



Australian Government

National  
Autism  
Strategy



# Draft of the National Autism Strategy

Easy Read version



# How to use this document



The Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) wrote this document.

When you see the word 'we', it means DSS.



We wrote this document in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

**Bold**  
Not bold

We wrote some important words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



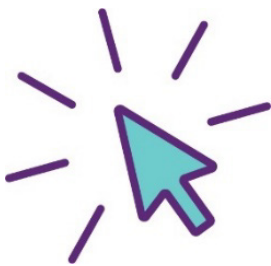
We explain what these bold words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 48.



This is an Easy Read summary of another document.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other document on our website.

**[www.engage.dss.gov.au/developing-the-national-autism-strategy/draft-strategy](http://www.engage.dss.gov.au/developing-the-national-autism-strategy/draft-strategy)**



This document is quite long.

It includes a lot of information.

You don't need to read it all at once.



You can ask for help to read this document.

A friend, family member or support person might be able to help you.



We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of the land we live on – Australia.

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



- land



- waters.



This document includes photos of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It may contain images of people who have passed away.

# What's in this document?

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# About the National Autism Strategy



We are creating the National Autism **Strategy**.

We call it the Strategy.



A strategy is a government plan for how we will do things in the future.

We asked people with **Autism** to help us create the Strategy.



Autism can affect how you:

- think
- feel
- communicate
- connect and deal with others.



In this document, we say 'Autistic people' when we talk about people with Autism.



We asked Autistic people in the community about what words they use to talk about themselves.

Many people told us they use 'Autistic people'.



The Strategy will support Autistic people and their families to get the support they need.



This document is about a **draft** of the Strategy.

A draft is a document that isn't finished.

Some things in a draft might change later.

## We want to know what you think



We want to know what you think about the ideas in this draft of the Strategy.



We have some questions you can answer at the end of the document.

There is no right or wrong answer.

You can answer:



- all our questions



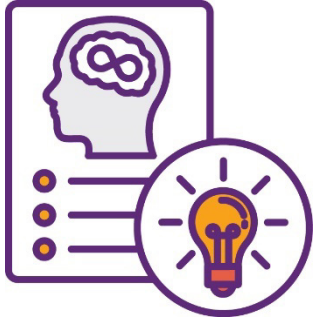
- some of our questions.



The questions start on page 42.



# Ideas that guide the Strategy



We have ideas that will guide the Strategy.



The Strategy's main goal is to improve the lives of all Autistic people.



The Strategy also has a **vision**.

A vision is what we want the future to be like.



The Strategy's vision is to create a safe and **inclusive** community.



When a community is inclusive, everyone:

- can take part
- feels like they belong.



We also want everyone to respect and support the **rights** of Autistic people.



Rights are rules about how people must treat you:

- fairly
- equally.

## Our principles



The Strategy has **principles** that guide how we will deliver it.

Principles are important ideas we should always think about.

We will create and deliver the Strategy by working with:



- Autistic people



- their families and carers



- people who work with Autistic people.



We want to make sure what we deliver through the Strategy is **accessible** for everyone.



When something is accessible, it is easy to:

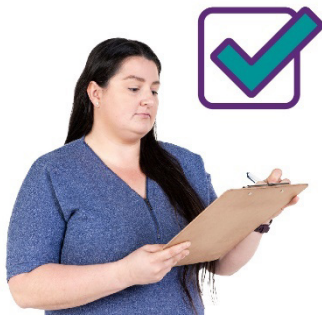
- find and use
- understand.



We also want to support Autistic people to have choice and control over their lives.



We want to make sure the Strategy works well with other government strategies.



We also want to make sure we can measure how well the Strategy is going.

And that it does:

- what we say it will do
- what we know works well.

We want to make sure the Strategy supports:



- the skills and strengths of Autistic people



- the community to understand and accept Autistic people for who they are.



We want to make sure the Strategy supports the rights of all Autistic people.



