



TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN AUTISM SPECTRUM COMMUNITY, POLICY AND DECISION MAKERS

THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME, AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS AND ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex lifelong disability with profound and pervasive impact on an individual's capacity for independence and social and economic participation.

ASD has historically been poorly understood because the paradigm for understanding functional impairment for disability has been determined largely by physical and intellectual impairments and not social communication impairments.

As the NDIS moves to develop a suite of assessment tools, it is critical that the complex needs of people with ASD are considered during this design phase. Assessment will be the critical interface between the individual and the new scheme. As such, it is essential that people with ASD can have confidence that the assessment instruments appropriately measure and weight the functional impairments that impact on their capacity for independence and social and economic participation

It is crucial that the assessment instruments used in the NDIS can demonstrate validity and reliability in measuring the functional needs of people with ASD. Use of instruments that are not tailored to measure the specific functional impairments in ASD will pose a considerable barrier to people receiving the support they require and undermine confidence in the scheme.

Please refer to our [Position Paper on functional assessment](#) for more information.

Jon Martin
Chair
Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders