

2024-25



Acknowledgement of Country

Amaze acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of the land now referred to as Australia and that sovereignty was never ceded. We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Elders past and present on the land and waters where we live, work and provide our services. For thousands of generations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have cared for these lands and waters, and we recognise and celebrate their spiritual and ongoing connection to Culture and Country. With the guidance of Elders past and present, we are committed to working towards a future where all Autistic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their families are supported to live their best lives.

We are committed to meaningfully and authentically contributing to Australia's journey to reconciliation. The development and implementation of our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2023 marked our first step. We are now progressing to our Innovate RAP to strengthen our partnerships and actions. To read more about our reconciliation journey, visit www.amaze.org.au/about-amaze/our-reconciliation-journey/.



Joel A – Yorta Yorta/Wiradjuri,
Lifes Journey: One Mob #2, 2024

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Messages From Our Chair and CEO



We are proud to present Amaze's Impact Report for 2024-25. This report captures the impression we

have made this year on the autism community, the professionals, organisations and families who support Autistic people, and the policies and systems that affect their lives. The consequences bring us closer to our goal of creating an autism-inclusive Australia where Autistic people and their families can live their best lives.

As always, I acknowledge the role our Board plays in guiding and supporting Amaze's work. During the year we were delighted to welcome Dr Stacey Rabba to the Board, an Educational and Developmental Psychologist based at Monash Health and Monash University whose research focuses on

neurodevelopmental conditions across the lifespan. I know she will be a real asset to Amaze. We are also deeply grateful to our generous donors, and to all whose support makes our work possible.

Finally, my profound thanks to the Amaze staff for their hard work and dedication throughout the year. The achievements highlighted in this report are a direct reflection of their effort, care and commitment.

Professor Warren Bebbington AM
Board Chair



This year we delivered positive impacts that created real change for the Autistic community.

We continued our national advocacy for community co-design and lived experience consultation in the development of the National Autism Strategy (NAS) towards a whole-of-life approach for Autistic people. In Victoria, we developed a comprehensive data framework for the Victorian Autism Plan to support government in capturing meaningful, high-quality data to drive inclusive policy and practice outcomes for Autistic people.

Our neuroinclusion programs continue to lead the way across workplaces, health and education. We worked alongside leading employers, retail environments, healthcare services, and education providers to embed affirming, sustainable practices. Through our Building Employer Confidence funding, more organisations were able to access the A-Plus Program to transform hiring, onboarding, and team support with practical, evidence-based tools.

Autism Connect remains a trusted, national lifeline. Every day, Autistic people, families and professionals access our free, independent helpline for support, information and connection.

We strengthened social connection and belonging for Autistic people through neuro-affirming community initiatives. This year, we partnered with major cultural and sporting organisations to create inclusive experiences that recognise and celebrate Autistic identity. Highlights included the All Abilities Day at the Australian Open, a relaxed performance of *Beauty and the Beast* designed for sensory accessibility, and the Amaze Pride Festival, which brought visibility to queer Autistic voices and celebrated intersectional identities.

Thank you to the Amaze Board, our community, network partners and stakeholders for the steadfast commitment and ongoing collaboration in creating a more autism-inclusive Australia.

David Tonge
CEO

Our Year At a Glance

In the 24-25 Financial Year, we

advised,
connected,
& empowered
over
19,000
people



3,800+

Autistic People



5,800+

family members
of Autistic people



6,000+

GPs & healthcare
workers



700+

managers,
People & Culture
professionals
& employees

91% recommend Amaze and/or
the Amaze service they used



96% felt empowered to take action
after engaging with us



73% took action to meet their needs 1-3
months after engaging with us



National Autism Strategy
released. Amaze advocated
strongly for this over the past

5+
years



Impacts from

11 of our policy
submissions
across



Education



Employment



Health



NDIS

377
attendees
across our

13 community
webinars



48
organisations

became more neuroinclusive
through the A-Plus program
and/or our customised training.



91%

of A-Plus participants
feel able to implement
strategies to support
Autistic employees.

30,000+ downloads
across our website resources



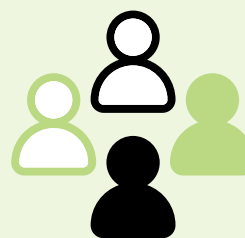
Who Are We?

Amaze is a leading autism organisation driving change so that Autistic people and their families can live their best lives. Amaze builds autism understanding in the community, influences policy change for Autistic people and their families/supporters, and provides independent, credible information and resources to individuals, families, professionals, government and the wider community.



Our Vision

An Australia that embraces Autistic people and their families living their best lives.



Our Values

- Community-centric
- Collaboration and partnership
- Constructive and solutions-focused
- Determination and independence
- Evidence-informed and outcomes-driven
- Strengths-based



Our Strategic Priorities

- Autism assessment and diagnosis
- Education and training
- Employment
- NDIS
- Health and mental health



Our Mission

To create positive change with Autistic people and their families at all life stages by advocating, influencing, innovating, mobilising efforts and opening doors. This ambition will be realised by being a trusted source of information, advice and support, and a willing partner in the development of new practices and approaches.

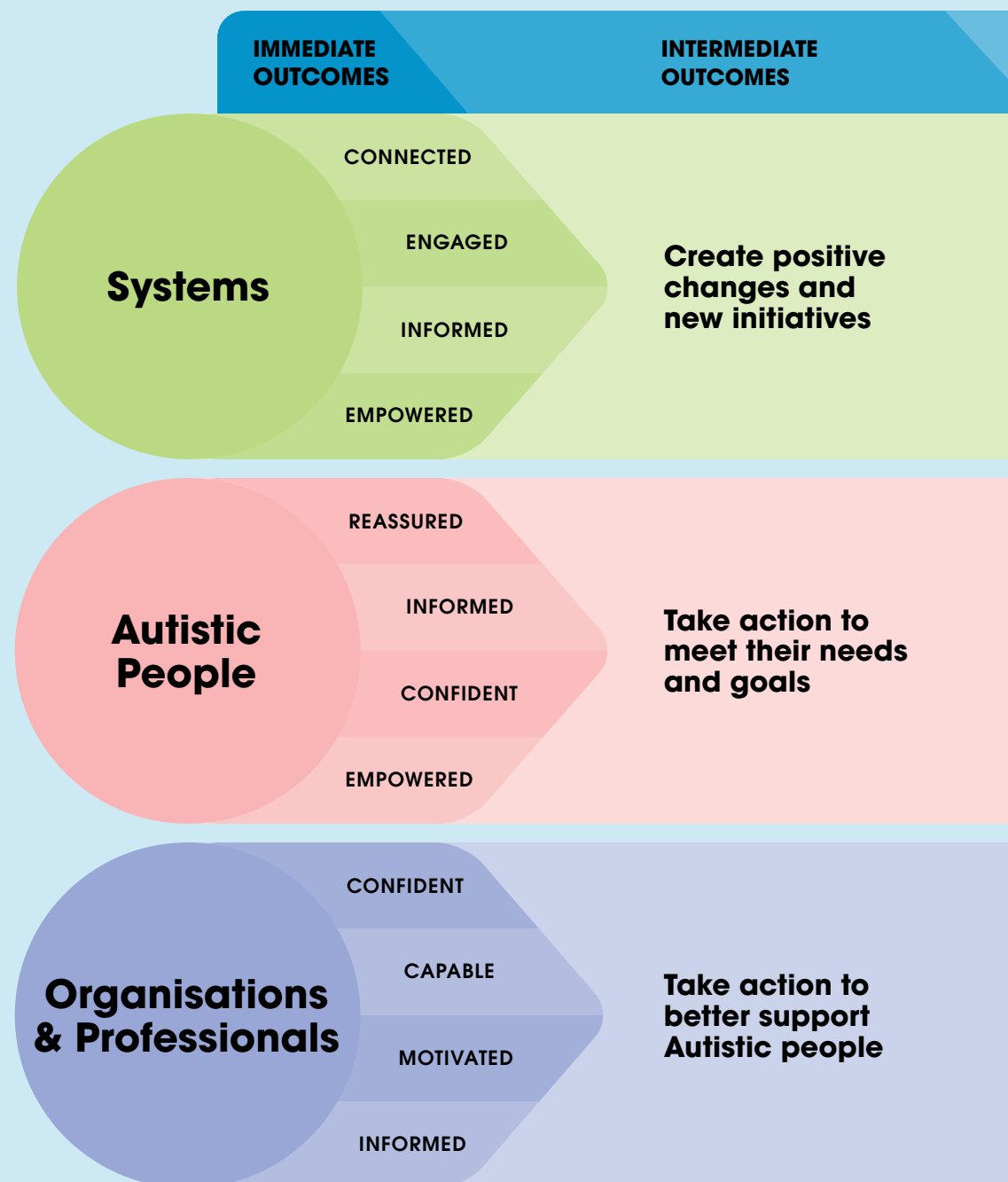


How We Evaluate Impact

We evaluate our projects and activities. We do this to understand our impact and learn from the results to improve our programs.