We also want to make sure the Strategy recognises that there are different parts to who an Autistic person is.



For example, someone could be:

- an Autistic person
- and
- a First Nations person.



The different parts of who someone is affects:

- how they experience life
- how they get support
- other parts of who they are.



We want to make sure the Strategy works well for what each person and community needs.

And supports people for their whole life.

# Our outcome areas



Our Strategy focuses on making life better for Autistic people in 4 main areas.

We call them our **outcome** areas.



Outcomes are important results we want to achieve.



## **An inclusive community**



We want to change the way the community does things so that Autistic people feel included.

# 2

## Learning and employment



**Employment** means you:

- have a job
- go to work
- get paid.

We want to support Autistic people to:



- learn skills



- find employment.



# 3

## Good supports for Autistic people



We want Autistic people to get the support they need.

This means the services that can support them need to be easy to find and use.

We also want to support people to easily get an Autism **diagnosis**.



A diagnosis is when a doctor:

- checks your health
- says what condition they think you have.

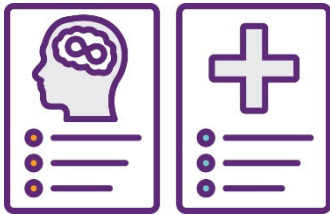
# 4

## Health and mental health

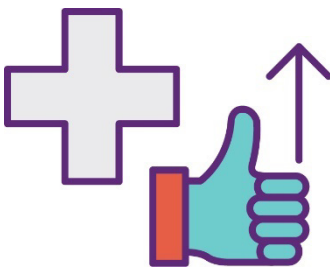


The Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) is writing a plan to improve the health and mental health of:

- Autistic people
- their families and carers.



This plan will be separate to the Strategy.



This is so the Australian Government can look more closely at how to improve the health and mental health of:

- Autistic people
- their families and carers.

# 1. An inclusive community



We want the community to be inclusive of Autistic people.



This means Autistic people should have an equal chance to:

- work and learn
- connect with other people
- have their say.



We want the community to:

- accept Autistic people in the same way as everyone else
- support Autistic people to take part in activities.



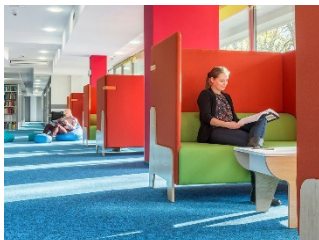
We want people to always think about Autistic people whenever they:

- make new services
- share information.



We also want all parts of the community to be easy for Autistic people to:

- find and use
- move around in.



For example, there should be places that Autistic people can go that aren't too:

- noisy
- bright
- busy.

## Why this outcome area is important



When the community is inclusive, people are:

- healthier
- safer.



People also experience less **discrimination**.

Discrimination is when someone treats you unfairly because of a part of who you are.

This includes how services treat you.



Everyone should respect the rights of Autistic people to take part in the community.

## How Autistic people experience this outcome area



The community does not always include Autistic people the way it should.



Autistic people often experience more discrimination than other people.



The same is true for:

- their families and carers
- people who support them.



This can be because a lot of people in the community don't understand:

- Autism
- how Autistic people experience the world.



It can mean Autistic people are less likely to:

- find a job
- earn money.



Autistic people can often experience issues when they move around the community.

For example, when taking buses and trains.



Autistic people can also face issues with finding and using homes to live in by themselves.

## How we plan to improve this outcome area



We want to improve the community's **attitudes** towards Autistic people.



Your attitude is what you:

- think
- feel
- believe.



We want to support the community to understand Autism better.



This includes in places like:

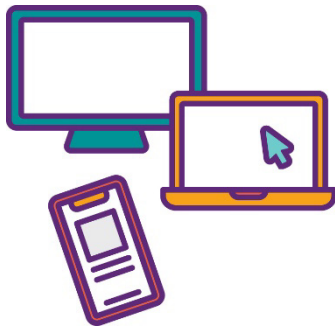
- schools
- health clinics.





