

9 October 2012

**Ms Rosemary Warmington  
Chief Executive Officer  
Carers SA**



Dear Rosemary

**Re: proposed Family Network**

I am writing in the hope that we might collaborate to explore means to create a national online network of parents and parent groups representing children who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired, DeafBlind or have a chronic ear disorder.

As you would be aware, many parent groups have discussed the idea of a national parent network over the years. Parent groups are organised by a dwindling group of volunteer parents.

Empowered parents are their child's best advocates. Our goal is to bring together parents and parent groups across the country, empowering them and providing them with strong points of contact with policy and decision makers to ensure their views are heard - united in one voice.

Individual advocacy will not be part of this program.

Nor will it compete with existing organisations and services, or be a conduit for advertising.

The Deafness Forum 'Family Network' will focus on the needs and interests of the family, rather than the individual child.

In quarterly newsletters, it will connect families with the services available through organisations and such programs as Better Start. Our hope is that service providers will share their information with the Family Network for the newsletter. While each service provider develops their own information and publishes it via its channels, the newsletter would draw together the various information services and link to websites.

Through an annual survey, the Family Network will seek to gain a clear understanding of the needs of families and use the results to inform Deafness Forum's policies and to highlight the current issues requiring advocacy on behalf of parents.

Our first objective is to survey parents to find out if they would support the Family Network. Views are being gathered by an online survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/B93CCTF](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/B93CCTF)

Could you please give consideration to how you might assist Deafness Forum in encouraging parents to participate in the survey?

I would be pleased to discuss the request in further detail.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Williamson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Steve Williamson  
chief executive