We use a range of methods to do this, such as surveys, monitoring data, interviews, case studies and document/ policy reviews.

We create impact from the following outcomes:



ULTIMATE OUTCOMES



Autistic people and families participate in ways that are meaningful to them and are recognised for the value of their contribution to the community.



Professional and community members understand autism, have positive attitudes and exhibit positive behaviours towards Autistic people and families.



Organisations have inclusive policies and practices.



Policies and systems enable Autistic people and families.

How We Create Impact

Amaze works towards an autism-inclusive Australia through a range of projects and activities. Everything we do is research- and evidence-based and informed by lived experience through consultation with Autistic people and their supporters.



Autism Connect

Our national autism helpline is a free service that provides accessible and independent expert advice and information via phone, email or webchat. Autism Connect advisors have lived experience and help people connect with supports and resources.



Events

We run events and workshops for Autistic people, their families and supporters. We connect our community with neuroinclusive events, and we attend conferences to engage with both professionals and the wider community.



Webinars

We deliver a range of webinars covering our strategic priorities, including the NDIS, education and mental health.



Autism Connect – Specialist Advisors

People who need more support can have additional sessions with specialist advisors who can assist with employment-related issues and support families with complex support needs. We give people information, support and advice that can help their situation.



Consultancy

Through our consultancy services, we help organisations create spaces, events and services that are neuroinclusive. This includes environmental and sensory audits for venues, accessibility resources reviews and inclusion advice.



Policy submissions & government engagement

We submit policy, advise state and federal government and sit on advisory groups to advocate for meaningful change. Through this work, we help decision-makers understand the needs of Autistic people and their families and make meaningful changes to improve their lives.



A-Plus Program

Our A-Plus program helps organisations support Autistic employees. We provide practical training modules and workshops for managers and People & Culture professionals. These workshops build employer capability and confidence to be neuroinclusive and create workplaces where Autistic people can contribute and succeed.



Trainings Programs

We run practical, tailored training programs for workplaces, schools, health services and community organisations. Our sessions cover autism awareness, inclusive communication, and strategies for managing neurodiverse teams. Every program is designed to give participants practical strategies they can use right away.



Research

We create and share knowledge to individuals, organisations and policymakers. These include toolkits, guides, videos and digital content that promote understanding and provides strategies for navigating education, employment and everyday life.



Advocating for Change

We believe that Autistic people and their families should have access to resources and opportunities that will help them live their best lives. One of the ways we help make this possible is advocating to government for meaningful change to policies and practices that impact Autistic people.

We are a trusted source of policy advice informed by lived experience and evidence. We run surveys and consultations, and use Autism Connect data to guide our advocacy. This ensures Autistic voices are at the forefront of our work. We also collaborate with other trusted organisations and autism advocates to drive change.



We drive systemic change by:

- ✓ Advocating to government and government agencies through advisory groups and networks
- ✓ Making policy submissions
- ✓ Empowering Autistic people and their families to engage with policy and self-advocate
- ✓ Running campaigns to encourage inclusion and understanding

When we advocate to government for systemic change on an issue, we also work directly with relevant community groups, individuals and organisations. For example, when we make a policy submission for inclusive workplaces, we will work with Autistic people to understand their rights and experiences at work, and we will partner with organisations to help them adopt inclusive workplace practices.

Policy and systemic change can take a long time and is usually the result of many voices. This can make evaluating the impact of policy change challenging. We understand our impact by identifying where policy change reflects our advocacy.

6 Policy Submissions

Across Our Strategic Priorities



Our submissions over the 24-25 FY covered:

NDIS support lists

Australian Government's review of Australia's Disability Strategy

Draft National Roadmap to Improve the Health and Mental Health of Autistic People

Advice on the National Suicide Prevention Strategy

General Foundational Supports Consultation Paper

Foundational Supports for Children (under 7) with developmental delay or disability and their families, carers and kin Consultation Paper

You can view our policy submissions here:



Policy Impact



Health and Mental Health

Victorian Eating Disorders Strategy

Neurodivergent people are identified as a cohort at high risk of eating disorders in the strategy. There is also a commitment to embedding lived experience in the design, delivery and evaluation of the strategy.

This is a direct result of our submission, which advocated for the strategy to be led by people with lived experience, and that Autistic people be recognised as a priority group.



Submission
November 22



Impact Seen
September 24

National Roadmap to Improve the Health and Mental Health of Autistic people 2025-2035

Supported the Roadmap Working Group

The comprehensive Roadmap reflects the considerable direct advocacy by both Amaze and the Australian Autism Alliance over many years, including our early advice on policy priorities and commencing a co-design framework. It also reflects our recommendations for national consistency and service integration.

However, the Roadmap was released without funding attached. Amaze is continuing to advocate for funding to support its full implementation and evaluation.



Submission
September 24



Impact Seen
February 25



Health and Mental Health

Report of the Online Safety Act Review

Direct advocacy to the eSafety Commissioner

The report recognises that people with disability are one of the groups at greatest risk of online harm. It recognises that more needs to be done to prevent this harm and make the online world safe for everyone. It recommended that decisions making should be informed by the perspectives of these groups.

While not autism specific, this reflected our advocacy in our submission for greater protections and action to ensure Autistic people can inform decision making, and recognition that Autistic people can be more vulnerable to online harm. We are continuing to advocate for this through meetings with the e-Safety Commissioner's office.



Submission
June 24



Impact Seen
February 25

National Suicide Prevention Strategy (2025–2035)

The Strategy recognises the disproportionate risk of suicide among people with disability, including neurodivergent people. It also reflects the need for tailored approaches and meaningful community engagement to inform suicide prevention activities.

While it doesn't specifically recognise the higher prevalence of suicide among Autistic people or address our community's specific needs, it does reflect our advocacy by identifying people with disability as a priority cohort.



Submission
October 24



Impact Seen
January 25

Policy Impact



Employment

Jobs and Skills Australia 2024-25 Work Plan

The Work Plan focuses on fostering inclusive employment by removing barriers to participation, including for people with disability, and scopes future cohort studies on the participation of Australians with disability in the workforce.

While not autism-specific, this reflects our advocacy for inclusive workplaces that harness the skills and expertise of Autistic people to fill workplace shortages, and to focus on the skills and training needs of disability service providers.



Submission
January 2024



Impact Seen
November 2024



NDIS

NDIS Supports List October 2024

While the finalised lists included some improvements consistent with our submission and broader sector advocacy – such as creating pathways to cost-effective mainstream supports – they largely failed to reflect the advocacy of Amaze or the sector more broadly.

We highlighted our concerns that the lists undermined an individualised, cost-effective and flexible approach, and we reiterated our concern about the government's lack of meaningful community consultation.

We are continuing to monitor the community's experiences with the transitional NDIS Support Lists and feedback key concerns to the Australian Government and/or NDIA, including through sector consultations and the Autism Advisory Group (AAG).



Submission
August 2024



Impact Seen
October 2024



Across Strategic Priorities

Australian Government Review of Australia's Disability Strategy August 2024

Consistent with our advocacy, the Strategy includes a commitment to develop a new community engagement plan. This will be developed in 2025 in partnership with people with disability. It means that people with disabilities can shape the strategy.



Submission
August 2024



Impact Seen
January 2025



Victorian Autism Plan

The Victorian Autism Plan (VAP) seeks to empower Autistic Victorians, improving quality of life and enabling participation in the community. It covers four key priority areas: inclusive communities; health, housing and wellbeing; fairness and safety; and opportunity and pride. The VAP was first established in 2019. In 2023 the Victorian Government extended it to 2027 and made some changes.



Since 2019, we have enabled and delivered parts of the Plan.

We empowered the Victorian Government to take actions that best meet the needs of the autism community. We did this through being actively involved in the Autism Plan Advisory group since 2019, by providing research and evidence regarding the Autistic community's needs, advising on the direction of the VAP, and providing information on priorities for building education that is inclusive of Autistic people.

With Victorian Government funding, we delivered two Change Your Reactions campaigns in 2020 and 2023. This was the first autism public education campaign to destigmatise Autistic people to the general public.

