



Government of  
South Australia

# SA Autism Strategy Action Plan 2025–2029

*Building knowledge,  
understanding and belonging*



## Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Human Services acknowledges and respects Aboriginal peoples as the state's first people. The department recognises Aboriginal peoples as traditional owners and occupants of lands and waters in South Australia.

We acknowledge that the spiritual, social, cultural and economic practices of Aboriginal peoples come from their traditional lands and waters, and that the cultural and heritage beliefs, languages and laws are still of importance today.

We are committed to ensuring that the needs and aspirations of Autistic Aboriginal peoples are incorporated in the design, development and implementation of this Action Plan.

## Language and terminology

The department acknowledges that language is an important factor in identity and a personal preference, where different languages and terminology exist within the neurodivergent community.

Every Autistic person is an individual with unique qualities, strengths and needs.

Feedback provided throughout the consultation process highlighted that many Autistic people prefer identity-first language. Based on feedback during consultation, and for the purposes of this plan, we use identity-first language (i.e. Autistic person) rather than person-first language (i.e. person with autism).

The term Aboriginal has been used throughout this document to reference all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The department acknowledges and respects this preference of the South Australian Aboriginal community in written and spoken language.

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## Introduction

The South Australian Autistic and autism communities have long advocated for improved knowledge and understanding, support and acceptance of Autistic people. In response, the Government of South Australia conducted extensive consultation with the Autistic and autism community to shape the development of the first SA Autism Strategy 2024–2029 (the Strategy).

The Strategy, launched in June 2024, is the Government of South Australia's commitment to addressing the barriers and challenges raised by Autistic people, their families and carers across all aspects of life.

The SA Autism Strategy Action Plan 2025–2029 (Action Plan) outlines the actions which the Government of South Australia will take to respond to the commitments made within the Strategy. This Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the Strategy, which can be accessed on the department's website at [autismstrategy.sa.gov.au](https://autismstrategy.sa.gov.au).

## Interactions with other initiatives

There are many disability inclusion initiatives in progress at the state, local and national government levels, as well as internationally. For meaningful change to take place, the Strategy must align with and support existing and emerging initiatives to ensure the needs of the diverse Autistic and autism communities are effectively addressed.

In particular, the State Disability Inclusion Plan, led by the Department of Human Services, works alongside and interacts with the Strategy to reduce duplication of efforts, whilst ensuring the needs of the disability and neurodivergent communities are met. This can be found on the Inclusive SA website at [inclusive.sa.gov.au/SDIP](https://inclusive.sa.gov.au/SDIP).

The National Autism Strategy was launched in early 2025 following a consultation period and outlines a framework to create a safe and inclusive society for Autistic people in all aspects of life in Australia. The associated National Autism Strategy First Action Plan outlines the steps the Australian Government is taking to deliver on the commitments made within the National Autism Strategy. Both the National Autism Strategy and the National Autism Action Strategy First Action Plan are available on the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing website at [health.gov.au/our-work/national-autism-strategy](https://health.gov.au/our-work/national-autism-strategy).

The National Autism Strategy supports and aligns with the South Australian Strategy. State-based actions arising from the National Autism Strategy will continue to be monitored to ensure reporting can be implemented through the Action Plan, and to ensure alignment of both the state and national strategies.

## Implementation and reporting

The Action Plan is a living document to ensure initiatives continue to meet the shifting needs and priorities of the Autistic and autism community.

State government agencies will report annually on actions they lead as part of the Action Plan.

As other disability reforms are underway over the life of the Action Plan, state government agencies have the opportunity to review, evolve and develop initiatives as part of the reporting process.

The Department of Human Services will prepare a report on the progress of actions led by state government agencies, which will be published alongside the State Disability Inclusion Plan reporting.

The actions will report on quantitative (data, statistics, total number) or qualitative (projects, outcomes, experiences) measures.

## Intersectionality

It is important to acknowledge the intersectionality between an Autistic person and other experiences of structural and systemic discrimination, where an Autistic person may belong to different population groups and may be subject to overlapping disadvantages.

To address this, state government agencies must embed inclusion into actions, initiatives, policies and services with diverse groups in mind.

Initiatives are designed to support Autistic people broadly across intersecting identities, even where actions are not explicitly stated to support a targeted priority group.

## Voices of lived experience

This Action Plan has been developed in consultation and collaboration with the South Australian Autistic and autism communities through the State Autism Strategy Advisory Committee. We acknowledge and value the contributions, insights, lived experiences, expertise and advice contributed from Autistic people, their families, carers, advocates and representatives towards the development of the Action Plan.

Where relevant, state government agencies will collaborate with the Autistic and autism community during the planning and development of their initiatives and programs to ensure voices of lived experience are embedded into the Action Plan.

## Focus Areas and commitments summary

The emerging themes identified throughout consultation processes have set the basis upon which the Strategy's seven priority areas were designed. These are called Focus Areas.

Under each of the seven Focus Areas, a set of commitments have been made outlining the Government of South Australia's response across the five-year lifespan of the Strategy. There are 25 commitments in total across the Focus Areas.

The Action Plan contains the actions which the Government of South Australia will complete to address these commitments. The following is a summary of the Focus Areas and the commitments made within each.

### FOCUS AREA 1: PATHWAYS TO DIAGNOSIS

**Objective: We want to create a clear and equitable approach to diagnosis in South Australia.**

Actions made under Focus Area 1 aim to address the experiences raised during consultation with the Autistic and autism communities about the barriers and challenges faced when attempting to obtain a diagnosis, the associated costs and wait times, and the importance of identity and sense of belonging when receiving a diagnosis.

- Commitment 1: Create clearer and more consistent pathways to diagnosis for Autistic people of all ages.
- Commitment 2: Improve the availability and access of diagnosis, especially in regional and/or remote areas.
- Commitment 3: Consider ways to reduce the occurrence of undiagnosed autism amongst girls and women and within the Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- Commitment 4: Improve the post-diagnostic referral process and accessibility of accurate information and resources.

### FOCUS AREA 2: POSITIVE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

**Objective: We want the South Australian public education system to champion Autistic children and students to thrive in the educational environment, to receive the right supports for them, and feel empowered to succeed.**

Actions made under Focus Area 2 aim to improve the educational experiences of Autistic children and young people by addressing bullying and discrimination, and addressing the need for flexibility and neurodiversity-affirming supports across all education settings.

- Commitment 1: Improve environments to support the inclusion of Autistic children and young people in our preschools, primary and secondary school settings.



- Commitment 2: Improve the knowledge and understanding of autism amongst our educators, support staff and those connected to our education and care settings.
- Commitment 3: Identify ways to improve transition pathways between educational settings and beyond school.
- Commitment 4: Implement neurodiversity-affirming supports and strategies, tailored to the individual, to ensure Autistic children and students receive the right supports for them.

### FOCUS AREA 3: THRIVING IN THE WORKPLACE

**Objective: We want a diverse, inclusive and welcoming South Australian workforce where the strengths and skills of Autistic people flourish.**

Actions made under Focus Area 3 aim to address the challenges experienced by Autistic people within the workplace, including the lack of understanding about autism, gaining and retaining meaningful and lasting employment, the need for flexible workplace adjustments, and the impact on wellbeing to ensure that the public sector workforce is inclusive and supportive.

- Commitment 1: Improve knowledge, understanding and awareness of autism across the workforce.
- Commitment 2: Create an accessible, inclusive and welcoming public sector where Autistic people can thrive.
- Commitment 3: Increase opportunities for Autistic people to gain meaningful and lasting employment.
- Commitment 4: Consider alternative employment initiatives when transitioning from education to employment.

### FOCUS AREA 4: ACCESS TO SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

**Objective: We want a clearer, more consistent and accessible service system where Autistic people and their families and carers can access the support they need, when they need it.**

Actions under Focus Area 4 aim to improve understanding within service systems and supports for Autistic people, as well as their families and carers. This includes enhancing support both before and after diagnosis, with a focus on helping people navigate services, access information and communicate using various accessible formats.

- Commitment 1: Develop a centralised state information system to support access and navigation of available supports and services.
- Commitment 2: Improve the knowledge and understanding of autism amongst professional staff.
- Commitment 3: Work with organisations to ensure evidence and research on autism can be effectively and efficiently translated into practice.
- Commitment 4: Ensure neurodiversity-affirming and culturally appropriate services and supports are available.

## FOCUS AREA 5: PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMUNITY

**Objective: We want a truly inclusive South Australia where Autistic people can meaningfully participate in the community without restriction.**

Actions made under Focus Area 5 aim to address feedback from the Autistic and autism communities regarding their experiences accessing supports and services, the need for accessible and sensory-friendly spaces in the community and the importance of recognising the diversity of Autistic experiences.

- Commitment 1: Consider how the built environment may impact Autistic people and identify opportunities for improvement across current and future infrastructure projects.
- Commitment 2: Identify ways to improve accessible transport options and the accessibility of public spaces and venues, including signage and wayfinding tools.
- Commitment 3: Partner with organisations, sporting clubs, local councils and community services to support inclusive initiatives for Autistic people of all ages.

