

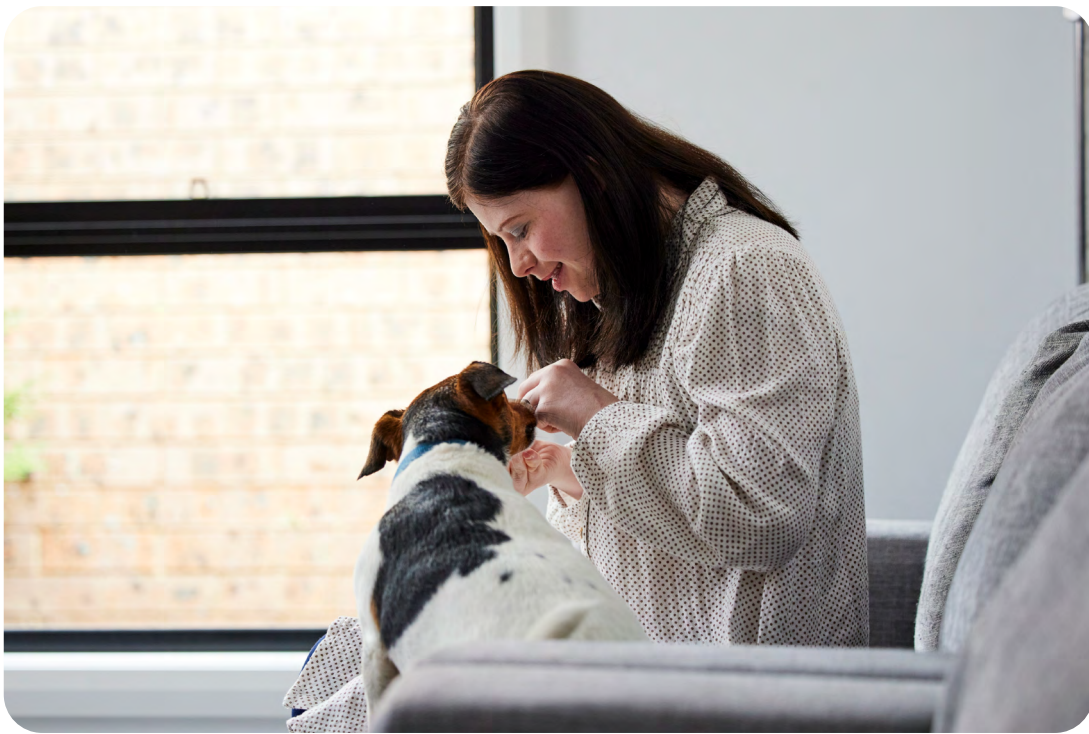


Australian Government

National Autism Strategy

Help shape the change.

# National Autism Strategy and First Action Plan



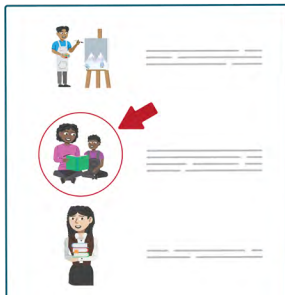
Easy Read

## About this paper



The Australian Government wrote this paper.

When you see the word 'we' or 'us', it means the Australian Government.



We wrote this paper in an easy to read way.

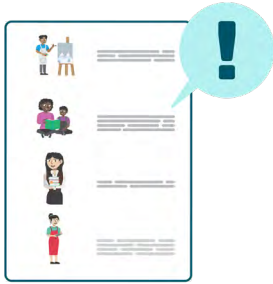
We use pictures to explain some ideas.



This paper has some hard words.

The first time we write a hard word:

- We will write it in **bold**.
- We will explain what the hard word means.



This Easy Read paper tells you the most important ideas from another paper.



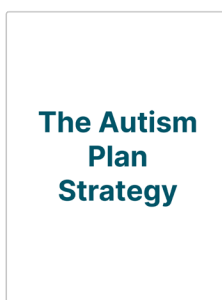
You can find the other paper on our website.

[www.dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy](http://www.dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy)



You can ask for help to read this paper.  
A friend, family member, or **support person** can help you.