We developed a data framework for the Victorian Autism Plan. This will enable the Victorian Government to collect and use high-quality and relevant data about Autistic people.

"Effective data and outcomes" – that is, to collect and use better data about Autistic people – is one of the major changes in the Victorian Autism Plan's renewed commitment. The outcomes and indicators were mapped from the state disability plan. We advised the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing on the relevance and appropriateness of their outcomes and measures to Autistic people.





How We Did This

We consulted with other organisations to understand their data and worked with various advisory and working groups.

We looked at available data, trends and changes to project areas that could influence data interpretation.

We mapped data and developed a framework to support outcome measurement, identifying drivers of change, priority areas, and data collection best practices.

Outcomes

- ✓ The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing have agreed to all our recommendations with "Address key data gaps for outcome measures" agreed to in principle.
- ✓ Our hope is that better tracking outcomes of Autistic Victorians and the Victorian autism community will enable the Victorian Government to better understand and support the needs of the Autistic community as they rollout the Victorian Autism Plan.

We advocated for the Victorian Autism Plan to:

1. combine data collection and sharing with other organisations
2. address key data gaps for outcome measures
3. collaborate with other projects that monitor outcomes of Autistic Victorians such as the National Autism Strategy
4. periodically review newly available data
5. consider changing outcome measures, data sources and indicators if higher-quality options become available
6. continue to make outcomes monitoring publicly available
7. continue to use results to drive reforms and advocacy
8. consider the evolving characteristics and diverse needs of the Autistic and autism communities
9. identify high-quality data for future foundational supports in co-design with the Autistic and autism communities

National Autism Strategy

Amaze and the autism sector passionately advocated for a national strategy that focuses on improving the lives of Autistic people. We did this for over five years. We advocated that it should be co-designed and cover the whole-of-life.

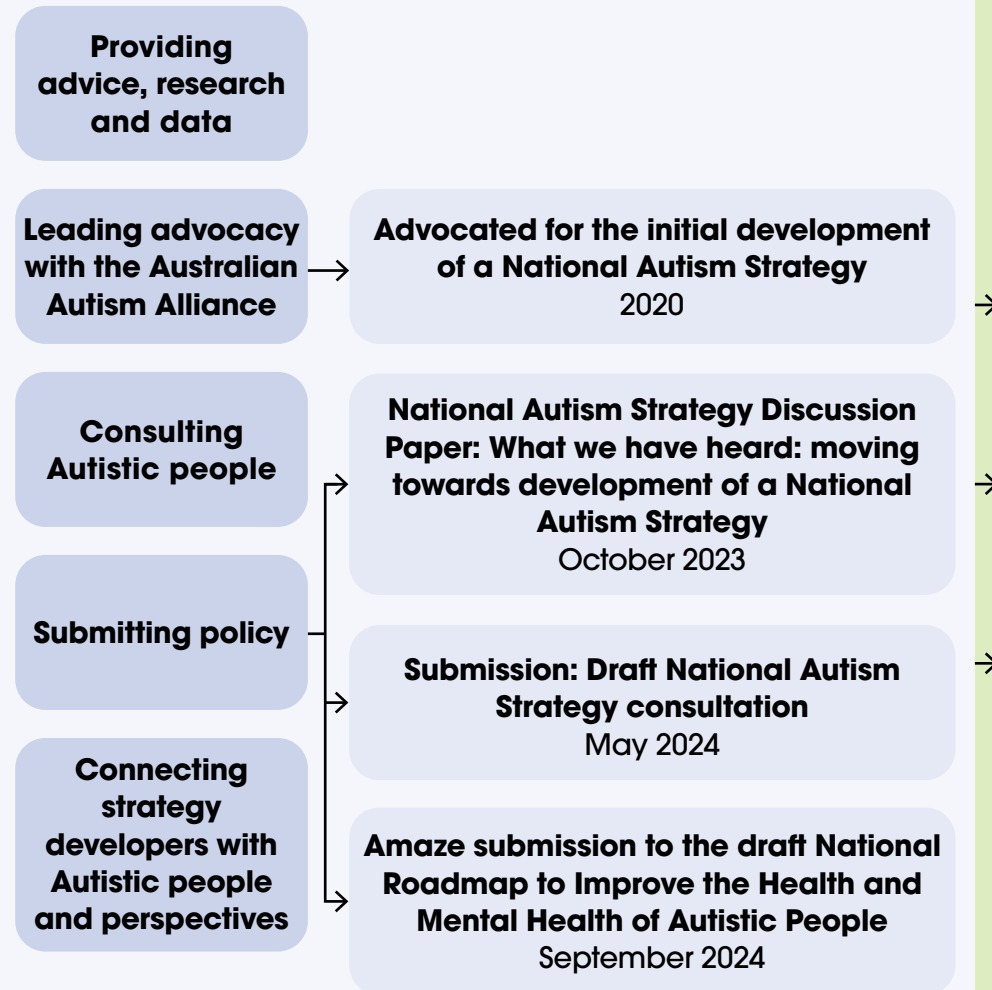
The Government released the National Autism Strategy on **14 January 2025**. It is an Australia-wide strategy that aims to create systems and services that best support and include Autistic people. It does this across four key outcome areas:

-  Social inclusion
-  Economic inclusion
-  Diagnosis, services and supports
-  Health and mental health

The Strategy has **\$42.3 million** of funding and was released with the first action plan. It was released alongside the Autism Health Roadmap (September 2024), which forms part of the strategy. The Strategy reflects our passionate advocacy and systemic approach to improving outcomes for Autistic people.



How We Influenced the Strategy



Outcomes



National Autism Strategy

Outcomes

We advocated for a number of items to be included in the strategy to effectively meet the needs of Autistic people. Some of these were successfully included in the National Autism Strategy:

- Attached funding
- Embedding a human-rights approach and recognising the social model of disability
- Governance will have a representative group of Autistic people and their families and carers
- Commitment to improving access to diagnosis, meaningful employment opportunities, and health and mental health services
- Intersectional approach
- Developing an evidence and evaluation framework
- Accompanied by an Autism Health Roadmap

You can find our National Autism Strategy overview here:



Next Steps

We will continue to engage with the Australian Government on the strategy. We will support its implementation and advocate for:

- A diversity of perspectives and experiences to inform the strategy's implementation. This is to ensure its actions are meeting the needs of all Autistic people and their families and carers.
- The development of a comprehensive evidence and evaluation framework and reporting measures. This is so the strategy can be transparent, accountable, and can inform future actions. It would also provide meaningful measures of success.
- Greater investment to support targeted actions for priority cohorts.
- Applying an autism lens on all reforms. This includes NDIS and Disability Royal Commission-related reforms.
- The whole government to commit to the National Autism Strategy, including driving state and territory commitments and autism plans.
- An Autism Act that embeds the strategy. This would ensure it is sustainable. It would provide a framework for its visions, principles, timeframes, periodic review and co-design.
- The roadmap to have attached funding. This would support its full implementation and evaluation.



Enabling Inclusive Education

We want the early learning, school, vocational and higher education sectors to provide environments where Autistic people can thrive. We work with Autistic people and their families, along with education professionals and government bodies, to drive this change.

Autistic students experience higher levels of stress and anxiety compared to their peers. This can be caused by things like noisy and overwhelming classroom environments, difficulty making and maintaining friends, managing workloads, achieving academic targets, bullying, and loneliness.¹ Nearly half of Autistic students report that they need more support in school than they are currently receiving.² These factors contribute to Autistic students having poorer academic outcomes and lower educational attainment compared to their non-Autistic peers.³



Enabling Inclusive Education

Here are some of the things we have done to make education inclusive to Autistic people, and the outcomes we have observed:

Providing information on education and schooling through our Autism Connect information line

1163 people
supported with education topics
through Autism Connect

Most Common Topics

- barriers in education
- education rights
- choosing a school

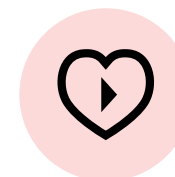


“They gave me the tools to do as much or as little as I wanted, and they were very positive about everything. I got the outcomes I wanted, that one-on-one schooling...”

Enabling Autistic students to thrive at school
We ran two webinars on thriving at school for parents and educators. We gave insights on what thriving can look like, advocacy and individualised supports.

