

# Expression of Interest – Volunteer Driver or Support for South Australia's First Sensory Bus



## What the Sensory Bus Is

The Sensory Bus is South Australia's first purpose-built, mobile sensory-friendly space. It was developed as an initiative of the Office for Autism (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) and is operated by Autism SA, with the support of foundation sponsors Kelsian Group and Torrens Transit.

The Bus will travel across metropolitan, regional, and remote South Australia, attending major events such as the Adelaide Christmas Pageant, OzAsia Festival, and Tour Down Under, as well as community-based gatherings.

## About Autism SA

**Autism SA is South Australia's peak body for autism, established in 1964 by parents of autistic children.**

For more than 60 years, we have championed the rights, inclusion, and participation of autistic individuals, their families, and the wider autism community. As the peak body, we are committed to amplifying the collective voice of the Autistic and autism community, working with government, industry, service providers, and research institutions to influence policy, drive systemic change, and build greater awareness and understanding of autism.

Our work ensures autistic people, and their families remain at the centre of decisions that affect their lives, advancing a vision where every autistic person can live the life they choose in an inclusive society.

## Why the Sensory Bus Matters

- **Statistics:** In Australia, around 290,000 people — 1 in 91 — are autistic (ABS, 2022), with around 1 in 4 families having experience with autism.
- **Sensory differences:** Up to 95% of autistic and neurodivergent people experience sensory processing differences, making crowded and noisy events particularly challenging (Robertson & Baron-Cohen, 2017).
- **Barriers to inclusion:** Sensory overload often forces families to avoid or leave events early. More than 61% of autistic people and 73% of families with an autistic family member report experiencing social isolation (Jones, Mizzi, Gordon, 2020).
- **Event exclusion:** Many autistic people and their families avoid attending community events altogether due to sensory barriers.
- \* 92% report crowds and large numbers of people as the main reason.
- \* 82% report levels of light and noise as a deterrent.

As one parent shared:

“My child hasn’t been in 5 years, but knowing this space was here, they wanted to come.”

Families told us:

“We’ve been all four days, and this space has made such a difference.

There is no way my son or I would’ve lasted the whole time and still be feeling really positive on the last day.”

## The Purpose of the Sensory Bus

The Sensory Bus provides a calm, safe, and sensory-friendly environment where individuals can regulate, reset, and rejoin activities that may otherwise be overwhelming.

Its purpose is simple but powerful:

- To enable autistic people and families to access and remain at events.
- To give families the chance to enjoy experiences together, rather than leaving early.
- To demonstrate South Australia’s leadership in access, inclusion, and innovation.

As the Sponsorship Proposal notes:

“The Sensory Bus provides a staffed, welcoming, fit-for-purpose environment to regulate and reset. Each deployment ensures more South Australians are included in the cultural and community life of our state, ensuring everyone gets the experiences of connection, belonging, and joy.”

# Volunteer Opportunities: Drivers and Support Team

We are seeking multiple expressions of interest from individuals who are enthusiastic about inclusion and community impact, and who are willing to join our volunteer driver team and/or event support team.

## ▪ **Volunteer Drivers:**

- Some applicants may already hold the necessary licence and training.
- For those who do not, Autism SA can support successful candidates to complete the required Bus Driver Training.

## ▪ **Volunteer Support Team:**

- Assist Autism SA staff with event logistics (set-up, pack-up, cleaning, parking support, etc.).
- Help ensure smooth operations during community and major events.

### **Hours & Commitment**

- This is a volunteer role only – not a paid position.
- Under our agreement with the Office for Autism, 10 key events and 5 community events are already confirmed; however, additional events may be scheduled.
- Weekend and evening work may be desired depending on the event.
- A team of volunteer drivers and support staff will be established, with hours shared and scheduled flexibly based on availability.

Register your interest by completing and returning the Expression of Interest Application Form.

For more information, please contact: [sensorybus@autismsa.org.au](mailto:sensorybus@autismsa.org.au)

# Expression of Interest Application Form: Volunteer Sensory Bus Driver/Support

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with South Australia's first Sensory Bus.

Please copy and paste the form below into an email and send it to [sensorybus@autismsa.org.au](mailto:sensorybus@autismsa.org.au)

## Personal Details

- Full Name:
- Address:
- Phone Number:
- Email Address:
- Preferred contact method:

## Licence Details (for drivers only)

- Driver's Licence Number:
- Licence Class:
- Expiry Date:
- Do you currently hold a Bus (MR Auto licence) or Heavy Vehicle Licence?  
☐ Yes    ☐ No    ☐ No, but I have in the past
- Have you completed Bus Driver Training?  
☐ Yes    ☐ No    ☐ No, but willing to complete with Autism SA's support

## Checks & Clearances

- Do you currently hold a Bus (MR Auto licence) or Heavy Vehicle Licence?  
☐ Yes    ☐ No    ☐ No, but I have in the past
- Have you completed Bus Driver Training?  
☐ Yes    ☐ No    ☐ No, but willing to complete with Autism SA's support

## Type of Volunteer Work You Could Offer

- (Please tick all that apply)
- ☐ Driving the Sensory Bus

- ☐ Supporting staff/volunteers with event logistics (e.g., setup, pack-up, cleaning, parking management)
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Expression of Interest

Please tell us briefly why you are interested in this role and how your skills/experience would make you a good fit. You may wish to include:

- Experience in driving larger vehicles (for drivers).
- Experience in volunteering, events, or community support.
- Relevant logistics, cleaning, or team support experience.

## Additional Information

Is there anything else you would like us to know about you or this opportunity?

If successful, you will be required to sign a Volunteer Registration Form and undertake Understanding Autism training.