We want to show more Autistic people and their lives in the **media**.

Media is a way of getting information.



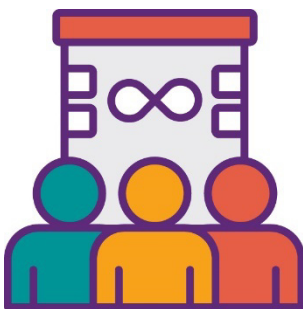
Parts of the media include:

- TV
- the Internet
- social media, like Facebook.



We want to increase the number of accessible places for Autistic people:

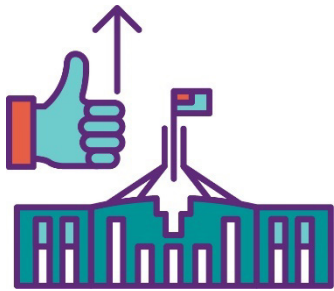
- in the community
- online.



We also want to support the organisations that speak up for Autistic people.



We want to support Autistic people to connect with other people in the community.



We want to improve the way the Australian Government:

- shares information
- delivers services
- communicates.



We want to think about how we can improve the laws about how everyone must treat Autistic people.



We also want to make Autistic people safer by working to stop:

- discrimination
- people treating Autistic people badly.

## 2. Learning and employment



We want to support Autistic people to:

- build skills
- find employment.



This will lead to Autistic people having more control over their:

- lives
- money
- how and where they live.



We also want to support young people to find employment.

We know this can lead to people having better chances for employment later in life.

## Why this outcome area is important



Taking part in employment is good for everyone.

Employment leads to people:



- worrying less about money



- having better health.



Schools and jobs also work better when there are people who have lots of different:

- ideas
- skills
- experiences.

## How Autistic people experience this outcome area



We know that Autistic students often experience discrimination at school.

And that trying to learn in schools can be hard for Autistic students.



Schools often don't support Autistic students the way they need.



Sometimes Autistic people have to work in a job that is too easy for them.

And they can't use all of their skills.



This can also mean they earn less money than if they could use all their skills.



And this can lead to Autistic people needing more support from:

- their families and carers
- government services.



There are many things that often stop Autistic people from finding employment.



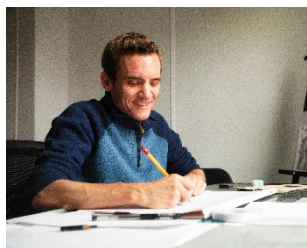
For example:

- not having enough experience in certain skills
- not being able to communicate with other people in a certain way.



This can also happen when the people who hire them don't understand Autism.

## How we plan to improve this outcome area



We want to create more ways for Autistic people to find employment.



We want to support people to make the way they hire people more accessible to Autistic people.

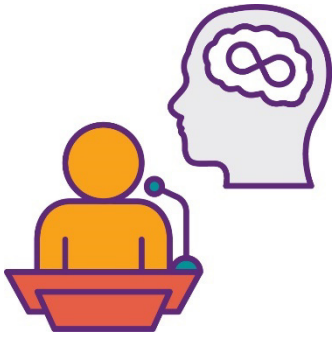


And support people to make their spaces accessible for Autistic people to work in.



We want to improve the supports and services that Autistic people use to:

- build skills
- find employment.



We want to support more Autistic people to be managers and leaders of organisations.



We want to improve the services that support Autistic students, their families and carers to speak up about:

- what they are going through at school
- what they need.



We want to work to stop the discrimination of Autistic people at all levels of education.

This includes stopping people from treating Autistic people badly.



## 3. Good supports for Autistic people



We want Autistic people to get good:

- supports
- services.



We also want Autistic people to be able to get an Autism diagnosis:

- quickly
- easily.

### Why this outcome area is important

When Autistic people get a diagnosis quickly and easily, they:



- can get support as soon as possible
- live healthier lives
- are less likely to have issues with their mental health.

