



Australian Government

# National Autism Strategy community consultations

## Stakeholder toolkit



Help shape the change.

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

This toolkit is for stakeholders and government departments to promote community engagement on a National Autism Strategy.



‘I hope the Strategy is the step forward that the Autistic community needs to be able to live the lives we want. We need the Strategy to help the education, employment and health sectors better support us.’

– Amanda, Autistic woman and mother of Autistic children.

## Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Social Services acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia on which we gather, live and work. We acknowledge all Traditional Custodians, their Elders past, present and emerging and we pay our respects to their continuing connection to their culture, community, land, sea and water.

## Help and support

When people share their story, or hear from others, it can sometimes lead to difficult feelings. You're encouraged to share these support lines with people in your communication or if someone is experiencing distress during engagements.



### Beyond Blue Support Service

Telephone 1300 224 636, 24 hours, 7 days a week.



### Lifeline Crisis Support

Telephone 13 11 14, 24 hours, 7 days a week



### 13 YARN – Support from First Nations crisis

counsellors is available at 13YARN (13 92 76) or by visiting [www.13yarn.org.au](http://www.13yarn.org.au), 24 hours, 7 days a week.



**Autism Connect** is a free, national helpline providing independent and expert Autism information that you can trust over phone, email and webchat.

Call 1300 308 699 to speak with an Autism Connect Advisor or visit [amaze.org.au/autismconnect/](http://amaze.org.au/autismconnect/) to find out more or connect via email or webchat.

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‘Nothing about us without us’ means all of us. The needs of all Autistic people should be reflected in the National Autism Strategy, or else it’s not going to be as effective and beneficial as it could be.’

– Alex, young Autistic woman.



# How to use this toolkit

This toolkit can be used to promote community engagement that will shape the National Autism Strategy to your stakeholders and community.

To create a National Autism Strategy for all Autistic Australians, **we need to hear from Autistic people, their families and carers and the Autism sector.**



## We encourage you to:



- tell your stakeholders, members and communities you work with about the consultation process. You can use the [key messages](#) to help with this



- feature the consultation process in your next [newsletter](#) or on your website



- share [posts](#) and [animations](#) on your social media



- download and share or print and display [factsheets and community flyers](#)



- spread the word about [community forums](#) in locations where events are being held.

You can start using this toolkit from now until October 2023.