## FOCUS AREA 6: ACCESS TO HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Objective: We want to address the barriers Autistic people and their families continue to face in accessing health and mental health services.**

Actions made under Focus Area 6 aim to address the need for increased training for health and mental health services staff, improved recognition of co-existing medical conditions, greater flexibility to book and attend appointments and greater awareness and understanding of Autistic-qualities for first responders and emergency services staff.

- Commitment 1: Improve the knowledge, understanding and acceptance of autism amongst health practitioners, medical staff and first responders.
- Commitment 2: Improve the experiences of Autistic people of all ages navigating and engaging in health and mental health services.
- Commitment 3: Improve the accessibility of health and mental health services, especially in regional and remote communities.



## FOCUS AREA 7: INTERACTIONS WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

**Objective: We want to improve the experiences of Autistic people coming into contact with the criminal and youth justice systems.**

Actions made under Focus Area 7 aim to address the barriers and challenges raised by the Autistic and autism communities relating to lack of awareness and understanding of staff working in the criminal justice system, the importance of providing information for Autistic people to understand police and court processes and the overrepresentation of undiagnosed Autistic people in criminal justice settings.

- Commitment 1: Improve the knowledge and understanding of autism across the criminal and youth justice systems.
- Commitment 2: Ensure services and supports provided in community and custodial justice settings are responsive to the needs of Autistic people.
- Commitment 3: Create autism inclusive environments within criminal justice settings.

### Timeline of implementation

The Action Plan is a living document that can respond to the shifting priorities of the Autistic and autism communities.

Some of the actions listed within the Focus Areas are aimed to be addressed within the first 12 months of implementation, whilst others are longer term or ongoing targets that will be addressed over the duration of the plan.

Each Focus Area is broken down into three stages of delivery:

- **Immediate actions - first 12 months:** These actions are aimed to be addressed within the first 12 months of the implementation of the Action Plan to improve supports for the Autistic and autism communities.
- **Staged actions – 2026 to 2029:** These actions are longer-term targets that will be staged from 2026 to 2029 (the duration of the plan), ensuring the services and supports provided to Autistic people in South Australia are meaningful and measurable.
- **Ongoing actions:** These actions are ongoing targets that will be addressed over the life of the plan and beyond, ensuring services and supports are reviewed and updated to reflect the needs of the Autistic and autism communities.

## Immediate actions – first 12 months

### FOCUS AREA 1: PATHWAYS TO DIAGNOSIS

#### Commitment 1:

**Create clearer and more consistent pathways to diagnosis for Autistic people of all ages.**

#### Target

Review the autism assessment and diagnosis landscape in South Australia.

#### Action

Conduct a review of the autism assessment and diagnosis landscape to inform future projects.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

#### Action

Establish the SA Autism Assessment and Diagnosis Advisory Group to bring together representatives in medical professions to provide advice regarding opportunities to improve autism assessment and diagnosis in South Australia.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

#### Target

Raise public awareness regarding diagnostic pathways and ensure all information and resources are accessible and easy to navigate.

#### Action

Provide updates through the Women's Information Service and Haven Community Partners to support women seeking clear, accessible information on pathways and requirements for autism diagnosis, including on funding rebates.

Lead: Department of Human Services

#### Target

Implement early intervention screening programs with autism specialists to support Autistic people.

#### Action

Scope opportunities for specialist services to have a presence on a higher education campus and build referral pathways to support Autistic students in both metropolitan and regional areas.

Lead: TAFE SA

**Commitment 3:**

**Consider ways to reduce the occurrence of undiagnosed autism amongst girls and women and within the Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.**

**Target**

Provide updated resources and information for staff to better understand and support people seeking autism diagnostic services.

**Action**

Develop an updated Inclusive Advice Guide to equip site leaders and key staff with clear, culturally safe and practical guidance to support Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse families and young people navigating the autism assessment process.

Lead: Department for Education

**Action**

Incorporate Working with Diversity information and/or workshop sessions into the Child and Family Support System (CFSS) Community of Practice, including about disability and autism, to support staff working with diverse cohorts.

Lead: Department of Human Services

**Target**

Provide updated resources and information for staff to better understand and support people seeking autism diagnostic services.

**Action**

Review and update the Practice Guide on Autism and Girls to ensure it provides autism inclusive guidance to school staff that accurately reflects the experiences and needs of Autistic girls in preschool and school settings.

Lead: Department for Education

**Commitment 4:**

**Improve the post-diagnostic referral process and accessibility of accurate information and resources.**

**Target**

Develop clear and accessible resources for Autistic people accessing post-diagnostic services and supports.

**Action**

Develop an information sheet about further services and supports for Autistic people post-diagnosis.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

**Target**

Ensure training and resources on post-diagnostic services and supports are continually updated.

**Action**

Develop a webinar to equip child protection case workers, family-based carers and child protection residential carers with an understanding of how to support Autistic children and young people who are in care.

Lead: Department for Child Protection

**Action**

Enhance assessment processes that support the identification of autism and/or disability needs for children referred to Child and Family System Pathways Services.

Lead: Department of Human Services

## FOCUS AREA 2: POSITIVE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

### **Commitment 1:**

**Improve environments to support the inclusion of Autistic children and young people in our preschools, primary and secondary school settings.**

#### **Target**

Improve in-classroom supports for Autistic students to support their individual needs.

#### **Action**

Conclude and evaluate the trial of three (3) models of increasing intensity across nine (9) standalone secondary school sites that have Autistic students transitioning into Year 7.

Lead: Department for Education

### **Commitment 2:**

**Improve the knowledge and understanding of autism amongst our educators, support staff and those connected to our education and care settings.**

#### **Target**

Provide Autism Awareness and Understanding training to educators in preschool, primary and secondary school settings in South Australia.

#### **Action**

Develop and deliver online professional development on how to support Autistic children and young people for South Australia preservice and in-service teachers.

Lead: Department for Education

### **Commitment 3:**

**Identify ways to improve the transition between educational settings and beyond school.**

#### **Target**

Embed autism inclusion into policies and procedures.

#### **Action**

Develop pilot resources to make neurodiversity-affirming changes in policies and processes to improve the transition between primary, secondary schools and other school environments at three public schools as part of the Autism Inclusion in Secondary Schools initiative.

Lead: Department for Education

#### **Target**

Develop supports for Autistic students during transition phases between school settings.

#### **Action**

Improvements made to the orientation and transition experience to Vocational Education and Training (VET) higher education for Autistic students, their families and carers.

Lead: TAFE SA

**Target**

Collaborate with stakeholders to support Autistic students to transition between secondary education settings and higher education.

**Action**

Engage with industries to raise awareness and understanding among South Australia's key employers about providing career opportunities to Autistic students.

Lead: Department for Education

**Commitment 4:**

**Implement neurodiversity-affirming supports and strategies, tailored to the individual, to ensure Autistic children and students receive the right supports for them.**

**Target**

Explore strategies that are neurodiversity-affirming and focus on supporting Autistic students and their families and carers.

**Action**

Trial eligible school students to access autism assessments in public schools at no cost.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) and Department for Education



## FOCUS AREA 3: THRIVING IN THE WORKPLACE

### **Commitment 1:**

**Improve knowledge, understanding and awareness of autism across the workforce.**

#### **Target**

Ensure public sector employees undertake Autism Awareness and Understanding training.

#### **Action**

Refresh digital training project in autism awareness and understanding to incorporate current best practice knowledge to target understanding and inclusion across public sector employment.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

#### **Target**

Increase awareness of autism across the public sector workforce and the strengths and benefits of employing Autistic people.

#### **Action**

Promote awareness of hidden disability, including autism, for public sector employees.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

### **Commitment 2:**

**Create an accessible, inclusive and welcoming public sector where Autistic people can thrive.**

#### **Target**

Embed autism inclusion into workplace policies and practices.

#### **Action**

Review and update the Guideline of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment: Recruitment to ensure South Australian Public Sector recruitment processes are inclusive of Autistic employees and free from bias.

Lead: Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment

#### **Target**

Promote autism inclusion across the public sector.

#### **Action**

Improve public awareness of the benefits of employing Autistic people through the delivery of the multimedia Autism Works campaign across South Australia.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

**Commitment 4:**

**Consider alternative employment initiatives when transitioning from education to employment.**

**Target**

Collaborate with service providers which support Autistic people transitioning to employment.

**Action**

In collaboration with Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, develop and promote information for hiring managers about how applicants who are registered with a disability employment service provider can apply for vacancies through the iWorkforSA website at [iworkfor.sa.gov.au](http://iworkfor.sa.gov.au).

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) and Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment

## FOCUS AREA 4: ACCESS TO SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

### **Commitment 3:**

**Work with organisations to ensure evidence and research on autism can be effectively and efficiently translated into practice.**

#### **Target**

Embed autism inclusion into programs, supports and services.

#### **Action**

Develop a guide that focuses on supporting practitioners working with children and families of present with disability and/or neurodivergence, inclusive of autism-specific information.

Lead: Department of Human Services

#### **Action**

Review and adapt existing information and programs to address the identified needs of parents and carers of Autistic children and young people, supported by data and lived experience groups.

Lead: Department of Human Services

### **Commitment 4:**

**Ensure neurodiversity-affirming and culturally appropriate services and supports are available.**

#### **Target**

Improve data capturing strategies for diverse cohorts of people accessing state government services and supports.

