

# CONTACT



***Welcome to our Special April 08 Edition – part of eSpectrum***

## ***AFSA CoM members***

President : Meredith Ward

Treasurer: Chris Ford

Amanda Golding, Nick Harvey, Phil Lipshut (Public Officer) .. and there is room for more!

## ***Currently at AFSA***

The AFSA CoM continues to meet on a regular basis on the third Tuesday evening each month at the office of Autism Victoria to discuss and progress its objectives. If you would like to know more or are interested in joining the AFSA CoM simply drop us a line at [afsa\\_aust@bigpond.com](mailto:afsa_aust@bigpond.com)

AFSA continues the research phase of its **ONCE** parent support group strategy and will be releasing information about the ONCE research phase at the AGM on June 17<sup>th</sup>.

AFSA is also returning to its Advocacy focus now that work on the Autism State Plan is entering its final stages. AFSA recognises that a strong and unified parent voice is essential to improve the outcomes and quality of life for individuals with an ASD and their families and carers.

AFSA's president Meredith Ward commenced in the position of Government & Public Relations Liaison with Autism Victoria in May 2006, and gave Autism Victoria an opportunity to capitalise on the various relationships she had built up over the best part of ten years as a member of the AFSA, with Ministers, their advisers, backbenchers, members of the opposition as well as key bureaucrats such as Director Early Years Branch (DHS). It's very satisfying to report that two initiatives lobbied for within the first 6 months in that role were translated into Election platforms, and are now government policy.

- 1) ECIS Enhanced places (packages)
- 2) Development of an Autism State Plan.

The development of an autism state plan was number one of nine priority areas outlined in a detailed letter to the Premier in Sept 2006. Interest in *priority one* was raised by the then Minister for Community Services, Sherryl Garbutt. Additional meetings with the Premier's office catalysed *priority one* as an election platform. The election win cemented the development of the Autism State Plan in history as a Victorian and Australian first.

AFSA is a self funded parent support association and as the only Victorian parent support group to be an organisational member of Autism Victoria has an important role to fill. Phil Lipshut represents AFSA and its members at Autism Victoria State Council meetings where strategic decisions about Autism Victoria are made.

AFSA's aim is not to run parent support group meetings, this is adequately done by the 50+ ASD specific and generic parent support groups around the state. AFSA does however, provide some parent to parent phone support for those who leave a message on our answering system ( 03 9885 8777 ).

The AFSA Inc. CoM sees AFSA's role more as a statewide voice for the autism community, and has the opportunity to develop a structure to support other groups, to enable them to build capacity within their own support groups, allowing them to get on with the job of informing, empowering and supporting parents in their local area.

### ***FREE AFSA Membership Until Feb 2009***

AFSA is re-building its membership data base and allowing past, present and new members to re-new and join at no charge between now and February 2009. Contact us at [afsa\\_aust@bigpond.com](mailto:afsa_aust@bigpond.com) include "membership" in the subject line and we will email you an ***Emembership Form*** which you can return by email. Alternatively you can print out the attached form and fax to 03 9885 0508 or post to : AFSA Memberships P.O Box 235, Ashburton Vic 3147.

### ***AFSA events***

**AGM** –Tuesday June 17<sup>th</sup> 2008 7.30 pm – 9.30 pm at the office of Autism Victoria.  
RSVP to [afsa\\_aust@bigpond.com](mailto:afsa_aust@bigpond.com)

### ***AFSA 2008 developments***

ONCE Strategy; Website; Regular Newsletters; Guest Speakers and more!-

### ***Want to Know More about AFSA's "ONCE"***

If you are a support group and want to know more about our "***ONCE***" strategy, or how to participate in the research phase, simply drop us a line at [afsa\\_aust@bigpond.com](mailto:afsa_aust@bigpond.com) and include "***ONCE***" in the subject line.

### ***Other News***

#### ***Introducing AFSA's newest CoM member Amanda Golding***

Amanda Golding, former Executive Officer at Autism Victoria, has joined the AFSA committee. Amanda first commenced her journey with Autism in the mid 1980's and was an AFSA committee member for several years. Her son is now an adult and Amanda wishes to focus on the issues faced by families supporting adults with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

As part of her new business, AmaGol Services ([www.amagol.com.au](http://www.amagol.com.au)). Amanda is assisting Alpha Autism with the preparation of a forum and display to be held at the Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre on Wednesday June 11th (afternoon and evening). Details will be available toward the end of April from Alpha Autism (9885 2777 or email Gabi at [admin@alpha-autism.org.au](mailto:admin@alpha-autism.org.au)). The forum is titled "***Autism, Aspergers and Adulthood - Planning for a Future with Infinite Possibilities- Getting Started***" and will comprise information and product displays, confidential interview opportunities, informative presentations and an open forum to discuss issues surrounding the provision of supported accommodation services.

#### ***Autism state plan development***

For all the latest news and updates go to [www.autismvictoria.org.au](http://www.autismvictoria.org.au) or <http://autismstateplan.dhs.vic.gov.au>

**Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)** [www.autismspectrum.org.au](http://www.autismspectrum.org.au) is looking at offering services in Victoria. For information about the Aspect Victorian Initiative contact Meredith Ward at [mward@autismspectrum.org.au](mailto:mward@autismspectrum.org.au)

**ACTNOW** project is nearing completion for latest information go to <http://www.med.monash.edu.au/spppm/research/devpsych/actnow/newsletters.html>

# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**JOIN FREE UNTIL FEB 2009**



Please complete this form and fax to 03 9885 0508 or Post to: AFSA Memberships PO Box 235 Ashburton Vic

I would like to become a member of the AUTISTIC FAMILY SUPPORT ASSOCIATION INC., to support its purposes and conform to its rules.

I have been a member in the past

I'm a new member

**NAME**( Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

.....

**ADDRESS**.....

.....**POSTCODE** .....

**TELEPHONE: Home**.....**Mobile**.....

**EMAIL:** .....

## About You

Individual with an ASD    Parent/Carer    Interested in ASD    Professional

## SCHOOL OR CENTRE CURRENTLY ATTENDED

.....

## How you can help AFSA raise awareness of ASD

*Tick the appropriate box only if you would like to be involved.*

Speak publicly or do media to help illustrate life with autism

Your area of interest / concern

General awareness    Diagnosis    Kinder support    Adult issues

Education Support/Models    Early intervention    Family Support

Other (please specify).....

## How to contact us: -

PO BOX 235, ASHBURTON, VIC., 3147

Phone: 03 9885 8777

Fax: 03 9885 0508

Email: [afsa\\_aust@bigpond.com](mailto:afsa_aust@bigpond.com)