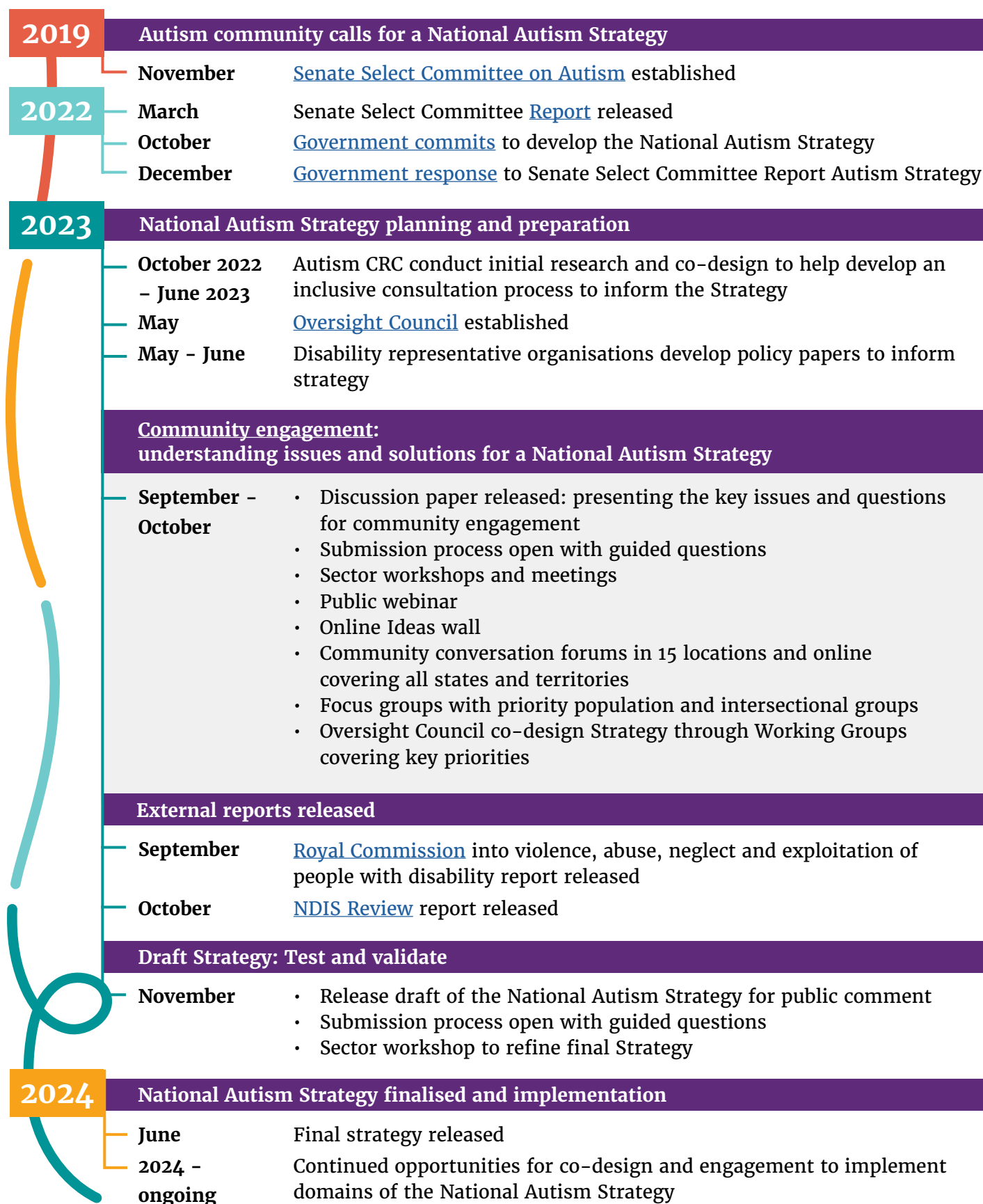
‘Representation is so important. Without it, the National Autism Strategy is meaningless. We need Autistic people with different backgrounds and identities to share their ideas and experiences so that the Strategy supports as many of us as possible.’

– Yenn, Autistic person.



# About the community engagement

The below graphic demonstrates the journey so far and next steps to develop the Strategy.





# More information about developing a National Autism Strategy

## The need for a National Autism Strategy

Australia's Autistic community has asked for a National Autism Strategy and the Australian Government has committed to delivering it.

A new National Autism Strategy will provide a coordinated, national approach to how governments and services can better support Autistic people and their families.

Life outcomes for Autistic people are worse than they should be. For example, Autistic people have a lower life expectancy than other Australians.



It can be harder for Autistic people and their families to get the help they need. This includes accessing appropriate healthcare, support at school or university, job opportunities and secure housing.



## How the National Autism Strategy is being developed

An [Oversight Council](#) has been set up to help develop the National Autism Strategy. It includes an Autistic co-chair and majority Autistic members.

The Autism CRC undertook a co-design process to help design an inclusive community engagement and consultation process to inform the National Autism Strategy.

Now we are asking Autistic people, their families and carers, and other community members across the country to have their say.

Consultation on the development of the draft Strategy will run from 4 September until the end of October 2023. Public consultation on the draft Strategy is expected to be open late November 2023 to mid-January 2024.

# Have your say

Visit the website to find a range of ways you can get involved.

At different points within the consultation period you can:



- Contribute by providing a [submission](#)



- Share your experiences through an [online ideas wall](#)



- [Register](#) your interest to participate in a community consultation in person in one of 15 locations around Australia



- [Register](#) to attend an online workshop.

Visit [dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy](https://dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy) to find out more.

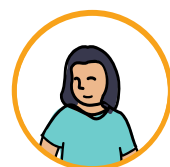
‘We need to speak for ourselves. Have our voices heard. We can make a real difference – a good change. But we need to learn about the experiences from Autistic people and their families.’

– Istar, mother of Autistic son.



‘The Strategy can benefit the whole Autistic community – but only if **we all have our voices heard**. The Autism spectrum is so huge. I can only speak for me and my family – we need the full diversity and intersectionality of experience to be heard and at the heart of the Strategy so that it can help us all.’

– Amanda, Autistic woman and mother of Autistic children.