33 parents and educators
attended across our two webinars

80%
feel more informed on how to help
Autistic students thrive at school



“I’m just very thankful for what Amaze is all about! I can’t wait (and my husband too) to join the next webinar. And I look forward to making contact with you guys for help and guidance etc. And to make use of the available resources. It’s comforting to know that I/we are not alone. There is a whole community within our reach!” — Parent

“I’ll put more Autistic-affirming resources around the school.” — Teacher

Building inclusive education

We published three resources to support parents and educators on:

- building parent-to-parent connections
- disability rights
- School Can’t

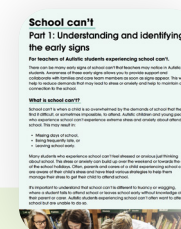
167 downloads
across our **Building Parent-to-Parent Connections**
resources



201 downloads
across our **Disability Rights**
resources



2567 downloads
of our new **School Can’t**
resources

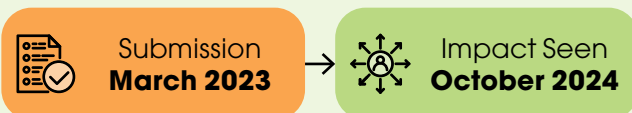


We advocated for change in the education system to better support Autistic students. We worked directly with the Department of Education, informing them on trends in education queries across our services, and submitting policy proposals. In our advocacy, we highlighted the increasing need to support Autistic students experiencing 'school can't'.

Two final reports that were influenced by our policy submissions and advocacy that relate to education policy were released this financial year. The recommendations in the reports reflect our push to provide quality support to Autistic students.

Review of the impact of COVID-19 on school students with disability

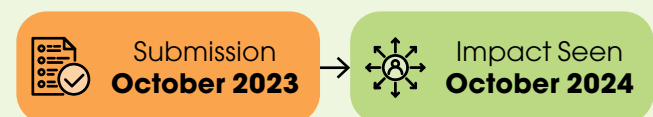
Students with disability were identified as a priority to plan for in future emergency responses. The report highlighted that Autistic students faced more challenges transitioning back to the classroom after lockdown and that there's been an increase in School Can't. This was in line with our submission highlighting the significant impacts of Covid-19 on Autistic students. The evidence and submission provided by Amaze is directly referenced in the report.



Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Victoria's state education system

In person evidence to a public hearing of the inquiry – June 2024

We advocated for an outcomes framework to measure the impacts of Victoria's Disability Inclusion reforms and Autism Education Strategy – this advocacy was reflected in the inquiry's final report. The report recommends that the Department of Education work with advocacy groups to devise an outcomes framework for the Disability Inclusion program. Our submission and evidence at the hearing were directly referred to in the report.



School Can't

You can view
our School
Can't resources
here:



School Can't occurs when a child is so overwhelmed and stressed by the demands of school that they find it difficult, or sometimes impossible, to attend. This may mean they miss days of school, are frequently late or leave school early. School Can't is a significant issue both in Australia and internationally, with Autistic students experiencing it at higher rates than non-Autistic students.¹

Here are some of the ways we have pushed for changes that will support Autistic students experiencing School Can't:

We have equipped family, carers, and teachers to better understand and support their Autistic person(s) experiencing School Can't by providing them with information, strategies and affirmation. The information and strategies we provide are informed by lived experience.

Autism Connect

We provided advice and resources on School Can't.

173 community members

supported with School Can't resources, mainly families and educators.

Survey on School Can't

Autistic students, parents/carers and educational staff told us about their experiences of School Can't, factors that contribute, and strategies they use.

747 people

responded to our survey on School Can't (2023). We used the findings from this survey to inform the resources we made to support parents, carers and education professionals supporting Autistic students experiencing School Can't. We will also use the results to develop more resources that we will launch in 2025.

School Can't Resources

These support parents, carers and education professionals to support Autistic people experiencing School Can't.

2567 downloads (combined total)

of our new School Can't resources. These are our **third most downloaded** resources.



463 views

of our YouTube video.
(September–July)



We heard from a parent who was homeschooling her child because school is too challenging for them. She said the resources *were the most neuro-affirming and useful resources relating to School Can't that she had seen and had been incredibly helpful to her.*

TAFE & Kangan Institute

Many Autistic students can find TAFE difficult when there is sensory overload, lack of support and lack of flexibility.⁴ Surveys estimate that around 45% of Autistic students don't complete their TAFE course.⁵ Autistic people have said that the things that help them succeed in TAFE include a structured curriculum, smaller class size, shorter courses and more contact hours.

As part of its goal to create inclusive TAFE classrooms for major vocational courses, we delivered a customised training program for Kangan Institute. The program was designed to build skills and strategies to create neuroinclusive learning environments, better understand Autistic students' needs, and support Autistic students. We also presented at the Reimagine Education conference and designed and distributed resources.

This was an important step towards creating better learning outcomes for Autistic students.

Here are some of the impacts we've seen:

50+ professionals

trained from across the TAFE sector at the Reimagining Education session



100% found the presentation valuable

Participants gained strategies to support Autistic students

“I learned a lot in this session, not having had a lot of exposure to neurodivergent learners or understanding of strategies to support these students.”

Our training is informed by lived experience. This was important to attendees:

“The lived experience makes it insightful.”

Building Neuroinclusive Spaces

We built neuroinclusive spaces by educating on how to create reset rooms through our practical guide and by developing an interactive map to help Autistic people find these spaces across Australia.

We also worked with Kmart and Target to make their stores and quiet hours more accessible for Autistic people.

Autistic people face sensory barriers to accessing many public environments. In retail settings, these include things like loud music, intense smells, screens playing videos, and fluorescent lighting.⁶ Building neuroinclusive spaces is important so that Autistic people can more easily engage in daily public activities.

Retail



Kmart and Target are making its stores more accessible for Autistic and neurodivergent customers. Since 2019, selected stores have offered a weekly Low-sensory shopping time. This is designed to be a calmer, lower-sensory environment more friendly to Autistic people. We partnered with Kmart and Target to expand, review, and update the Low-sensory shopping program.

Across these activities we gave Kmart and Target evidence-based insights to their store accessibility. We identified accessibility barriers and enablers.

We also trained store managers on practical strategies to support Autistic customers and employees.

Together we:

-  Did an **inclusion audit** of Kmart and Target's Low-sensory shopping program.
-  Did a **resource review** of key Low-sensory shopping resources and training program.
-  **Recommended** how to make the Low-sensory shopping program more neuroinclusive.
-  **Designed and delivered** custom training to key Kmart and Target store managers.



The impact it made

Kmart and Target leaders said they better understand how to make their Low-sensory shopping program and store operations more neuroinclusive.

85% of store managers said they are confident to better understand and support team members.

We are rolling out neuroinclusion training to more Kmart and Target store managers across Australia in 2025-26.

85%



Reset Rooms

A reset room, sometimes also called a sensory room or a chill-out zone, is a dedicated space where people can go to self-regulate and reset their nervous system. Autistic people report that having a reset room available to them in public buildings helped sensory and emotional regulation, helped them stay longer, and helped them more easily participate in the community.⁶

We released resources in February that inform people of different reset rooms around Australia and enable organisations to create best practice reset rooms. Early feedback shows strong positive impacts, with more expected over the coming years. These changes will make it easier for Autistic people to take part in public spaces.

Reset Room Guide and Video

These resources inform people on the value of reset rooms, and how to set one up using best practice.



535 people

downloaded the Reset Room Guide



25 attendees

to our Reset Room Guide launch including architects, consultants, and community access and inclusion officers from various organisations.



People told us they are empowered to set up reset rooms based on our guide.



In our post-event survey, people said that they better understand the value of reset rooms and how to set one up.



Some attendees said they are in the process of creating reset rooms based on our guide.

Looking for a Reset Room interactive map

The interactive map helps Autistic people and their supporters locate information about publicly available reset rooms.

521 views

since it was released

You can find the list and interactive map here:



Looking for a Reset Room?

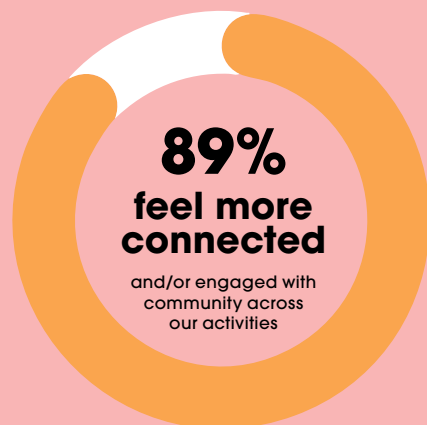
Browse by state or search our interactive map to find publicly available reset rooms near you.