A support person is someone who helps you with things you find hard to do by yourself.



This paper is for the **National Autism Strategy**.

This is a plan to help Autistic people and their families in Australia.

In this paper, we call it 'the **Autism Strategy**'.





Autism means a way that your brain works.

If you are Autistic, you were born that way and will be for your whole life.

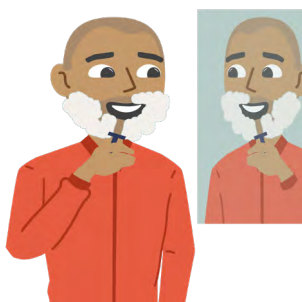
You might be very good at:



- Remembering information.



- Learning about your favourite things.



- Doing things the same way.



You might find it harder to:

- Talk to other people.



- Try new things.



- Be around bright lights, loud noises, or strong smells.



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# How we made the Autism Strategy



We talked to over 2,000 Autistic people and their families from September to November 2023.



We used their ideas in the draft Autism Strategy we made in April 2024.



Over 1,300 Autistic people and those who help them told us what they thought about the Autism Strategy.



We made changes to the draft Autism Strategy and finished it.



## What the Autism Strategy should do



There are 5 things that Autistic people we talked to want the Autism Strategy to do.

### 1. Inclusion.

We will help Autistic people feel that they belong.



We will change how people think about autism in:

- Schools.



- Workplaces.



- Governments.





## 2. Acceptance.

We will teach people what autism is.



This is so they understand and are kind to Autistic people.



## 3. Listening to Autistic people.

We will make sure that people listen to Autistic people.



This includes Autistic people who:

- Do not talk.





- Talk a little.



We want people to listen to them so they know:

- What Autistic people can be good at.



- How each Autistic person is different.

#### 4. Seeing that each Autistic person is different.



We want people to know that each Autistic person has different:

- Things they do or that happen to them.



- Needs.



We want Autistic people to be treated the same in all areas of life.



## 5. Better lives.

We will make it easier for Autistic people to get help from:

- Services to be healthy and happy.



- Housing.





- **Police, courts, and lawyers.**

These are people and places that help when someone breaks the rules.

They also help if someone needs help to stay safe.



- **Schools.**



- **Workplaces.**



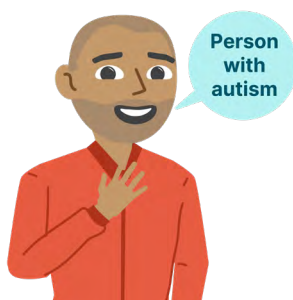
## About language



We know that Autistic people might use different words to talk about autism.



Some people say 'Autistic person' because it shows autism is part of who they are.



Other people say 'person with autism' because they see autism as just one part of them.



Some people think of autism as a disability.

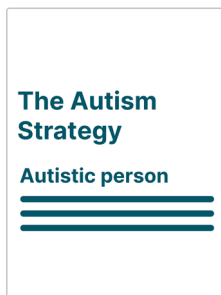




Other people do not think autism is a disability.



Everyone can choose the right words for them.



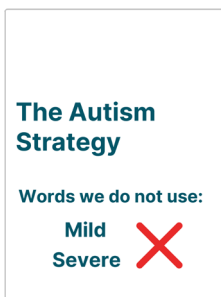
We use the words 'Autistic person' in the Autism Strategy.

This is because most Autistic people told us we should use these words.



We also use the words 'all Autistic people' in the Autism Strategy.

This is to show that every Autistic person is different.



We do not use the words 'mild' or 'severe' in the Autism Strategy.

This is because these words can tell people the wrong idea about what Autistic people can do.



The Autism Strategy will help Autistic people no matter what their needs are.



The Autism Strategy will also help Autistic people even if a doctor has not told them that they are Autistic.



We want to help all Autistic people no matter what words they use to talk about their autism.



## About autism



There is not one way to explain what autism means because every Autistic person is different.



Some Autistic people:

- Live by themselves.



- Need small changes to the people and places around them.



Other Autistic people might need more help with:

- Everyday tasks.





- Making choices.



The help an Autistic person needs might change in different times and places.