#### **Action**

Report on data, capturing the diverse student community within higher education to inform future initiatives, ensuring data and reporting is confidential.

Lead: TAFE SA

## FOCUS AREA 5: PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMUNITY

### Commitment 1:

**Consider how the built environment may impact Autistic people and identify opportunities for improvement across current and future infrastructure projects.**

#### Target

Ensure that accessibility and inclusion is considered from the very beginning of the planning process.

#### Action

Review the Security Design Standards to incorporate viable solutions for alarms in buildings where people may have sensory needs.

Lead: Department for Education

#### Target

Improve the standardisation of autism inclusion in infrastructure projects.

#### Action

Collaborate to develop autism inclusive guidelines that are available publicly to ensure the needs of Autistic people are being met throughout the planning, development and management of new infrastructure projects.

Lead: Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing and Department for Infrastructure and Transport

#### Target

Collaborate with the Autistic and autism community to inform infrastructure projects.

#### Action

Update the Community Engagement Charter Toolkit to provide guidance for consulting the autism community on future planning decisions.

Lead: Department for Housing and Urban Development

#### Action

Consult with Property Council of Australia to inform inclusive design.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

**Commitment 2:**

**Identify ways to improve accessible transport options and the accessibility of public spaces and venues, including signage and wayfinding tools.**

**Target**

Collaborate with subject matter experts to ensure the needs of the Autistic and autism community are considered in the decision-making process.

**Action**

Collaborate on Driver Training Reform Bill to ensure the needs of the Autistic and autism community are considered during the reform process.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) and Department for Infrastructure and Transport

**Action**

Collaborate on Disability Parking Reform to ensure the needs of the Autistic and autism communities are considered during the reform process.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) and Department for Infrastructure and Transport

**Commitment 3:**

**Partner with organisations, sporting clubs, local councils and community services to support inclusive initiatives for Autistic people of all ages.**

**Target**

Improve new and existing programs and services to ensure they are accessible and inclusive to allow Autistic people to fully participate.

**Action**

Review current and potential inclusive initiatives that support community participation and social connection for Autistic people under the Department of Human Services Community Connections Program (CCP), for people aged 18-65.

Lead: Department of Human Services

**Action**

Review current and potential inclusive initiatives that support community participation for Autistic people within the programs offered by the Community and Partnerships team, including the Community and Neighbourhood Development Program, the Financial Wellbeing Program, the Youth Support and Development Program, and the Service to Aboriginal Youth Program.

Lead: Department of Human Services

**Action**

Review opportunities for the Sports Vouchers Plus program to be expanded to include other recreational sport and activities to support Autistic people.

Lead: Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing

**Action**

Provide funding for community and non-government organisations to implement inclusion initiatives through the Community Grants Program 2024.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

**Target**

Ensure sporting and community facilities support accessible and inclusive community participation.

**Action**

Ensure event organisers using government facilities provide for the needs of Autistic people and people with disability – including participants, officials and spectators.

Lead: Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing

**Action**

Work with State Sporting Organisations to ensure they have updated disability and/or neurodivergence policies and procedures for their sport at all levels.

Lead: Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing

**Action**

Explore funding opportunities to work with partners for the delivery of disability and autism awareness workshops with state sporting organisations and sporting clubs.

Lead: Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing



## FOCUS AREA 6: ACCESS TO HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

### Commitment 1:

**Improve the knowledge, understanding and acceptance of autism amongst health practitioners, medical staff and first responders.**

#### Target

Promote autism inclusion across health and mental health services.

#### Action

Develop and co-design a suite of resources to break down the barriers experienced by Autistic people accessing health services.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) and Department for Health and Wellbeing

#### Action

Collaborate with Metropolitan Fire Service to promote Hidden Disabilities fire truck and Autism Works public knowledge campaigns.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

#### Target

Provide autism awareness and understanding to healthcare professionals and first responders to effectively support Autistic people during emergency services.

#### Action

Deliver Autism Awareness and Understanding training to first responders, medical and health professionals across emergency services, including to SA Health, South Australian Ambulance Services and South Australian Police staff to better support Autistic people accessing health, mental health and emergency services.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

#### Action

Provide subject matter expertise for health and disability advocacy organisations.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

**Commitment 2:**

**Improve the experiences of Autistic people of all ages navigating and engaging in health and mental health services.**

**Target**

Ensure health and mental health services and supports are tailored to the individual.

**Action**

Improve the Connected Kidz navigation service, which supports navigation within health and supports.

Lead: Women's and Children's Health Network (WCHN)

**Target**

Consult with Autistic people and subject matter experts when developing and reviewing health and mental health supports, services and facilities.

**Action**

Develop resources in partnership with the Autistic and autism community and the Office for Autism relating to Hospital Emergency Departments.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) and Department for Health and Wellbeing

## FOCUS AREA 7: INTERACTIONS WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

### **Commitment 1:**

**Improve the knowledge and understanding of autism across the criminal and youth justice systems.**

#### **Target**

Provide Autism Awareness and Understanding training to correctional and custodial staff, including first responders to ensure Autistic people are supported when in contact with justice systems.

#### **Action**

Deliver mandatory Autism: an interactive training module for Australian Police to all police officers and police security officers.

Lead: South Australia Police

#### **Action**

Delivery of Autism Awareness and Understanding training modules to correctional and custodial staff.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

#### **Action**

Ensure the Autism Awareness online program and other diversity programs are made available to employees, regularly promoted and completion rates are tracked.

Lead: Courts Administration Authority

### **Commitment 2:**

**Ensure services and supports provided in community and custodial justice settings are responsive to the needs of Autistic people.**

#### **Target**

Ensure information and resources are accessible for Autistic people to access essential information.

#### **Action**

Ensure the Courts Administration Authority website is accessible and autism inclusive.

Lead: Courts Administration Authority

### **Commitment 3:**

**Create autism inclusive environments within criminal justice settings.**

#### **Target**

Consider how the built environment, including sound and lighting, can be adjusted to support Autistic people in contact with the justice systems.

#### **Action**

Finalise and implement a Lived Experience Policy to inform policy and practice in community and custodial settings.

Lead: Department for Correctional Services

## Staged actions – from 2026 to 2029

### FOCUS AREA 1: PATHWAYS TO DIAGNOSIS

#### Commitment 1:

**Create clearer and more consistent pathways to diagnosis for Autistic people of all ages.**

#### Target

Explore funding for means tested services to facilitate timely autism diagnostic assessment and the accessibility for vulnerable and at-risk young people.

#### Action

Refer eligible school age children and young people in care who are on a waitlist for autism assessment to the service (Solasta), under the funded grant to undertake 100 autism assessments.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

Target Date: 2026

#### Commitment 4:

**Improve the post-diagnostic referral process and accessibility of accurate information and resources.**

#### Target

Ensure training and resources on post-diagnostic services and supports are continually updated.

#### Action

Develop and implement a pilot program to assess the delivery of post-diagnostic supports for children and young people who have received a diagnosis through the Autism and Assessment Diagnosis project.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

Target Date: 2026

## FOCUS AREA 2: POSITIVE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

### Commitment 1:

**Improve environments to support the inclusion of Autistic children and young people in our preschools, primary and secondary school settings.**

#### Target

Improve in-classroom supports for Autistic students to support their individual needs.

#### Action

Continue to invest funding for access to an Autism Inclusion Teacher in public primary schools across South Australia.

Lead: Department for Education

Target Date: 2026

#### Action

Deploy School Services Officer (SSO) to improve in classroom supports and learning experiences for students.

Lead: Department for Education

Target Date: 2026

#### Target

Develop accessible educational settings to support student learning outcomes.

#### Action

Develop a publicly available 'Good Design Guide' for the fit out of learning environments that is evidence informed. This includes retreat and sensory spaces that provide for self-regulation and privacy as well as passive supervision, fit out, equipment, lighting, mechanical services and acoustics.

Lead: Department for Housing and Urban Development and Department for Education

Target Date: 2027

### Commitment 2:

**Improve the knowledge and understanding of autism amongst our educators, support staff and those connected to our education and care settings.**

#### Target

Provide Autism Awareness and Understanding training to educators in preschool, primary and secondary school settings in South Australia.

#### Action

Provide support to educators within the Autism Inclusion Teacher program to provide subject matter expertise and continuing education on autism awareness and understanding.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

Target Date: 2026

**Target**

Improve the training and supports provided to educators in higher education settings.

**Action**

Collaborate with South Australian universities to deliver the Diverse Classroom project, preparing newly qualified teachers with training in autism awareness and understanding.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) and Department for Education

Target Date: 2026

**Commitment 3:**

**Identify ways to improve the transition between educational settings and beyond school.**

**Target**

Embed autism inclusion into policies and procedures.

**Action**

Identify and promote successful inclusive practices, policies and strategies for Autistic students in primary and secondary schools that can be adapted and implemented across public schools in South Australia.

Lead: Department for Education

Target Date: 2026

**Target**

Collaborate with stakeholders to support Autistic students to transition between secondary education settings and higher education.

**Action**

Develop information sharing processes between TAFE SA and schools to ensure Autistic students have consistent continuity of support during transition.