# Community consultations

Community events will be held around Australia from September to October 2023. **Help us promote these in your state, territory or region.**

There are open community forums and Autistic voices discussion forums. Dates and locations are subject to change based on interest and other factors. Check the [DSS Engage web page](#) to confirm locations and dates.

You can also [register](#) to attend a webinar or online workshop. Visit the DSS Engage page for more information.

## Location

Sydney, NSW

Dubbo, NSW

Adelaide, SA

Mount Gambier, SA

Hobart, TAS

Devonport, TAS

Melbourne, VIC

Ballarat, VIC

Canberra, ACT

Perth, WA

Bunbury WA

Katherine, NT

Darwin, NT

Cairns, QLD

Brisbane, QLD



# Key messages



## How to use

You can use these key messages when talking about the National Autism Strategy with your community and networks. You can also use them in emails or social media posts.

- Have your say on a National Autism Strategy for Australia.
- Community engagement to develop a National Autism Strategy is happening from September 2023.
- You can share your ideas and views on what the Strategy should focus on.
- A National Autism Strategy, will for the first time, provide a coordinated national approach to support Autistic people and their families.
- Government wants to hear from you about what actions could be taken to improve the lives of Autistic people in Australia.
- You can share your ideas and suggestions on what should be in a National Autism Strategy by making a submission or answering the guided questions online, or attending a community or online event.
- There is also an online Ideas Wall where you can post ideas, messages and comments.
- All feedback given during the community engagements will be collected and analysed to help inform the draft strategy.
- Visit [dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy](https://dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy) to register your interest to take part in the consultation and subscribe for updates.

‘I would like this Strategy to give extra support for Autistic people, especially those who are marginalised, with more opportunity for growth and also employment.’

– Kirk, Autistic man.

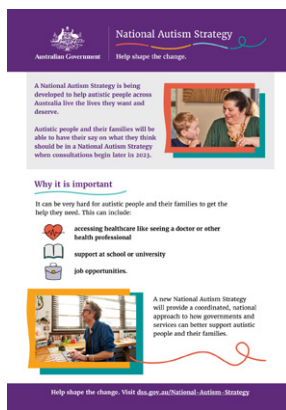


# Products and resources



## How to use

You can share the below resources with your networks or communities to help promote the National Autism Strategy. Use the links provided to view and download resources to share with your networks. You can email or print and display resources on community noticeboards.



- [Factsheet](#)
- [Factsheet for First Nations communities](#)
- [Community flyer for First Nations communities](#)
- [Factsheet for multicultural communities](#)
- [Easy read factsheet](#)



‘[We] desperately need to hear, especially hear from everybody, but especially people who don’t normally have a voice, who already don’t feel represented. If you don’t feel presented in general in the discussion about Autism, then we absolutely desperately need to hear from those people.’

– Dani, Autistic woman.

# Animations



## How to use

You can share these animations on your own channels by emailing them to your networks. There are two shorter videos you can share on social media. You can do this by clicking on the video you want to share and copying the link to a new social media post.



[Animated video explainer  
\(1 minute and 30 seconds\)](#)



[Video explainer – Auslan  
\(1 minute and 30 seconds\)](#)



[Short animation:  
What is a National Autism Strategy  
\(30 seconds\)](#)



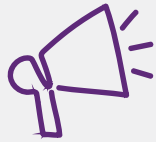
[Short animation:  
Why is a National Autism Strategy  
important \(30 seconds\)](#)

‘I want to live in a community that recognises and appreciates my son for who he is. He is amazing – like all children are. He has so many strengths, we need change to be able to realise his potential so he too can contribute to our community and make it better.’

– Istar, mother of Autistic son.



# Social media



## How to use

To use these social media tiles, [download](#) the tile and share the tile and the accompanying text on your social media account/s.



Have your say. 🗣️💻

Help shape the National Autism Strategy. 💡

Visit the website to see how you can get involved 💡⬇️  
[www.dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy](http://www.dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy)

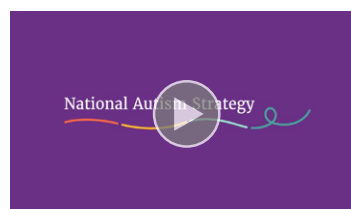


Community engagement to help shape the National Autism Strategy is now open. 🗣️💻

A strategy will help Autistic people across Australia have better opportunities in life. ✅

We need to hear from Autistic people, their families and the Autism sector.