## How Autistic people experience this outcome area



Many Autistic children get a diagnosis when they are 6 years old.



But it is possible to get a diagnosis as early as 18 months old.



An early diagnosis means Autistic people are more likely to get better results at:

- school
- work.



They are also more likely to connect with other people.



But it is not easy to get an Autism diagnosis.



Autistic people often have to wait a long time to get a diagnosis.



And health professionals often have different ways of doing the diagnosis.



It can also be hard for Autistic people to get the supports they need after they get a diagnosis.

For example, they might have to get support from many different places.

## How we plan to improve this outcome area



We want to work with health professionals to improve the way people get a diagnosis.

We want to make resources about getting a diagnosis.



We will make them for:

- Autistic people
- their families and carers.

We also want to make resources for health professionals.



These resources will explain how to provide supports to Autistic people in the right way.



We want to work to improve the way Autistic people find and use supports.

This includes Autistic people who live far away from cities and towns.



We want to support people with **lived experience** of Autism to deliver supports to Autistic people.



When you have lived experience of Autism, you:

- have Autism
- know what life can be like for Autistic people
- can tell your story to help others.



We want to work to make a tool to support Autistic people to make decisions about their lives.



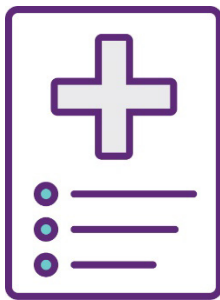
We will use the Strategy when we work with state and territory governments.

## 4. Health and mental health



The Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) is writing a plan to improve the health and mental health of:

- Autistic people
- their families and carers.



It is called the National Roadmap to Improve the Health and Mental Health of Autistic People in Australia.

In this document, we call it the Roadmap.



The Roadmap will be separate to the Strategy.



This will let the Australian Government look more closely at how to improve the health and mental health of:

- Autistic people
- their families and carers.

DoHAC are making the Roadmap with:



- Autistic people



- their families and carers



- people who work with Autistic people.



They are also working with groups of people who will make sure the Roadmap works well.

# What happens next

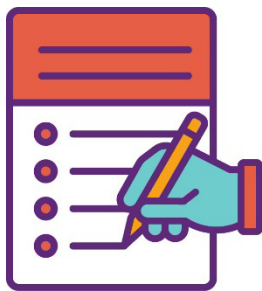


We will make an action plan for each of our outcome areas.



The action plans will explain what we will do to improve the outcome area.

We will work with the community to:



- make the action plans



- deliver the Strategy.



We will work with:



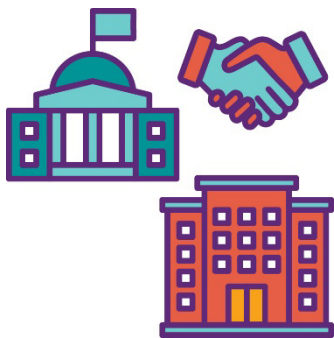
- Autistic people



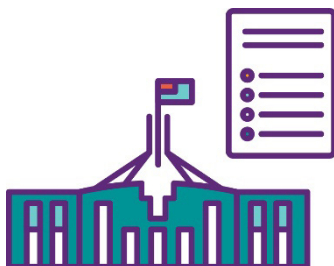
- their families and carers



- researchers.



We will also work with governments and organisations who make **policies**.



A policy is:

- a government plan for how to do things
- where rules come from.

# Questions for you



We wrote 3 questions for you.



You don't have to answer any of our questions if you don't want to.

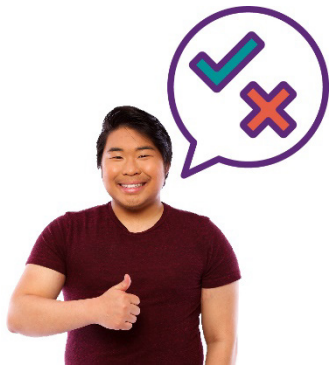
You can answer:



- all our questions



- some of our questions.