Lead: TAFE SA

Target Date: 2026

**Commitment 4:**

**Implement neurodiversity-affirming supports and strategies, tailored to the individual, to ensure Autistic children and students receive the right supports for them.**

**Target**

Explore strategies that are neurodiversity-affirming and focus on supporting Autistic students and their families and carers.

**Action**

Provide neurodiversity training for educators using a trauma informed practice lens to increase safe learning environments in preschool and primary school settings.

Lead: Department for Education

Target Date: 2027



## FOCUS AREA 3: THRIVING IN THE WORKPLACE

### **Commitment 1:**

**Improve knowledge, understanding and awareness of autism across the workforce.**

#### **Target**

Improve data collection systems to effectively inform autism inclusion across the public sector.

#### **Action**

Explore opportunities to collect employee data on autism confidentially through public sector Human Resource Management Systems to better understand the number of Autistic people across the workforce and inform future initiatives.

Lead: Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment and Shared Services SA (Department of Treasury and Finance)

Target Date: 2028

### **Commitment 2:**

**Create an accessible, inclusive and welcoming public sector where Autistic people can thrive.**

#### **Target**

Promote autism inclusion across the public sector.

#### **Action**

Establish a Carers and Parents within Department for Infrastructure and Transport Community of Practice to provide supports to employees who are carers of Autistic people.

Lead: Department for Infrastructure and Transport

Target Date: 2026

#### **Target**

Develop strategies to improve the overall health and wellbeing of Autistic public sector employees.

#### **Action**

Consult with the Aboriginal Employment Teams and training providers about making the departmental Aboriginal Cultural Footprint program autism inclusive and neurodiversity-affirming to provide tailored and specific supports for Autistic Aboriginal employees.

Lead: Department for Infrastructure and Transport

Target Date: 2026

### Action

Consult with lived experience networks and stakeholders about how to provide tailored and specific supports for Autistic employees from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Lead: Department for Infrastructure and Transport

Target Date: 2026

### Action

In consultation with the Office for Autism, develop a 'Toolbox' resource for building designers to support inclusive design for employees with a disability and neurodivergent employees.

Lead: Department for Infrastructure and Transport and Department for Housing and Urban Development

Target Date: 2029

### Commitment 3:

**Increase opportunities for Autistic people to gain meaningful and lasting employment.**

### Target

Develop programs and resources that support Autistic people transition into meaningful employment in the public sector.

### Action

Deliver the Autism Works in the Community Grants Program 2025 to improve employment opportunities for Autistic people.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

Target Date: 2026

### Action

Deliver programs that target diversity and inclusion for Autistic people to gain practical workplace experience while undertaking higher education to support them into employment long-term.

Lead: All state government agencies

Target Date: 2029

### Action

Review and implement opportunities for supported transition into employment programs for Autistic people transitioning into employment in the public sector to receive tailored supports, ensuring that Autistic people are supported initially and ongoing.

Lead: All state government agencies

Target Date: 2029

**Action**

Establish a Disability and Neurodivergence Employment Coordinator position to provide better outcomes for Autistic employees.

Lead: Department for Infrastructure and Transport

Target Date: 2029

**Target**

Provide alternative workplace training and volunteer options that support Autistic people entering the public sector workforce.

**Action**

Scope updating the Guideline of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment: Volunteers to include information that supports state government agencies to consider volunteering opportunities for Autistic people.

Lead: Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment

Target Date: 2027

**Action**

Review and implement alternative and accessible workplace training options to support Autistic employees, including in a range of accessible formats and learning styles.

Lead: All state government agencies

Target Date: 2029

**Target**

Improve inclusive workplace practices and strategies which support Autistic people through all stages of career progression in the public sector.

**Action**

Develop and implement a range of resources for the Government of South Australia to use during the recruitment process to provide practical job support for Autistic applicants, including a range of accessible communication methods, clear role requirements and interview preparation supports.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

Target Date: 2026

**Target**

Collaborate with service providers to increase opportunities for Autistic people.

**Action**

Scope opportunities to connect public sector agencies with Autistic job seekers or employment providers/social enterprises.

Lead: Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment

Target Date: 2027

**Commitment 4:**

**Consider alternative employment initiatives when transitioning from education to employment.**

**Target**

Collaborate with service providers which support Autistic people transitioning to employment.

**Action**

In collaboration with Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, explore a whole of government partnership with a panel of local disability employment services to promote available Autistic candidates to work in the public sector.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) and Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment

Target Date: 2026

**Target**

Develop programs or supported pathways for Autistic students transitioning from education settings to employment across the public sector.

**Action**

In collaboration with Office for Autism, scope opportunities for increased support to access diagnostic services and training support for Aboriginal public sector trainees.

Lead: Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment and Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

Target Date: 2027

## FOCUS AREA 4: ACCESS TO SUPPORT AND SERVICES

### **Commitment 1:**

**Develop a centralised state information system to support access and navigation of available supports and services.**

#### **Target**

Ensure resources and information about supports and services are updated, easily accessible and autism inclusive.

#### **Action**

Develop a resource hub that supports knowledge, understanding, and awareness of autism and a centralised location for relevant information.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

Target Date: 2026

### **Commitment 2:**

**Improve the knowledge and understanding of autism amongst professional staff.**

#### **Target**

Involve the Autistic and autism community in feedback processes to inform the direction of supports and services.

#### **Action**

In consultation with Office for Autism, develop and implement a reporting process within the Ombudsman SA complaints management system to identify areas for improving accessibility.

Lead: Ombudsman SA (Attorney-General's Department)

Target Date: 2026

#### **Target**

Provide Autism Awareness and Understanding training to front-line workers to effectively support Autistic people accessing services.

#### **Action**

Deliver Autism Awareness and Understanding training to staff working with Autistic children in out-of-home care and their parents and caregivers.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

Target Date: 2026

**Target**

Involve the Autistic and autism community in feedback processes to inform the direction of supports and services.

**Action**

In collaboration with Office for Autism, develop and promote information about working with the Autistic and autism community during induction training, processes and onboarding.

Lead: Department for Education and Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

Target Date: 2026

**Commitment 3:**

**Work with organisations to ensure evidence and research on autism can be effectively and efficiently translated into practice.**

**Target**

Embed autism inclusion into programs, supports and services.

**Action**

Review digital training project to incorporate current best practice knowledge on autism and to support understanding and inclusion.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

Target Date: 2026

**Target**

Collaborate with subject matter experts when developing and implementing supports and services for Autistic people.

**Action**

Conduct a review of the Companion Card program in consultation with other states and territories offering the Card, medical professionals, and lived experience groups including the Autistic and autism communities.

Lead: Department of Human Services

Target Date: 2026

**Action**

Deliver the Australian Government-funded Inklings Project in South Australia.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

Target Date: 2027



**Commitment 4:**

**Ensure neurodiversity-affirming and culturally appropriate services and supports are available.**

**Target**

Improve existing services to ensure they are streamlined, effective and efficient to meet the individual needs of Autistic people.

**Action**

Review and implement opportunities to develop and embed standardised contractual requirements for Department of Human Services-funded services regarding autism inclusion into relevant future contracts and monitor through contract management processes.

Lead: Department of Human Services

Target Date: 2026

**Action**

Implement a disability consultant to provide professional support and mentoring to family service practitioners with assessment, case coordination and system navigation for Department of Human Services clients who are Autistic and/or have other disability.

Lead: Department of Human Services

Target Date: 2026

**Target**

Develop culturally specific supports for those who are accessing services and supports.

**Action**

Explore partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to co-design culturally specific supports for people with disability, including Autistic people.

Lead: Department of Human Services

Target Date: 2029

## FOCUS AREA 5: PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMUNITY

### Commitment 1:

**Consider how the built environment may impact Autistic people and identify opportunities for improvement across current and future infrastructure projects.**

#### Target

Improve the standardisation of autism inclusion in infrastructure projects.

#### Action

Conduct an audit of existing state government owned facilities, including physical assets, operations, and management, to include consideration of accessibility and inclusivity for all people, including Autistic people.

Lead: Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing

Target Date: 2027

#### Action

Improve the existing built environment on campuses to be more accessible, including sensory spaces.

Lead: TAFE SA

Target Date: 2029

#### Target

Ensure that accessibility and inclusion is considered from the very beginning of the planning process.

#### Action

Ensure employees are trained to provide advice to state government agencies on the application of best practice principles in relation to designing for the autism community.

Lead: Department for Housing and Urban Development

Target Date: 2026

### Commitment 2:

**Identify ways to improve accessible transport options and the accessibility of public spaces and venues, including signage and wayfinding tools.**

#### Target

Ensure public events are designed to be sensory-friendly and supportive so everyone can fully participate.

#### Action

Deliver the Sensory Bus Project to provide a sensory space at major government and non-government events across South Australia.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

Target Date: 2026

**Target**

Improve public spaces and venues to be accessible and inclusive of Autistic people.

**Action**

Review and include requirements around designing for the Autistic and autism community in state-based procurement guidelines.

Lead: Department of Treasury and Finance

Target Date: 2028

**Target**

Improve the accessibility of public transport systems to support Autistic people navigate their journey.

**Action**

Incorporate any relevant findings into the design and delivery of the Department of Human Services-funded Community Transport SA services to support access and inclusion of Autistic people.

Lead: Department of Human Services and Department for Infrastructure and Transport

Target Date: 2026

**Action**

Investigate the introduction of quiet carriages and/or services and spacious zones with window tinting, less stickers and advertising on public transport.