Building Community Connection

Social connection improves Autistic people's wellbeing.⁷ Recreational activities, connecting with other Autistic people, broader social and work communities, and being socially supported can all be important sources of connection.

Autistic people experience more barriers to participating in social and community activities. Common barriers to participation include anxiety, disability and cost.⁸



We connected Autistic people and their supporters to community, events, spaces and activities, and built the capacity of organisations to support them:

We received 628 Autism Connect enquiries about finding peer support groups for Autistic people

Autistic people, their families and supporters talked about feeling freer to express themselves, an increased sense of safety and connection to one another.

628

700
Tickets

Australian Open

406
Tickets

Beauty and the Beast

Supported neuroinclusive events and connected Autistic people and their families to them

Celebrated queer Autistic identity
through the Amaze Pride Festival.

20
attendees

1640

Connected to peer supports

Provided advice to 1,640 people on finding peer supports. 66% of those were looking for peer supports for Autistic people.

34
zine packs

Built peer leaders' capacity

Established a community of practice for 62 peer group leaders from across Australia. We developed and distributed resources to support peer leaders, and hosted multiple trainings and networking events.

62



Spotlight: Amaze Pride Festival

Queer Autistic people came together to connect with one another and celebrate their identity in a neuroinclusive environment. The day included an informative talk on neuro-queer identity, a performance, and a zine-making workshop.

Attendees said they came away from the event with a strong sense of community, understanding, safety, joy and pride.

The Amaze Pride Festival was honestly the most accepted and proud of my identity that I've ever felt.

Amaze Pride Festival attendee

...being judgement free, being around other families with additional needs, having a sense of common understanding, feeling less alone/isolated.

Australian Open attendee

That I don't have to mask as much, and I have less stress knowing that everyone else is helpful and supportive ... If it wasn't for Amaze, I wouldn't go to the AO as it's too overwhelming and too many spoons.

Australian Open attendee

Felt very included and proud to be part of this community.

Australian Open attendee

Spotlight: Australian Open

Autistic people and their families were invited to enjoy early, free access to the Australian Open Ballpark, with activities designed to be accessible and inclusive. We distributed 700 tickets to Autistic people and their families, and supported people to access the space with resources and advice. We also gave advice to the Australian Open to improve accessibility.

Participants reported feeling more connected and engaged with community and social events. Many described the day as neuroaffirming and inclusive of their family's needs, allowing them to relax and take part without fear of judgement. Free tickets also made it possible for people to attend an event they might otherwise have missed.



Advising and Supporting Community

11,200  **people supported**

through our community focused activities, including the Autism Connect information line, our specialist advisors and community webinars. We connected people with independent and expert information, resources and referrals.

10,155

Autism Connect

674

Specialist Advisors

377

Webinars

629



LGBTQIA

110



ATSI

658



CALD

Most people we supported were Autistic or a family member.

46%

Family members

32%

Autistic person

14%

Professional

Unknown/Other
Supporter

Autism Connect Origin

54%

Phone

25%

Email

20%

Web Chat

1%

In-person

Autism Connect Top Six Topics

28%

Diagnosis

26%

Autistic-informed support

22%

Family and community information

16%

Accessing therapy

11%

Education support

11%

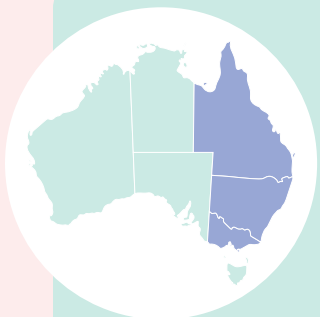
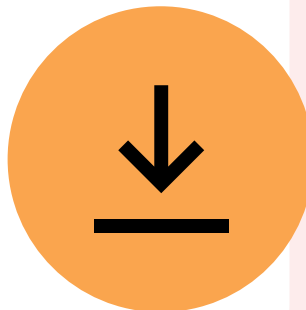
NDIS

30,000+ resource downloads

across

14,000 users

We produce and update resources based on the needs of the community. These include information sheets, videos and our email templates with information and strategies.



We supported people across
all states in Australia
with the majority from
**Victoria, New South Wales
and Queensland.**



Supporting Community Across Our Strategic Priorities

We make sure we are supporting the community across critical areas relevant to them. Here are some ways we've supported community across our strategic priorities through Autism Connect, our specialist advisors, tailored webinars, and information on our website.



Health and Mental Health

3,600+ people

supported through Autism Connect to find **Autistic-informed support**. The number of people supported increased by 100 compared with 2023–24.

+100
on last year
↑

Many people accessed our health resources available on our website. The most frequently downloaded health resources were across puberty, Medicare, peer support groups and accessing health services such as GP and hospital care.



Education and Training

1,160+ people

supported through Autism Connect with **education-related queries**.

33 attendees

across our **2 webinars** on thriving at school.

2,300+ people

accessed our School Can't resources. These are some of our **most downloaded resources**.

Some of our other most frequently accessed resources included information sheets for teachers about how to support Autistic students, and education inclusion information for families.



NDIS

1,400+ people

supported through Autism Connect with **information about the NDIS**.

207 people

supported across our **5 webinars** about the NDIS.

460+ people

accessed our **NDIS resources**. These include information about the NDIS and guides for accessing it.



Autism Assessment and Diagnosis

3,000+ people

supported with information about **assessment and diagnosis** through Autism Connect.

8,300+ people

used our assessment and diagnosis page. This is one of our **most frequently accessed pages**. It provides people with information about how to access an autism assessment, what the process involves, and steps after being diagnosed.



Employment

773 people

supported with **employment enquiries**.

205 sessions about employment

delivered to Autistic people by our **specialist advisor**. This is a 50-session increase compared to last year. Through these sessions we've supported Autistic people with a variety of employment-related topics, such as inclusion at work, choosing and applying for jobs, and making decisions about a current workplace.

+50
on last
year ↑

Feedback From the Community

We sent a survey to people to understand their experiences with our service.

**This combines data across Autism Connect, our specialist advisors, and our webinars.*

We reassured and validated people's experiences.



86% said they felt reassured by the advisors and mentors. This is crucial for ensuring that people not only receive the right information, but also feel heard and understood in their experiences.

Kindness, patience, intelligence, information – and I'll add kindness again because that is what I'm most grateful for.

Autism Connect user



Centring lived experience helps us provide the right support.



A strong theme was the value of our advisors' and mentors' lived experience. Their ability to connect through shared understanding helped people access the right supports, feel seen and understood, and gain confidence to move forward.

Kind, empathetic, understanding, non judgmental. It felt personal and they took their time to explain things. Also speaking to someone with lived experience themselves felt like they truly understood where I was coming from as a parent of an Autistic child.

Autism Connect user

Having people that have lived the life rather than only studied it makes a huge difference.

Specialist program participant

The information and support we provide is relevant and useful.



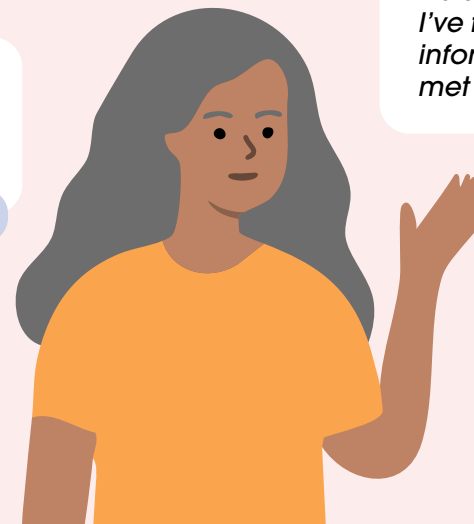
90% said the information and/or support we provided was relevant to them.

The service was invaluable. Like every other time I've called/messed, it felt like the support had been tailored in a way understanding exactly who I am.

Autism Connect user

It's been one of the few times in my life I've felt heard and understood. I received information about so many resources that met my very specific needs.

Autism Connect user



Empowering People to Take Action to Meet Their Needs

89% across Autism Connect and community projects said they feel empowered to act based on the information they received.

74% from Autism Connect and our specialist advisors said they have taken action to meet their needs 1 to 3 months later.



“When I started, I wasn't sure where to go, what to say or how to manage it. Today I feel calmer, more capable in managing situations and also, in doing that, it's given me time to do things for myself as well.

Anika was struggling to understand her son's behaviour and would get annoyed easily. She contacted Amaze out of desperation and signed up to support with one of our specialist advisors.. When Anika started, she was confused and lost about where to turn and what to do. Her mentor helped her understand behavioural patterns and how to support her son.