The way people think about autism can make some Autistic people hide who they are.

This can make them feel:



- Very tired.





- Bad about themselves.



Some Autistic people do not talk or only talk a little.



There are many ways people can **communicate** with each other.

Communicate means telling other people about your ideas, feelings or information. You can communicate in many ways.

This includes:



- Technology.





- Hand and head movements.



- Sign language.



- **Interpreters.**

Interpreters are people who help other people to understand each other when they communicate in different ways.



Autistic people might use different ways of communicating at different times.

We want Autistic people to use the ways of communicating that work best for them.





The Autism Strategy wants to make sure that each Autistic person gets the help they need.

Autistic people should get help even if their needs change in different times and places.

## Autistic people who need more help first



All Autistic people need help to be treated the same in all areas of life.



There are some groups of Autistic people who have more problems getting help because of who they are.

We want to help these groups of Autistic people first:



- **First Nations** peoples.

They were the first people to live on and use the:

- Land.
- Waters.



- People who were born overseas or speak languages other than English.



- Women, girls, and people with different genders.





- **LGBTQIA+** people.

This means:

- Lesbian.
- Gay.
- Bisexual.
- Transgender.
- Queer.
- Intersex.
- Asexual.
- People with other sexual feelings and genders.



- Older people.





- Children and young people.



- People who need a lot of help everyday.



## What we want to happen



There are 4 things that we want to happen.

1. Make sure Autistic people feel that they belong.



2. Help Autistic people to build skills and get jobs.



3. Make it easier to get a **diagnosis** and help from services.

A diagnosis means when a doctor tells you that you are Autistic.

A diagnosis helps people to get the right help.



4. Make better services to be healthy and happy for Autistic people.





We want to help all Autistic people feel:

- Safe.



- Happy



- They belong.



The big thing we want is for Autistic people to have good lives that make them happy.





To do this, we will:

- Listen to Autistic people and their families.

This includes Autistic people who need more help first.



- Make the Autism Strategy easy for everyone to understand.



- Let Autistic people make their own choices about their lives.



- Check how well the Autism Strategy is working.

This includes looking at information and talking to people who know a lot about autism.





- Teach everyone to understand and be kind to Autistic people.



- Keep Autistic people safe from being hurt and treated in an unfair way.



- Remember that everyone has different needs and life stories.

The Autism Strategy will help each person in the best way for them.



## Making sure Autistic people feel that they belong



All Autistic people should feel that they belong.

Feeling like you belong can help you stay healthy and happy.



Many Autistic people:

- Feel alone.



- Are treated in an unfair way by other people.



This can be because many people do not understand autism.



We will:

- Teach everyone to understand and respect Autistic people better.

This includes:



- Showing different types of Autistic people in:
  - Workplaces.



- Media.

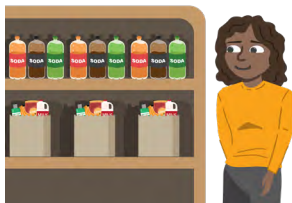


- Sport.



- Arts.





- Making public places more comfortable for Autistic people who find it hard to be around:



- Bright lights.



- Loud noises.



- Strong smells.



- Help people and groups who speak up for Autistic people.



- Help Autistic people to make friends and get help from other people in ways that work best for them.



- Make Government services easier to use and understand.



- Look at what needs to be changed in Government rules about people with disability to meet the needs of all Autistic people.



- Keep Autistic people safe from being treated in an unfair way.



## Helping Autistic people to build skills and get jobs

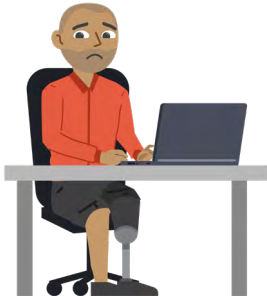


We want to make sure Autistic people can get good jobs.



Many Autistic people are treated in an unfair way by:

- Schools.

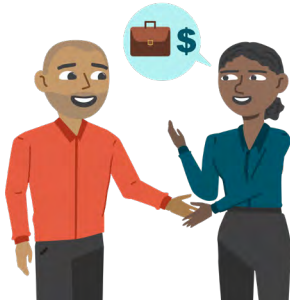


- Workplaces.