Lead: Department for Infrastructure and Transport

Target Date: 2029

**Action**

Investigate the introduction of seats on public transport that showcase not all disabilities are visible and the availability of badges that public transport users can wear to help promote understanding of hidden disabilities to other passengers that the individual may require additional support or consideration.

Lead: Department for Infrastructure and Transport

Target Date: 2029

**Action**

Promote the Try Before You Ride initiative to provide Autistic people, and/or people with disability who may not feel confident using public transport, and their support people, with a safe and supportive environment.

Lead: Department for Infrastructure and Transport

Target Date: 2029

**Commitment 3:**

**Partner with organisations, sporting clubs, local councils and community services to support inclusive initiatives for Autistic people of all ages.**

**Target**

Collaborate with the Autistic and autism community to ensure activities and services are autism inclusive.

**Action**

Amend SA Youth Week grant guidelines to require organisations to consider and/or collaborate with the Autistic and autism communities when planning and organising Youth Week activities and events.

Lead: Department of Human Services

Target Date: 2026

**Target**

Improve new and/or existing programs and services to ensure they are accessible and inclusive to allow Autistic people to fully participate.

**Action**

Consider scope and objectives of the Community Grants Program for 2025 which provides funding to community and non-government organisations to implement inclusion initiatives.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

Target Date: 2026

**Target**

Ensure sporting and community facilities support accessible and inclusive community participation.

**Action**

Provide information stalls at events that promote community engagement for Autistic people.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

Target Date: 2026

**Action**

Provide sensory spaces at major events across South Australia to better support autism inclusion at major events.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

Target Date: 2026

**Action**

Develop a training package for sporting organisations to assist them to implement adaptations needed for successful participation of Autistic children and young people.

Lead: Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing

Target Date: 2028

## FOCUS AREA 6: ACCESS TO HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

### **Commitment 2:**

**Improve the experiences of Autistic people of all ages navigating and engaging in health and mental health services.**

#### **Target**

Ensure health and mental health services provide services and supports that are tailored to the individual.

#### **Action**

Create pathways to support the transition from youth to adult hospitals and services, including for their families, carers and support people.

Lead: Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN) and Women's and Children's Health Network (WCHN)

Target Date: 2026

#### **Action**

Ensure resources and supports are provided to carers involved in the care planning of an Autistic person.

Lead: Local Health Networks

Target Date: 2026

#### **Action**

Partner with specialist health and mental health service providers to support the diverse student community in higher education across metropolitan, regional and remote campuses.

Lead: TAFE SA

Target Date: 2029

#### **Action**

Pilot the Hidden Disability Sunflower pathway to improve access to surgery and care.

Lead: Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN)

Target Date: 2026

### **Commitment 3:**

**Improve the accessibility of health and mental health services, especially in regional and remote communities.**

#### **Target**

Improve health and mental health service processes to ensure they are accessible.

#### **Action**

Build partnerships with external mental health services in the metropolitan and regional communities to improve referral pathways and access to services for Autistic students in higher education.

Lead: TAFE SA

Target Date: 2029

## FOCUS AREA 7: INTERACTIONS WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

### **Commitment 1:**

**Improve the knowledge and understanding of autism across the criminal and youth justice systems.**

#### **Target**

Improve the awareness of autism in justice settings to address misconceptions of Autistic qualities.

#### **Action**

Ensure Courts SA staff, including Youth Court staff, are given education and development opportunities to increase awareness of disabilities that affect children, young people, and families involved in criminal and youth justice systems or care and protection systems.

Lead: Courts Administration Authority

Target Date: 2026

#### **Action**

Consider implementing the Hidden Disabilities Program at different Courts Administration Authority sites.

Lead: Courts Administration Authority

Target Date: 2026

### **Commitment 2:**

**Ensure services and supports provided in community and custodial justice settings are responsive to the needs of Autistic people.**

#### **Target**

Enhance supports for Autistic people within the community and custodial setting, including supports to ensure Autistic people are informed of processes.

#### **Action**

Continue to implement Canine Therapy Companions, where possible, to support Autistic people in court proceeding processes.

Lead: Courts Administration Authority

Target Date: 2026

#### **Action**

Ensure Intervention Programs within the courts integrate treatment with the court process to provide support to court users, including Autistic people.

Lead: Courts Administration Authority

Target Date: 2026

**Commitment 3:**

**Create autism inclusive environments within criminal justice settings.**

**Target**

Collaborate with stakeholders and lived experience groups to ensure criminal justice settings are autism inclusive.

**Action**

Establish a Courts Administration Authority Community Reference Group to ensure Courts Administration Authority policies, processes and resources are developed with reference to the needs of diverse communities.

Lead: Courts Administration Authority

Target Date: 2026

**Action**

Identify appropriate professionals who can be engaged by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to provide communication assistance for Autistic victims and witnesses with complex communication needs, ensuring they can understand and communicate with the court.

Lead: Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Attorney-General's Department)

Target Date: 2026

**Action**

Consult with Department for Correctional Services and South Australia Police staff to provide subject matter expertise regarding autism.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) and Department for Correctional Services

Target Date: 2026

**Action**

As part of the three-year Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) plan, develop an ODPP Diversity and Inclusion Working Group to identify opportunities to ensure ODPP policies, processes and resources reflect to the needs of diverse communities.

Lead: Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Attorney-General's Department)

Target Date: 2026

**Target**

Provide supports and services in various formats to ensure Autistic people can access information about services, rights, informed decision-making and support inclusion.

**Action**

Develop resources for Autistic victims with written and visual information about the do's and don'ts at trials, to support verbal information provided.

Lead: Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Attorney-General's Department)

Target Date: 2026



## Ongoing actions

### FOCUS AREA 1: PATHWAYS TO DIAGNOSIS

#### Commitment 1:

**Create clearer and more consistent pathways to diagnosis for Autistic people of all ages.**

#### Target

Raise public awareness regarding diagnostic pathways and ensure all information and resources are accessible and easy to navigate.

#### Action

Develop and promote information, where appropriate, on autism to assist people and their families to access services, for example:

- assessment and diagnostic services
- counselling and support following a diagnosis
- autism and disability specific information
- supports for parents with disability, including autism.

Lead: All state government agencies

#### Commitment 2:

**Improve the availability and access of diagnosis, especially in regional and/or remote areas.**

#### Target

Expand autism assessment services and supports for children and young people and their family and carers, especially in regional and remote areas.

#### Action

Improve pathways to identify children and young people who require an autism assessment.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

#### Action

Assist carer and case worker understanding of the pathways to identify children and young people in care who require autism assessments.

Lead: Department for Child Protection

**Action**

Provide training to case workers delivering support in rural and remote areas to understand pathways for autism assessment for children and young people in care who have been identified.

Lead: Department for Child Protection

**Action**

Provide autism assessment and diagnosis referrals for young people connected with the youth justice system, and for family members receiving support from Safer Family Services through the Autism Assessment and Diagnostic Service.

Lead: Department of Human Services

**Commitment 4:**

**Improve the post-diagnostic referral process and accessibility of accurate information and resources.**

**Target**

Ensure training and resources on post-diagnostic services and supports are continually updated.

**Action**

Provide regular carer learning opportunities and forums to keep carers informed and updated of supports available for Autistic children and young people in care.

Lead: Department for Child Protection

**Target**

Develop clear and accessible resources for Autistic people accessing post-diagnostic services and supports.

**Action**

Ensure resources and websites provide clear and accessible information on how higher education students can access the support services they offer, and outline what those services are, even if they have not previously disclosed an autism diagnosis.

Lead: TAFE SA and Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

## FOCUS AREA 2: POSITIVE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

### Commitment 1:

**Improve environments to support the inclusion of Autistic children and young people in our preschool, primary and secondary school settings.**

#### Target

Develop accessible educational settings to support student learning outcomes.

#### Action

Ensure ongoing review and updating of Education and Care Facilities Design Standards to align with inclusive design requirements and make available on the public-facing website.

Lead: Department for Education

#### Action

Ensure existing preschools, schools or public sites are accessible to Autistic students where minor capital works and upgrades have been implemented via the 'Just in Time' principle.

Lead: Department for Education

#### Target

Improve autism inclusive supports that strengthen learning outcomes for Autistic students in higher education settings.

#### Action

Deliver and update, where relevant, the Inclusive Education Roadmap, a framework that is responsive to the diversity and variability of students, ensuring all learners have equitable opportunity to develop knowledge, understanding, skills and competency by:

- recognising individual learner strengths and capabilities
- accommodating individual learner requirements
- removing barriers to participation.

Lead: TAFE SA

#### Action

Establish in classroom supports and reasonable adjustments for Autistic students to support their individual needs.

Lead: TAFE SA

**Action**

Provide accessible and alternative formats to support Autistic students' learning. This includes course design, alternative formats on course content and learning materials on select resources.

Lead: TAFE SA

**Action**

Develop clear and accessible information on the safety and rights of Autistic students through existing resources and public-facing websites.

Lead: TAFE SA

**Commitment 2:**

**Improve the knowledge and understanding of autism amongst our educators, support staff and those connected to our education and care settings**

**Target**

Provide Autism Awareness and Understanding training to educators in preschool, primary, and secondary school settings in South Australia.