She said that because of the support she received, she better understands autism and her son and can act with the knowledge that has been given to her. This has resulted in Anika having better communication with her son, being more patient, and feeling connected with him.



Tahlia's 9-year-old grandson Tommy has autism. Tommy was having difficulties with his schooling in a mainstream school setting, and Tahlia was feeling distraught about the difficulties he was facing. She rang Autism Connect to find some supports for Tommy and found that the advisors were able to provide her with what she needed.

Tahlia felt that the advisor's lived experience meant they really understood her situation, and they validated and reassured her that seeking supports for Tommy's schooling was the right course of action. The advisor also gave her clear direction for seeking those supports, and Tahlia felt like she was given all the tools she needed to take action. After their call, she used the information to secure the one-on-one schooling Tommy needed. Tahlia's experience was so positive she has since referred her friends facing similar difficulties to Autism Connect.

“ They gave me the tools to do as much or as little as I wanted, and they were very positive about everything. I got the outcomes I wanted, that one-on-one schooling, and it almost feels like Amaze did it all for me.



Hoodie Up

My Positive Autistic Identity

Every April, Amaze celebrates World Autism Month with our Hoodie Up campaign. Hoodie Up is our annual campaign to uplift the Autistic community and encourage understanding and acceptance. We wear hoodies to recognise that some Autistic people use them to help manage sensory input. This year's theme, 'My positive Autistic identity', celebrates the strengths, uniqueness and pride in being Autistic.

This year, many people joined us to show their support for Hoodie Up. Autistic people played a bigger role in the campaign, and schools and workplaces across the community got involved in fundraising, running activities and, of course, wearing hoodies!



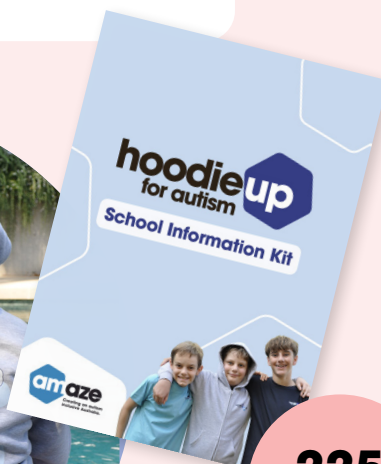
Centring Autistic Voices

This year, we did things a bit differently. Autistic people were invited to submit designs for the 2025 Amaze Hoodie as a way of sharing what being Autistic means to them. The result is a hoodie designed by and for community. The 'Uniquely Me' design was created by Gabby, and the 'Felix Tee' by Felix. Both are young Autistic people from Victoria. We love the designs and how they represent the varied strengths and uniqueness of being Autistic!



Schools and workplaces joined us to celebrate Hoodie Up and promote Autistic inclusion.

Schools and workplaces across Victoria joined in celebrating Hoodie Up by fundraising, wearing hoodies and running activities on Autistic inclusion. The Hoodie Up 2025 School Information Kit was accessed by 225 people, and was used by schools to support their own Hoodie Up activities.



225
downloads



Health Services

This year we enabled various health services and professionals to better support Autistic people. We also supported Autistic people and their families with information on accessing Autistic-affirming health services.

Autistic people have higher rates of health and mental health conditions compared to non-Autistic people. This includes anxiety, depression, epilepsy, intellectual disability and sleeping problems.⁸⁻¹⁰ This means it's important that Autistic people can access high-quality healthcare. However, Autistic people face several barriers to healthcare. This includes difficulty recognising and communicating symptoms, anxiety and overwhelm in healthcare settings, and poor previous experiences with healthcare professionals who don't properly understand autism.¹¹⁻¹²

We trained GPs and healthcare workers across Australia on autism to enable them to better support their Autistic clients.

We organised a lecture for GPs and healthcare workers at a conference and online. At the conferences we engaged GPs and healthcare workers through:

-  a lecture on 'Autism in Children'
-  on-demand **recordings** of the lecture
-  **information packs** for attendees with further information on autism and Amaze
-  an Autism Connect exhibition stand

6000+ GPs trained

- 2,326 attended the in-person conference
- 3,717 attended a webcast of the session

Attendees gained skills to better support Autistic clients

87% said the lecture on autism in children improved their clinical knowledge and skills

Next Steps

We are developing further training on supporting Autistic people in healthcare settings. These will be available for general practitioners, nurses and midwives, and general health and allied healthcare professionals. Our goals for these trainings are to help healthcare professionals to:

- Be confident interacting with and supporting Autistic patients through clear communication, sensory and processing considerations, and individualised support.
- Understand the specific needs of Autistic people.
- Enhance their ability to engage with Autistic patients in a way that fosters trust and reduces anxiety.



Evidence-informed health information through Autism Connect

Many people contacted our national support line for information on health and mental health.

370+ allied health and medical professionals

supported with information about autism, accessing a diagnosis, and finding Autistic-person-centred support.

1270+ Autistic people and family members

supported to find appropriate therapy and supports.



Mental health and wellbeing locals resources

Mental health and wellbeing locals (MHWL) are a service for adults 26+ with mental health or substance use concerns. They provide mental health treatment, care and supports.

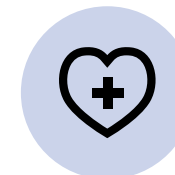
We released two resources in December to help improve Autistic people's experiences accessing MHWL services.

100+ people

have downloaded our resource for Autistic people and their families. It covers what MHWLs are and how to access them.

8 MHWL teams

have been sent the toolkit on how to support Autistic people accessing their service. It builds their understanding of autism, effective communication, and community needs.



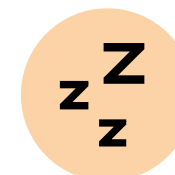
Autism and sleep resources

Research estimates that between 50% to 80% of Autistic children experience sleep problems.

We made resources to help health professionals, families and carers support Autistic children with their sleep. These were funded by Aspen Australia.

490+ people

have accessed our sleep resources. This includes strategies to help Autistic children navigate healthy sleeping habits, case studies, and a podcast discussion with experts.



Health Services

Ambulance Victoria

Ambulances have strong sensory input, including bright lights, loud sounds and different smells. This can make it hard for Autistic people when they need to use one.

We worked with Ambulance Victoria to help them better support Autistic people accessing an ambulance, and to build a neuroinclusive workplace to support their Autistic employees.



Together we:

-  Conducted a survey to ask Autistic people about their experiences accessing an ambulance.
-  Produced resources for paramedics and Ambulance Victoria staff on how to support Autistic people accessing an ambulance. This includes a video, posters and a neuroinclusion toolkit.
-  Produced an information sheet for community. This covers Autistic people's experiences accessing an ambulance, and what they and paramedics can do to have a more positive experience.
-  Ambulance Victoria staff can access two of our online trainings to better understand autism and how to build a neuroinclusive workplace.



Many of these resources were published in June 2025, so their impact will become clearer over the next financial year. Early feedback already shows positive outcomes in the short time since their release.



The resources are grounded in the lived experience of Autistic people and their carers.

36 survey participants

shared what sensory and communication barriers they experience when they access an ambulance. We used this information to inform the resources we created for ambulance staff and community.

Staff are better equipped to support Autistic people accessing ambulances.

380+ Ambulance Victoria staff

have completed our 'What is Autism' training.

We heard from a staff member who supported an Autistic patient.

“The neuroinclusion resources helped them understand what to do and create a more positive experience.”

We distributed posters to over 100 stations. These link staff to the neuroinclusion toolkit.

Staff told us some of the strategies they gained:

“Being able to ask questions and make those adjustments to allow people to feel comfortable ... enough to be able to answer our questions and allow us to assess them is such a key point.”

You can view some of the resources for Ambulance Victoria staff here:

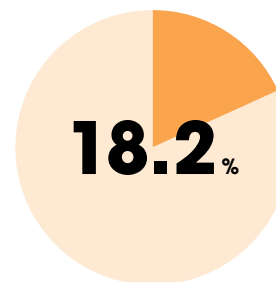


Building Organisation Capability

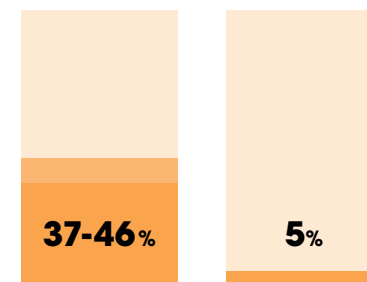
We want Autistic people to have career development, greater opportunities for sustainable employment, and inclusive and supportive workplaces. This work is important because Autistic people in Australia have high rates of unemployment and underemployment. 18.2% of Autistic people in Australia are unemployed,¹² and between 37 and 46% of Autistic people in Australia are estimated to be underemployed, compared with 5.6% of the general Australian population.¹³

Work can give Autistic people a sense of purpose, independence and improve their quality of life. For employers, it can bring innovation, creativity, efficiency, and employees who are deeply engaged in their work.¹⁴

We enable organisations and individuals to support Autistic people to thrive at work. We build their understanding of Autistic experience and give them strategies and confidence to create more neuroinclusive workplaces, policies and practices.



