 2008 in order to expand media and awareness raising opportunities for the corporate members of the Board and the broader autism community;
- Agreed on a set of guidelines and protocols for future national biennial conference on ASD that ensures the Advisory Board will be an active participant in the formulation of each conference and to strengthen the relationship between the Board and the local corporate member who together co-host the conference;
- Secured the future of the Advisory Board through a revised fee structure;
- Commenced a consultative process to develop a nationally agreed set of standards on the assessment and diagnosis of autism due for completion in 2008;

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- Commenced the process to establish a national Expert Reference Group which will advise the Board on technical and clinical issues relating to autism spectrum disorders;
- Continued the successful relationship with Apex Fund for Autism resulting in the Apex research grants which are judged and offered through the Advisory Board;
- Commenced a fundraising partnership with Charity Life – an personal life insurance program which includes charitable allocations to identified partners of which the Advisory Board is one;
- Became a member of the National Disability Services – the peak employer body representing the disability sector in Australia, and
- Circulated four communiqués on the work of the Advisory Board during the year to better inform its constituents of its work.

Adrian Ford

Chairperson

Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders

15 January 2008