**Action**

Deliver Autism Awareness and Understanding training, information sessions, and resources provided to educators in preschool, primary, and secondary school settings.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) and Department for Education

**Target**

Improve the training and supports provided to educators in higher education settings.

**Action**

Support Registered Training Organisations that deliver subsidised training to effectively work and support Autistic students and provide inclusive learning environments.

Lead: Department of State Development

**Action**

Deliver Autism Awareness and Understanding training sessions to TAFE SA staff.

Lead: TAFE SA

**Commitment 3:**

**Identify ways to improve the transition between educational settings and beyond school.**

**Target**

Develop supports for Autistic students during transition phases between school settings.

**Action**

Expand the Disability Transition Program for students with a disability, including Autistic students, to increase the number of students in the program and support transition between the secondary school environment and the workplace or community.

Lead: Department for Education

**Action**

Develop and update, where relevant, inclusive and accessible information for Autistic students to support transitioning from secondary school settings to VET and higher education.

Lead: TAFE SA

**Target**

Collaborate with stakeholders to support Autistic students' transition between secondary education settings and higher education.

**Action**

Promote support services dedicated to inclusion and accessibility for current and prospective Autistic students transitioning from secondary school to VET, including through initiatives such as career expos.

Lead: TAFE SA

**Commitment 4:**

**Implement neurodiversity-affirming supports and strategies, tailored to the individual, to ensure Autistic children and students receive the right supports for them.**

**Target**

Explore strategies that are neurodiversity-affirming and focus on supporting Autistic students and their families and carers.

**Action**

Implement neurodiversity-affirming strategies for Autistic students that reduce stress, enhance wellbeing and lead to improved learning outcomes in higher education settings, including continued, tailored support through Disability Access and Inclusion Plans.

Lead: TAFE SA

**Action**

Create alternative learning environments and flexible learning options for Autistic students, including considerations for diverse communication styles and reasonable adjustments, in order to support a wider range of effective learning preferences for Autistic students. For example, implementing sensory spaces at each TAFE SA campus.

Lead: TAFE SA

**Action**

Implement flexible and alternative options, including online appointments, for Autistic students to connect with services that support student wellbeing through various formats.

Lead: TAFE SA

**Target**

Collaborate with the Autistic and autism community to ensure supports are effective and responsive to the individual need of Autistic students.

**Action**

Develop and update, where relevant, resources in collaboration with the Autistic community to enable Autistic and neurodivergent students to communicate their support needs.

Lead: Department for Education and TAFE SA

**Action**

Continue building community connections with disability support providers to improve access to information for Autistic students in higher education.

Lead: TAFE SA

## FOCUS AREA 3: THRIVING IN THE WORKPLACE

### Commitment 1:

**Improve knowledge, understanding and awareness of autism across the workforce.**

#### Target

Ensure public sector employees undertake Autism Awareness and Understanding training.

#### Action

Ensure in-person and online Autism Awareness and Understanding training is completed across public sector workforce.

Lead: All state government agencies

#### Action

Embed and update Autism Awareness and Understanding training across Government of South Australia learning management systems.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

#### Action

Share resources about autism in the workplace to support Autistic staff, including supporting reasonable adjustments, and the benefits of workplace inclusion.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

#### Target

Ensure senior management and executive leaders within the public sector are equipped with knowledge and understanding of autism across the public sector.

#### Action

Promote resources for managers and executives to support the inclusion of Autistic people in the workplace and employee retention.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

#### Target

Increase awareness of autism across the public sector workforce and the strengths and benefits of employing Autistic people.

#### Action

Outline the initiatives completed to promote autism inclusion in the workplace.

Lead: All state government agencies

### Action

Engage Autistic employees and employees with disability to provide advice and inform inclusion activities, including to assist in promoting days of significance.

Lead: All state government agencies

### Action

Coordinate the SA Public Sector Disability, Diversity and Inclusion Community of Practice and encourage cross-sector engagement and collaboration, and share insights related to improving knowledge, understanding and awareness of autism across the public sector.

Lead: Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment

### Action

Coordinate the South Australian Public Sector Neurodivergent Employee Network to support knowledge, awareness and understanding of autism in the public sector.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

### Target

Improve data collection systems to effectively inform autism inclusion across the public sector.

### Action

Collect data from Government of South Australia departments on the completion of Autism Awareness and Understanding training and report annually.

Lead: Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment

### Commitment 2:

**Create an accessible, inclusive and welcoming public sector where Autistic people can thrive.**

### Target

Embed autism inclusion into workplace policies and practices.

### Action

Share updated resources to support the Government of South Australia to implement autism inclusive recruitment practices to ensure Autistic applicants are supported throughout recruitment processes.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)



**Action**

Review recruitment policies and processes to ensure they support reasonable adjustments and are responsive to the alternative ways Autistic employees can engage throughout the recruitment and training processes.

Lead: All state government agencies

**Action**

Review and implement reasonable adjustments procedures and flexible workplace arrangements that support all staff, including Autistic employees and parents and carers of Autistic people.

Lead: All state government agencies

**Action**

Review and update, where applicable, new starter forms to include an opportunity to identify as Autistic and/or neurodivergent to enable more accurate reporting and awareness in the public sector workforce.

Lead: All state government agencies

**Action**

Review and update, where applicable, the Design Quality Handbook to support the inclusion of Autistic employees across public sector workspaces.

Lead: Department for Housing and Urban Development and Department for Infrastructure and Transport

**Target**

Promote autism inclusion across the public sector.

**Action**

Develop resources for Government of South Australia management on reasonable workplace adjustments to ensure they can support Autistic people in the public sector.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

**Action**

Maintain the South Australian Public Sector Neurodivergent Employee Network.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

**Target**

Develop strategies to improve the overall health and wellbeing of Autistic public sector employees.

**Action**

Identify appropriate mechanisms, including clear confidentiality, to ensure Autistic employees feel safe, supported and confident to disclose that they are Autistic at the commencement of employment and through the employment lifecycle.

Lead: All state government agencies

**Action**

Continue to promote and provide EAP services that are inclusive, culturally appropriate, neurodiversity-affirming and in a range of modes and formats to support the diverse communication styles of Autistic employees.

Lead: All state government agencies

**Action**

Review and update, where relevant, the SA Government Office Accommodation Guidelines and provide training to Department for Infrastructure and Transport staff to ensure public sector buildings are autism inclusive.

Lead: Department for Infrastructure and Transport

**Commitment 3:**

**Increase opportunities for Autistic people to gain meaningful and lasting employment**

**Target**

Provide alternative workplace training and volunteer options that support Autistic people entering the public sector workforce.

**Action**

Identify volunteering opportunities for Autistic people across all state government agencies.

Lead: All state government agencies

**Action**

Review existing peer support or mentoring programs to ensure they are inclusive of Autistic employees.

Lead: All state government agencies

**Action**

Deliver Autism Awareness and Understanding training to mentors supporting Autistic employees.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

**Target**

Improve inclusive workplace practices and strategies which support Autistic people through all stages of career progression in the public sector.

**Action**

Promote resources and/or practices for the Government of South Australia that support retention and career progression opportunities for Autistic people.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

**Action**

Increase participation of Autistic employees in South Australian Leadership Academy (SALA) programs for current and aspiring executives and ensure Autistic employees can achieve the same outcomes.

Lead: Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment

**Target**

Collaborate with service providers to increase opportunities for Autistic people.

**Action**

Deliver Autism Awareness and Understanding training to non-government sectors.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

**Action**

Consult and partner with peak bodies, where relevant, to provide a gap analysis on current recruitment procedures to make them more autism inclusive.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

**Commitment 4:**

**Consider alternative employment initiatives when transitioning from education to employment.**

**Target**

Develop programs or supported pathways for Autistic students transitioning from education settings to employment across the public sector.

**Action**

Review existing graduate programs to expand pathways for Autistic graduates from education settings to employment.

Lead: All state government agencies

**Action**

Ensure the VET for School Students policy is inclusive of Autistic students.

Lead: Department for Education

**Action**

Expand the Career Education and Pathways Strategy – Disability Transition Program to increase employment outcomes for Autistic students.

Lead: Department for Education

**Action**

Provide a range of career skills to aid Autistic students with the transition from education into employment.

Lead: TAFE SA

**Target**

Collaborate with service providers that support Autistic people transitioning to employment.

**Action**

Developing industry and employer partnerships to increase awareness about the skills and abilities of Autistic students to aid with future employment.

Lead: TAFE SA

## FOCUS AREA 4: ACCESS TO SUPPORT AND SERVICES

### **Commitment 1:**

**Develop a centralised state information system to support access and navigation of available supports and services.**

#### **Target**

Ensure resources and information about supports and services are updated, easily accessible and autism inclusive.

#### **Action**

Deliver or review initiatives, platforms and systems to connect Autistic people with information in various accessible formats across Government of South Australia supports and services.

Lead: All state government agencies

### **Commitment 2:**

**Improve the knowledge and understanding of autism amongst professional staff**

#### **Target**

Provide Autism Awareness and Understanding training to front-line workers to effectively support Autistic people accessing services.