Autistic people are unemployed



Underemployment

We do this through:

A-Plus Inclusion Program

A comprehensive 8-week professional development program for managers, People & Culture teams and employees.

A-Plus Foundations

A self-paced online program suitable for all employees. It is part of the A-Plus program and can also be accessed independently.

Custom Training Workshops

Training workshops that are tailored to help organisations design and implement inclusion strategies relevant to their context.

Autism Connect

We provide information and advice to support individual employees and Autistic people with workplace inclusion.

Across our activities, we are seeing strong positive impacts. The organisations we support are introducing, or planning to introduce, strategies and practice changes that reduce barriers, strengthen inclusion, and create workplaces where Autistic people are supported and enabled to thrive.



Learn More

48 organisations

supported through A-Plus and/or custom training

15 organisations

have adopted A-Plus Foundations, our self-paced online program that builds understanding of Autistic experiences in the workplace and strategies for being more neuroinclusive.

700+ managers, people and culture (P&C) professionals and employees

supported to build neuroinclusion.

This is across Autism Connect, A-Plus and custom trainings.

6 A-Plus full program

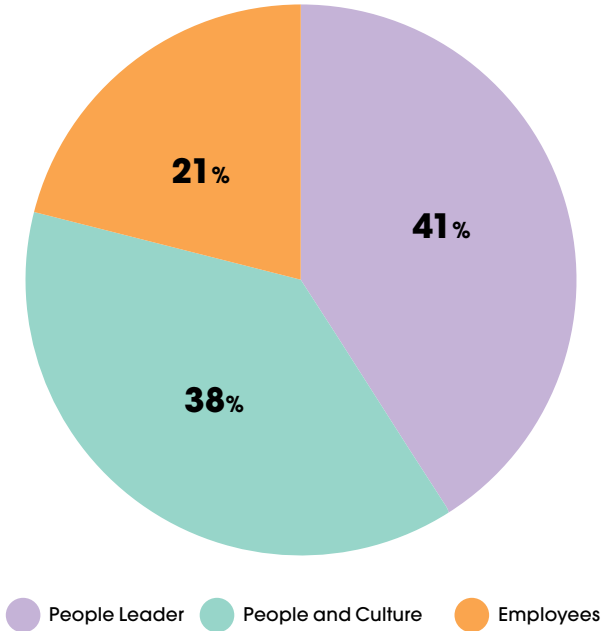
25 A-Plus open program

17 custom training

Across healthcare, community services, public sector, retail, engineering, education/training, conservation and arts.

185 participants

in the A-Plus Program



By training leaders and people & culture professionals, we help people with the most influence in their organisation to make changes to their workplace systems and practices.

“...what I think was most valuable was bringing together key stakeholders to brainstorm in this space and give insights and guidance as to how implementation might work. Also, I think their participation ensures that we have a variety of people already knowledgeable and ready to support with developing inclusive practice.”

“ (What I most valued about the program was) *The time and teamwork in crafting ideas to make our workplace more inclusive. It's not something to solve in isolation so I feel motivated by working through this with my peers.*”

A-Plus Impact

Through the A-Plus Program, participants move beyond awareness towards practical steps to support neuroinclusion.

Participants learnt strategies to be more neuroinclusive. These include simple, everyday adjustments, as well as bigger changes to workplace policies and practices. They feel confident and ready to make these changes in their teams and workplaces.

Some of the impacts we've seen so far:

Participants are more informed and confident to build neuroinclusion.

93% can identify small actions that support neuroinclusion in their workplace.

91% feel able to implement strategies to better support Autistic employees.

There are a lot of quick wins that I wouldn't have necessarily previously thought of. The sessions were practical and provided a lot of examples in how we can be more inclusive.

Small steps make big changes.

Participants feel empowered to take action.

83% are likely to put what they have learned into practise within the next three months.

74% have a plan of action to make their team/organisation more inclusive for Autistic employees.

I guess it was the small things that can be easily achieved, added, implemented, or removed, and having not done the sessions I would not have made these small but impacting adjustments to my daily interactions.

(What I most valued was) developing action plans and having tools to move forward.



Creating autism
inclusive workplaces.

**Participants better
understand their
own needs
at work.**

A common theme in the feedback was that participants gained a better understanding of their own working styles and what they need to thrive at work.

It helped me to consider what type of workplace enables me to be at my most productive.

It has provided me (an opportunity) to reflect on my own sensory needs and be more understanding of how the environment around us can impact others.

**Autistic participants
found the training
neuroinclusive
and affirming.**

We received great feedback from Autistic and neurodivergent participants. Many said that the A-Plus program was affirming to their experiences and identity.

I am thrilled with what I have seen in these units. It feels very safe.

It definitely increased my feelings of being affirmed in my identity. I love how clear this module was, you explained masking really well.

A-Plus Program participants are making changes in their workplace to include Autistic people

Through A-Plus, participants are making small, practical adjustments to communication and accommodations, as well as influencing broader workplace culture.

Together, these changes are creating more inclusive systems, giving Autistic people greater opportunity to succeed, and strengthening organisational capability for long-term impact.

94%

Report they better understand how to communicate inclusively.

91%

Are likely to share with others the strategies they learned. This helps inclusion spread across their organisation.



Inclusive communication

“Being at least a little more aware of other people’s preferred communications needs – both sending and receiving.”



Asking employees what they need

“I am thinking about where I can better set up my team for success by seeking more information on their individual learning and processing styles and offering different ways to engage with team workflow.”



Making sensory accommodations

Accommodations participants mentioned included quiet spaces, different lighting and normalising use of noise-cancelling headphones.



Not making assumptions

“I now feel more prepared to respond appropriately if someone shares that they are Autistic or neurodivergent. I will listen respectfully, without commenting, ask how I can support them, and check if they are comfortable with me asking questions.”



Sharing what they learnt with their coworkers and leaders

“This has inspired me (to educate) senior leaders on different communication styles and how we can create greater awareness of people who don’t fit the norm but can still be best fit for a higher role.”

Supporting Neuroinclusion in Large Organisations

We delivered the A-Plus inclusion program to a national engineering company with more than 5,000 employees. 48 managers and P&C professionals completed the program.

Here are some of the impacts we've seen:

Participants will put what they learnt into action to make their workplace more neuroinclusive.

95% said they feel capable of implementing practical strategies to better support Autistic employees.

83% said they are likely to put what they've learned into practice within the next three months.

Staff told us about actions they plan to take immediately. These included things such as improving communication, assigning tasks based on individual strengths and needs, advocating for neuroinclusion initiatives, developing an inclusion handbook for managers, and refining recruitment and onboarding practices.

Neuroinclusion is enabled across many parts of the organisation.

94% said they are likely to share this knowledge and these strategies with others in their organisation.

Given the size of the organisation and its reach across Australia, participants sharing strategies beyond the program is especially impactful – multiplying the benefits for many employees and future recruits.

Neuroinclusion can be built across many parts of the organisation because they had people from different operations participate. This included people from HR, Recruitment, Training and Development, Health and Safety, Project Management, and Executive Leadership.

“I feel more comfortable to speak openly with people about neurodiversity and help everyone to understand it is different for every individual. Patience and understanding, allowing each individual to be open about their needs and what works best for them, and finding ways to accommodate each individual is possible.”

Spotlight: Retail

We delivered the A-Plus program to Technology people leaders and the People and Culture team at Bunnings, giving them practical skills and strategies to create a workplace that is inclusive of Autistic people.

The program combined instructor-led training with self-paced learning over eight weeks. We are already seeing promising outcomes, with clear indicators that Bunnings is now better positioned to support Autistic team members in the workplace.



We:

Built their confidence to use the strategies we provided to make their workplace more inclusive to Autistic employees.

All participants

feel **confident** they could take small, actionable steps to **improve workplace inclusion**.

“Really valuable! (I learnt) some simple adjustments that can be made to make the workplace more inclusive.”

Helped them build action plans and identify achievable changes.