They also work less than they can or want to.





We will:

- Make more ways for Autistic people to work, like helping them to start their own business.



- Help people get and keep more Autistic workers by making workplaces safe and welcoming.



- Give Autistic people more choices about school and work.





- Help more Autistic people to become leaders.



- Help Autistic students with better information and help in schools.



## Making it easier to get a diagnosis and help



We want to make sure Autistic people find out that they are Autistic early in life.

Getting a diagnosis early means they can get the right help to do well in all areas of life.



It can be hard for people to get a diagnosis because it:

- Takes a long time.



- Costs a lot of money.



These groups of Autistic people get a diagnosis later than other Autistic people:

- Women, girls, and people with different genders.





- People who hide their autism or whose autism is hard for other people to see.



- People who live far away from cities.



We will:

- Check if the tools used to diagnose autism work well.



- Teach health workers how to better help Autistic people when they get a diagnosis.



- Make better information for Autistic people and their families about getting a diagnosis.



- Look at ways to make it cost less money to get a diagnosis.



- Look at early signs of autism in children so they can get diagnosed earlier.



- Make it easier for people who live far away from cities to get help.





- Help more Autistic people to work with other Autistic people to help them better.



- Make better tools for Autistic people to make their own choices.



- Work with State and Territory Governments to make it easier for Autistic people to get help from:





- The **National Disability Insurance Scheme** or the **NDIS**.

This is a plan that we follow to pay for the help and services that people with disability need to live well.



- Other disability services.



## Making better services to be healthy and happy



We want Autistic people to be healthy and happy.



We will:

- Help more Autistic people and their families to get help from services to be healthy and happy across their lives.



- Teach doctors and health workers to understand autism better.



- Join services better with the NDIS so we can help pay for them.





- Get better information about how healthy and happy Autistic people are.



# How we will make help happen



We will make plans about how we will help Autistic people.

To make these plans, we will:



- Work with:
  - Autistic people and their families.



- People who know a lot about autism.

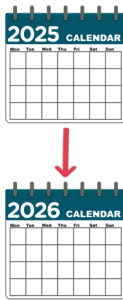


- Follow the important ideas in the Autism Strategy to find out information to help Autistic people.





- Share information about what we find out with everyone in an easy to read way.



We have made a plan to make the lives of Autistic people better.

This is what we will make happen from 2025 to 2026.



Right away, we will:

- Help Autistic people to meet each other in safe spaces to feel less alone.

These spaces will also be safe for:





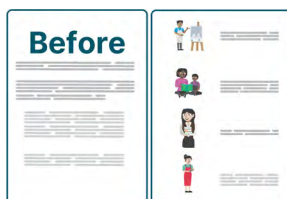
- Autistic people of different ages.



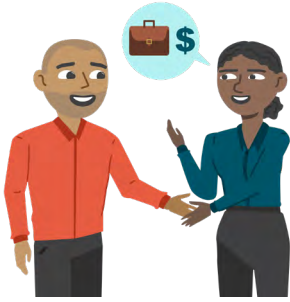
- Autistic people with different ways of living and who speak languages other than English.



- Teach people how to understand and be kind to Autistic people.



- Make information that explains what to do before and after a diagnosis in an easy to read way.



- Help Autistic people get and keep good jobs.



- Share better information about autism with:



- Disability services.



- Governments.





- Look at what changes:
  - Work well.



- Need to be better.



Other things that we will do in the future are:

- Make better services and help for Autistic people.



- Look at information about how to help Autistic people be:
  - Safer.



- Happier.



- Find out how many Autistic people live in Australia.



- Check if the Autism Strategy is helping Autistic people in the best ways.



- Make sure Autistic people and the people who help them can tell us what they think about the Autism Strategy.



## How to contact us



**You can send us an email**

[AutismPolicy@dss.gov.au](mailto:AutismPolicy@dss.gov.au)



**You can write to us**

Autism Policy Section  
Department of Social Services  
GPO Box 9820  
Canberra ACT 2601



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