#### **Action**

Deliver Autism Awareness and Understanding training across public sector workforce and representatives from major private sector employers.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

#### **Action**

Coordinate Autism Awareness and Understanding training for service providers funded by the Department of Human Services in order to support the delivery of inclusive services for Autistic people and the broader autism community.

Lead: Department of Human Services and Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

### **Commitment 3:**

**Work with organisations to ensure evidence and research on autism can be effectively and efficiently translated into practice.**

#### **Target**

Collaborate with subject matter experts when developing and implementing supports and services for Autistic people.

#### **Action**

Collaborate with autism-specific organisations, where relevant, when developing and implementing policies, supports and services for Autistic people.

Lead: All state government agencies

**Action**

Provide subject matter expertise in consultation with state government agencies to ensure Department of Human Services-led Disability Access and Inclusion Plans are autism inclusive.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

**Target**

Embed autism inclusion into programs, supports and services.

**Action**

Collaborate with Government of South Australia agencies to share ideas, strategies and projects that support best practices and culturally appropriate support services that support Autistic people.

Lead: Department of Human Services

**Target**

Collaborate with the Autistic and autism community throughout the planning, development and implementation phases to ensure services are neurodiversity-affirming and are effectively meeting the needs of Autistic people.

**Action**

Consult with reference groups and lived experience groups, where relevant, on autism-related matters to provide insights and guidance on identifying and addressing barriers to accessing services provided by the Government of South Australia.

Lead: All state government agencies

**Commitment 4:**

**Ensure neurodiversity-affirming and culturally appropriate services and supports are available.**

**Target**

Improve existing services to ensure they are streamlined, effective and efficient to meet the individual needs of Autistic people.

**Action**

Review and update, where relevant, the customer service areas and experiences to ensure Autistic people feel supported when accessing services.

Lead: All state government agencies

**Action**

Ensure all new services, operational programs, and policies are reviewed with an autism inclusive lens to ensure services are neurodiversity-affirming and culturally appropriate.

Lead: Department of Human Services

**Target**

Ensure a wide range of neurodiversity-affirming and culturally appropriate services and supports are available, including to Autistic people who do not yet have an autism diagnosis.

**Action**

In the development of new strategies and initiatives, the State Autism Strategy and/or Autism Charter will be linked and referenced, where appropriate.

Lead: All state government agencies

**Action**

Provide inclusive, accessible and responsive support services to students engaged in higher education.

Lead: TAFE SA

**Target**

Improve data capturing strategies of diverse cohorts of people accessing state government services and supports.

**Action**

When consulting to inform the development of new strategies and initiatives, personal identifying data will be collected where appropriate, to capture and consider the specific perspectives of the Autistic community.

Lead: All state government agencies

## FOCUS AREA 5: PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMUNITY

### Commitment 1:

**Consider how the built environment may impact Autistic people and identify opportunities for improvement across current and future infrastructure projects.**

#### Target

Ensure that accessibility and inclusion is considered from the very beginning of the planning process.

#### Action

Continually review and update the Education and Care Facilities Design Standards to ensure alignment with inclusive design requirements.

Lead: Department for Education

#### Target

Improve the standardisation of autism inclusion in infrastructure projects.

#### Action

Ensure accessibility and inclusivity for all people, including Autistic people, is considered from the very beginning of the planning process for all new sport and recreation facility development projects presented to government for funding consideration.

Lead: Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing

### Commitment 2:

**Identify ways to improve accessible transport options and the accessibility of public spaces and venues, including signage and wayfinding tools.**

#### Target

Improve public spaces and venues to be accessible and inclusive of Autistic people.

#### Action

Review customer service areas and facilities, including Service SA, Public Transport Authority and RiderSafe, and make autism inclusive supports available to customers accessing them.

Lead: Department for Infrastructure and Transport

#### Action

Consider alternative ways to manage physical queueing for services, such as Service SA, including offering a virtual experience and/or access to sensory or quiet rooms.

Lead: Department for Infrastructure and Transport

#### Action

Provide information, both in response to individual requests and through the Office for Autism website, to help the community understand the use of MLAK keys for accessing public facilities, such as toilets and changing rooms.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)



**Action**

Ensure signage and information is accessible and in a range of formats to be inclusive of Autistic students.

Lead: TAFE SA

**Action**

Conduct environmental audits on behalf of neurodivergent employees in the public sector.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

**Target**

Ensure public events are designed to be sensory-friendly and supportive so everyone can fully participate.

**Action**

Develop a toolkit to ensure community events are accessible and inclusive of all people, including Autistic people.

Lead: Department of Human Services

**Commitment 3:**

**Partner with organisations, sporting clubs, local councils and community services to support inclusive initiatives for Autistic people of all ages.**

**Target**

Collaborate with the Autistic and autism community to ensure activities and services are autism inclusive.

**Action**

Consult with the Autistic and autism community, where appropriate, when planning and organising events to ensure they are autism inclusive, such as the inclusion of breakout or sensory spaces.

Lead: All state government agencies

**Target**

Improve new and/or existing programs and services to ensure they are accessible and inclusive to allow Autistic people to fully participate.

**Action**

Partner with sporting organisations to provide opportunities for children and young people in care to participate in sport, including Autistic children and young people.

Lead: Department for Child Protection

**Action**

Consider how funding programs can be developed or amended to support inclusive sport programs, equipment purchases, and facility development projects.

Lead: Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing

## FOCUS AREA 6: ACCESS TO HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

### Commitment 1:

**Improve the knowledge, understanding and acceptance of autism amongst health practitioners, medical staff and first responders.**

#### Target

Provide Autism Awareness and Understanding training to healthcare professionals and first responders to effectively support Autistic people during emergency services.

#### Action

Deliver Autism Awareness and Understanding training to healthcare professionals.

Lead: Local Health Networks

#### Action

Continue updated delivery of Autism Awareness and Understanding training to first responders, and medical and health professionals across emergency services, including to SA Health, South Australian Ambulance Services and South Australian Police staff to better support Autistic people accessing health, mental health and emergency services.

Lead: Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet)

### Commitment 2:

**Improve the experiences of Autistic people of all ages navigating and engaging in health and mental health services.**

#### Target

Ensure health and mental health services provide services and supports that are tailored to the individual.

#### Action

Provide sensory toolboxes to volunteers through the Women's and Children's Hospital Foundation sensory toolbox project, allowing them to support sensory comfort for patients in a hospital setting.

Lead: Women's and Children's Health Network (WCHN)

#### Action

Review early intervention processes (Code Grey) to improve sensory comfort, reduce restrictive practices and reduce the need for Code Black.

Lead: Women's and Children's Health Network (WCHN)

**Action**

Review and update, where relevant, the strategies to provide proactive support for sensory needs and reduce distress in the Paediatric Emergency Department.

Lead: Women's and Children's Health Network (WCHN)

**Action**

Review and update, where relevant, information resources to ensure they are inclusive of Autistic people, including materials in languages other than English, translation services and Easy Read materials.

Lead: Department for Health and Wellbeing

**Target**

Consult with Autistic people and subject matter experts when developing and reviewing health and mental health supports, services, and facilities.

**Action**

Collaborate with Autistic people and people with lived experience of autism, where relevant, as consumer representatives in the planning, design, measurement, evaluation and improvement of health systems and services.

Lead: Local Health Networks

**Action**

Co-design, where relevant, with Autistic people and people with lived experience of autism, in the development and relocation of facilities, signage and wayfinding across hospital sites and services to ensure environments are inclusive for Autistic people.

Lead: Local Health Networks

## FOCUS AREA 7: INTERACTIONS WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

### **Commitment 1:**

**Improve the knowledge and understanding of autism across the criminal and youth justice systems.**

#### **Target**

Provide Autism Awareness and Understanding training to correctional and custodial staff, including first responders, to ensure Autistic people are supported when in contact with justice systems.

#### **Action**

Continue updated delivery of the mandatory Autism: an interactive training module for Australian Police to all police officers and police security officers.

Lead: South Australia Police

#### **Action**

Work in partnership with the Office for Autism to identify opportunities to deliver targeted training to key areas within South Australian prisons, such as the High Dependency Unit.

Lead: Department for Correctional Services

#### **Target**

Improve the awareness of autism in justice settings to address misconceptions of Autistic qualities.

#### **Action**

Improve autism awareness, knowledge and information across the department through the provision of spotlights, intranet communications and specific activities.

Lead: Department for Correctional Services

### **Commitment 2:**

**Ensure services and supports provided in community and custodial justice settings are responsive to the needs of Autistic people.**

#### **Target**

Enhance supports for Autistic people within the community and custodial setting, including supports to ensure Autistic people are informed of processes.

#### **Action**

Consider providing translation and interpreting services to support Autistic court users, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, so they can better understand and engage in treatments and court proceedings

Lead: Courts Administration Authority

**Target**

Expand the provision of professionals within community and custodial justice settings who can provide autism diagnostic assessments and ongoing diagnostic supports.

**Action**

Continue to invest in the NDIS Team to assist Autistic prisoners with specialist diagnostic assessments to enable NDIS participation.

Lead: Department for Correctional Services

**Action**

Expand the use of autism screening tools to inform complex individual management plans.

Lead: Department for Correctional Services

**Commitment 3:**

**Create autism inclusive environments within criminal justice settings.**

**Target**

Consider how the built environment, including sound and lighting, can be adjusted to support Autistic people in contact with the justice systems.