All participants

intend to **implement what they learnt** within the next three months.

Participants shared achievable changes they plan to make. These included accommodating people's communication preferences and respecting sensory needs.

“Respecting sensory needs without requesting detail or justification.”

“Establishing what form of communication everyone is comfortable with prior to setting up a meeting, sharing a detailed agenda, and not launching straight in.”

**Check out how
Bunnings made
their stores more
accessible here:**



Encouraged them to share their learnings across the organisation so that many employees can build this culture of inclusion.

All participants

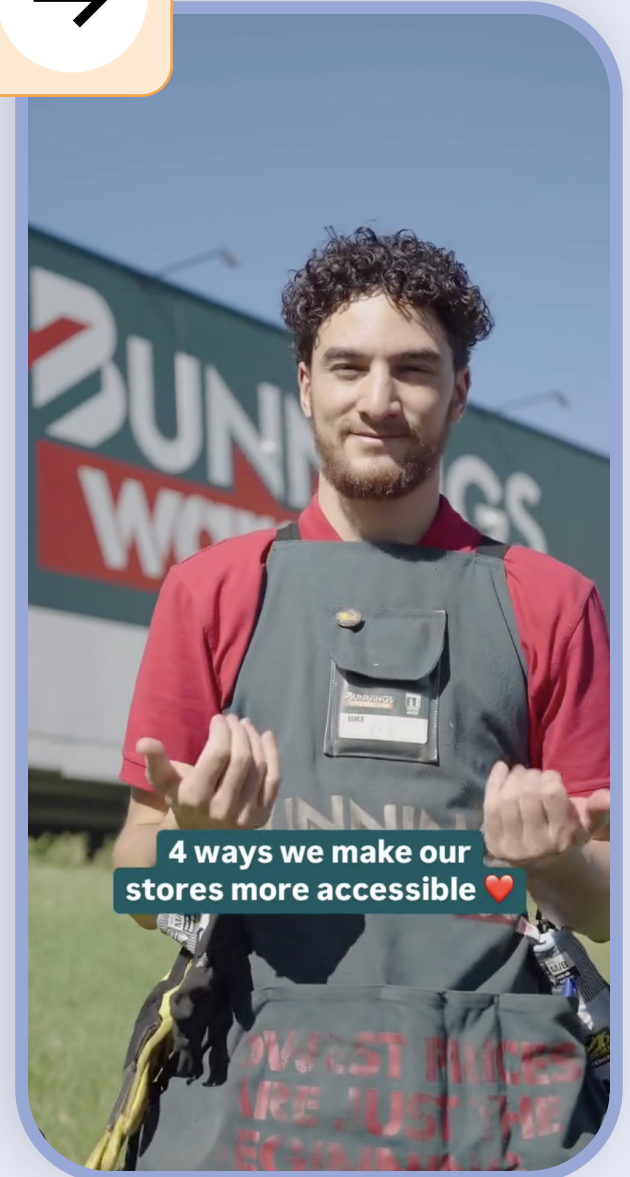
intend to **share the knowledge** and strategies they gained with others in Bunnings.

“ (A small step I am planning to take is) start to educate my peers on adapting our ways of working to be more accommodating to different communication and working approaches.”

Some participants said they better understand their own needs because of the program.

This affirms that A-Plus strategies are relevant to helping all employees consider what helps them thrive in their workplace.

“ Gave me the words to better explain why I feel more safe wearing noise-cancelling headphones in the office.”



Our Supporters

Our ability to build an Australia that embraces Autistic people and their families living their best lives can only be made possible with support from others who share the same vision.

We extend our sincerest thanks and gratitude to the many organisations, trusts, departments and individuals who have supported us throughout the 2024–25 financial year and those who have helped to fund and make possible our work with Autistic people, their families and the wider community.

Thank you to:

- Australian Government
Department of Social Services
- Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs
- Victorian Government
Department of Education
- Victorian Government
Department of Families,
Fairness and Housing
- Department of Health, Victoria
- Jobs Victoria
- Carers Victoria
- Herbert Smith Freehills
- Pratt Foundation
- VEITH Foundation
- Sirius Foundation (Australia)
- Margaret Attwood Trust
- Norma, Mavis & Graeme
Waters Perpetual Charitable
Trust
- Australian Nursing and
Midwifery Federation
- CFMEU members
- Village Cinemas
- GO Salary
- Victoria Woods
- Tania Moss (In Memory
of Laura Moss)

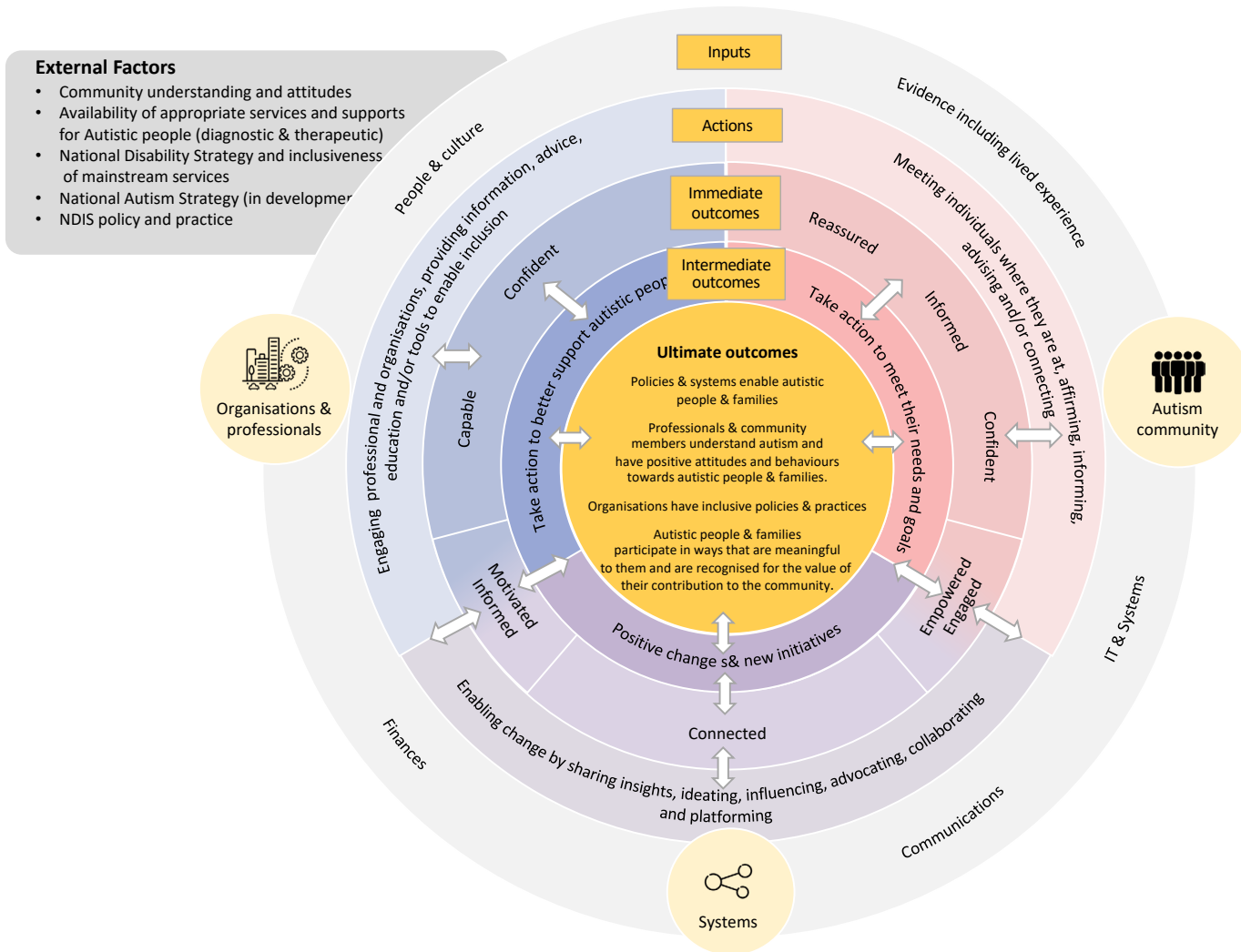
- APS Foundation
- Enfield Uniting Church
- Bowness Family Foundation
- Autism Camp Australia
- The Currajong School
- Rohan Worland
- Ecoplumb Contracting Services
- Many individual donors

Delivery partners

We worked with our delivery partners to build more local knowledge and service more Australians. Our delivery partners over this reporting period included:



Impact Framework



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