Check out how you can help shape the change ✅⬇️  
[www.dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy](http://www.dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GtGA0a7gmc>

Community engagement to develop the National Autism Strategy is underway. 🗣️💡👉

The Strategy will help Autistic people and their families get the support they need to live the lives they want and deserve. ❤️

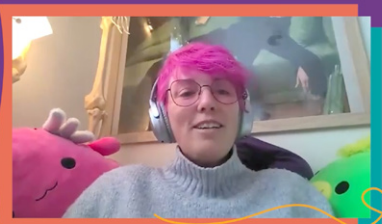
Have your say and help shape the change. ❤️⬇️  
[www.dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy](http://www.dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy)

# Stories



## How to use

Hear from autistic people and their family members about the importance of a National Autism Strategy.



### Dani's story

Dani is passionate about helping others understand what it means to be Autistic.



### Kirk's story

Kirk looks forward to a Strategy that will support Autistic people with more opportunities – particularly employment.



### Jen's story

Jen is hopeful the Strategy will mean Autistic people can more easily find meaningful work.

### Amanda's story

Amanda looks forward a time where Autistic people don't face barriers to living the lives they want.

### Istar's story

Istar is hopeful the Strategy will support Autistic children with the right support early on to live independent and fulfilling lives.

### Yenn's story

Yenn hopes the Strategy will support mental health clinicians to better understand and care for Autistic people.

'We all deserve to live good lives, whatever that looks like for each individual and their family. We deserve access to opportunities, supports and services, no matter where we're located.'

– Alex, young Autistic woman.



# Newsletter content



## How to use

Copy and paste the content to use in your newsletter or to email your stakeholders, members, clients or community to let them know about ways to get involved in the National Autism Strategy.

## Help shape the National Autism Strategy

A National Autism Strategy is being developed to help Autistic people across Australia live the lives they want and deserve. You can help shape the change by having a say on the Strategy.

### *What's happening?*

Australia's Autistic community have asked for a strategy. The Government has committed to delivering a National Autism Strategy.

Autistic people and their families, the Autism sector, health professionals and researchers are invited to help inform the Strategy. A range of ideas and options have been developed into the discussion paper and summary paper. These ideas are based on information gathered through evidence and reviews and the outcomes of the Senate Select Committee Inquiry into services, support and life outcomes for Autistic Australians in 2022.

### *How can I get involved?*

To share your ideas and suggestions:

- Provide a [submission](#) or answer the online guided questions
- Share your experiences through an [online ideas wall](#)
- [Register](#) to participate in a community engagement event in person in one of 15 locations around Australia
- [Register](#) to attend an online workshop.

**For more information on how to get involved visit**  
[dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy](https://dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy)



# Hold a community conversation

You can hold your own community conversation with Autistic people and their families in your networks.

The earlier [key messages](#) can help you speak with people about the development of the National Autism Strategy.

The following discussion questions can be used to guide your community engagement.



Please share any insights gathered during community engagement using the online guided submission questions at the [DSS Engage submission page](#).

## Key discussion questions

- What does a National Autism Strategy need to achieve?
- How can the Strategy support the rights, autonomy, and diversity of Autistic people?
- What needs to improve so Autistic people are better supported for their whole life?
- What can we do to better support Autistic people from different population groups? This includes:
  - First Nations Autistic people
  - Autistic people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities – including those from multicultural, immigrant, and refugee backgrounds
  - Autistic women and girls
  - Autistic people that identify as LGBTQIA+
  - Autistic infants, children, and young adults
  - older Autistic people
  - Autistic people who also have an intellectual disability.
- What might help to improve people's understanding of Autism?
- Are there any areas missing from this discussion paper that should be a priority in the Strategy?



For more information on how to get involved visit [dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy](https://dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy)

## Contact

For information about the National Autism Strategy:

- visit [www.dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy](http://www.dss.gov.au/national-autism-strategy)
- email [AutismPolicy@dss.gov.au](mailto:AutismPolicy@dss.gov.au)

Community consultation is being coordinated by engagement specialists, The Social Deck. If you need help to register for an event you can contact The Social Deck at [engage@thesocialdeck.com](mailto:engage@thesocialdeck.com) or on 0458 228 142.



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