There is no right or wrong answer.



You can send us your answers in an email.

**AutismPolicy@dss.gov.au**



You can also email us to learn more about how to tell us what you think.

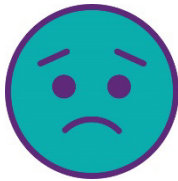


**1.** How well do you think this draft Strategy will do what Autistic people:

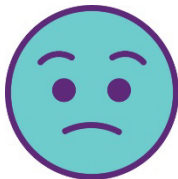
- need?
- hope for?



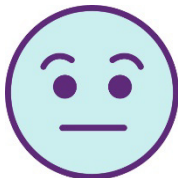
Please mark one box below that is true for you.



It won't work at all



It will work a little bit



It will work okay



It will work a lot



It will work completely



I don't know



**2.** Is there anything you think is missing from this draft of the Strategy?



You can write your answer in the box below.



**3.** Is there anything you want to say about how we could improve this draft of the Strategy?

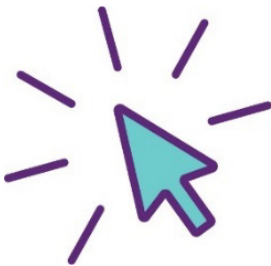


You can write your answer in the box below.

# Contact us



You can contact us for more information about the Strategy.



You can visit our website.

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

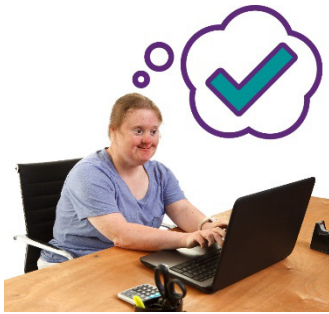


You can send us an email.

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

# Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



## **Accessible**

When something is accessible, it is easy to:

- find and use
- understand.



## **Attitudes**

Your attitude is what you:

- think
- feel
- believe.



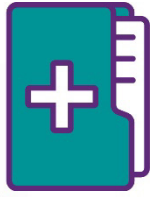
## **Autism**

Autism can affect how you:

- think
- feel
- communicate
- connect and deal with others.



## Diagnosis



A diagnosis is when a doctor:

- checks your health
- says what condition they think you have.



## Discrimination

Discrimination is when someone treats you unfairly because of a part of who you are.

This includes how services treat you.



## Draft

A draft is a document that isn't finished.

Some things in a draft might change later.

## Employment



Employment means you:

- have a job
- go to work
- get paid.

## Inclusive



When the community is inclusive, everyone:

- can take part
- feels like they belong.

## Lived experience



When you have lived experience of Autism, you:

- have Autism
- know what life can be like for Autistic people
- can tell your story to help others.

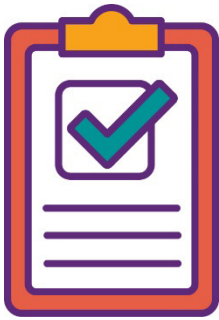
## Media



Media is a way of getting information.

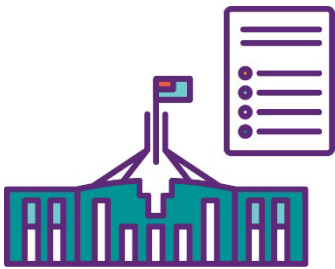
Parts of the media include:

- TV
- the Internet
- social media, like Facebook.



## Outcomes

Outcomes are important results we want to achieve.



## Policy

A policy is:

- a government plan for how to do things
- where rules come from.



## Principles

Principles are important ideas we should always think about.



## Rights

Rights are rules about how people must treat you:

- fairly
- equally.



## Strategy

A strategy is a government plan for how we will do things in the future.



## Vision

A vision is what we want the future to be like.



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