**Action**

Continue to explore ways to introduce sensory options in prisons on a case-by-case basis.

Lead: Department for Correctional Services

**Target**

Collaborate with stakeholders and lived experience groups to ensure criminal justice settings are autism inclusive.

**Action**

Continue to develop and implement individual behaviour support plans, where required, to better assess, inform and respond to the individual needs of people in community and custodial settings, regardless of formal autism diagnosis or not.

Lead: Department for Correctional Services

**Target**

Provide supports and services in various formats to support inclusion and ensure Autistic people can access information about available services and their rights, as well as make informed decisions.

**Action**

Ensure that the Canine Court Companion is accessible to Autistic witnesses and victims, subject to availability.

Lead: Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Attorney-General's Department)

**Action**

Continue to use the vulnerable witnesses provisions to apply for special arrangements when taking the evidence of an Autistic witness who is the alleged victim of a serious offence, in accordance with the views and wishes of that witness.

Lead: Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Attorney-General's Department)

**Action**

Support staff from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to increase autism awareness in order to inform the provision of appropriate supports for engaging with the prosecution process.

Lead: Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Attorney-General's Department)

## Glossary

### Autism

Autism is a neurological developmental difference that impacts the way an Autistic person sees, experiences, understands and responds to the world. Every person's lived experience of Autism is different.

### Autistic qualities

Personality and behavioural qualities that are commonly viewed as aspects of the diagnostic criteria for autism as per the diagnostic manuals.

### Co-design

A design process where community members are treated as equal collaborators to design products, services, systems, policies, laws and research, informed by each other's expertise.

### Co-occurring conditions

Co-occurring conditions refer to a person who has one or more neurotype, disability or medical health conditions at the same time. For example, Autistic people may also have a mental health condition and/or an intellectual disability that requires additional support.

### Culturally appropriate

Culturally appropriate refers to practices that are respectful and inclusive of all backgrounds, beliefs, values, customs, knowledge, lifestyles and social behaviours. Supports and services that are culturally appropriate are respectful and tailored to all cultures.

### Diversity

Any aspect that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another. It empowers people by respecting and appreciating what makes them different.

### Inclusion

The intentional, ongoing effort to ensure that all people can feel welcomed, respected, supported and valued to fully participate in all aspects of life.

### Intersectionality

How different aspects of a person's identity, such as their gender, ethnicity, class, age, sexuality, ability etc. can interact to create experiences of discrimination and marginalisation. Intersectionality helps us to understand how these experiences can overlap and intersect and how they can be challenged and addressed.

### Lived experience

The personal knowledge that a person gains from direct, firsthand involvement.

## **Neurodivergent and neurodivergence**

Neurodivergent and neurodivergence is a non-medical term to describe various neurological variations in someone's neurodevelopment. Neurodivergent is used to describe people who may have one or more ways in which their brain functions differently to the 'typical' way. Some Autistic people may also use this term to refer to themselves.

## **Neurodiversity**

A term used to describe the natural variation and development in human cognition. It refers to the idea that all human brains are different and function uniquely. There is no one way of thinking, learning or behaving. Rather there is a range of naturally different ways of thinking, learning or behaving.

## **Neurodiversity-affirming / neuro-affirming**

Neurodiversity-affirming practice, or neuro-affirming practice, is a strengths and rights-based approach to supporting individual developmental differences, depending on each person's needs and context. It responds to a natural variation in humans' neurology rather than a perception that a deficit needs to be 'fixed'. Supports, policies and interactions aim to facilitate the inclusion of neurodivergent individuals in ways that enable authentic ways of thinking, learning and behaving.

## **Sensory**

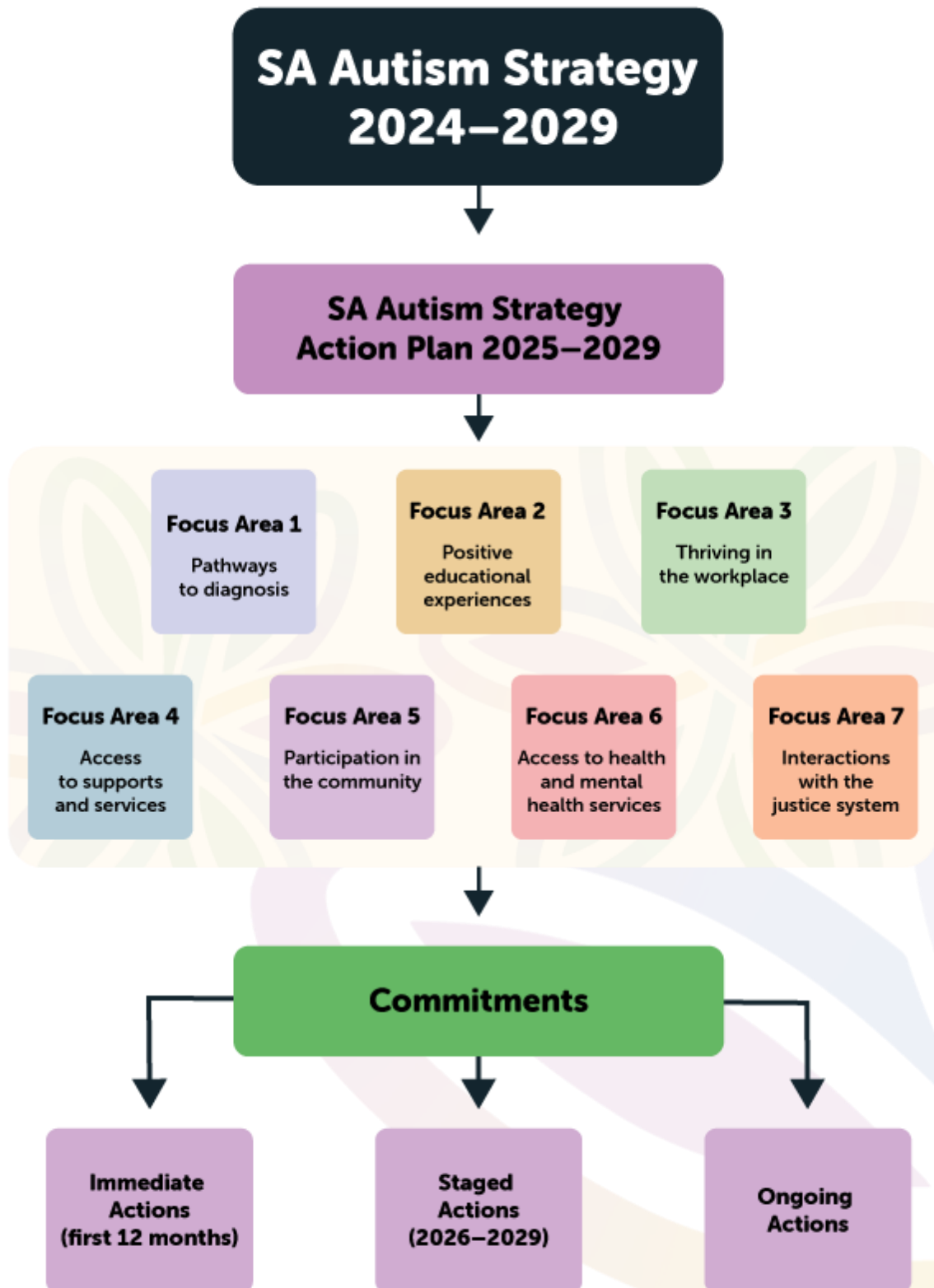
Sensory relates to the senses of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell, and the body's ability to receive and process information from the environment through our sensory systems. In the context of autism, it can refer to the way an Autistic person processes information from their senses differently. Some may have a range of sensory sensitivities, while others may seek out sensory experiences.

## **Universal Design**

Universal Design (UD) is the design and composition of an environment that can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, disability, size, background or other factors.



## Appendix 1. SA Autism Strategy Action Plan 2025-2029 Flowchart



## Plain text description of SA Autism Strategy Action Plan 2025-2029 Flowchart

The flowchart on page 65 illustrates the structure of the SA Autism Strategy Action Plan 2025-2029 and how its components are connected.

It consists of a hierarchy of text boxes, each linked to the next by arrows, showing the flow from overarching strategy to implementation of actions.

The elements are listed in the following order:

- 1. SA Autism Strategy 2024–2029**
- 2. SA Autism Strategy Action Plan 2025–2029**
- 3. Seven Focus Areas of the Action Plan:**
  - Focus Area 1: Pathways to diagnosis
  - Focus Area 2: Positive educational experiences
  - Focus Area 3: Thriving in the workplace
  - Focus Area 4: Access to supports and services
  - Focus Area 5: Participation in the community
  - Focus Area 6: Access to health and mental health services
  - Focus Area 7: Interactions with the justice system
- 4. Commitments of the Action Plan**
- 5. Three types of actions:**
  - Immediate actions – first 12 months
  - Staged actions – from 2026 to 2029
  - Ongoing actions

## Contact

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## Easy Read

The information in this publication is available in Easy Read format at [autismstrategy.sa.gov.au](http://autismstrategy.sa.gov.au)



# SA Autism Strategy Action Plan 2025–2029



Government  
of South Australia