



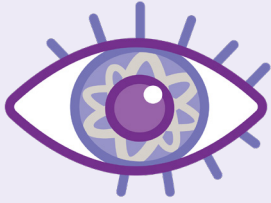
# 2024/25

## Annual Report

Supporting the community  
*since* **1964**

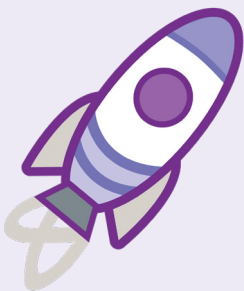


# Our Vision, Mission and Values



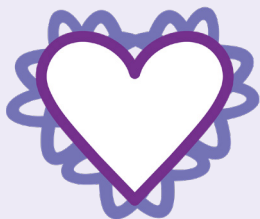
## Our Vision

Each person on the autism spectrum lives the life they choose in an inclusive society



## Our Mission

Is to be the first choice for individuals on the autism spectrum, supporting them to turn their potential into reality



## Our Values

- We care about people
- We have integrity and honesty
- We work together
- We are innovative and problem solve
- We provide dignity and respect
- We have ambition
- We harness heart

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Autism SA acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.

Art: 'Bush Medicine Leaves' by Audrey Brumby for Autism SA

# Key Milestones in Autism SA's Journey

For more than 60 years, Autism SA has been at the heart of supporting and empowering autistic individuals, their families, and the wider community in South Australia. From humble beginnings as a parent-led association and the state's peak body for autism, our history reflects resilience, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to inclusion.

1964

Autism SA was founded by parents as the Autistic Children's Association, in response to the lack of services and supports for autistic children in South Australia.

1967–1969

Autism SA hosted Australia's first national conference on childhood autism, leading to the formation of the Autistic Children's Association of Australia — the first national body for autism.

1974

South Australia's first autism-specific school opened, pioneering tailored education for autistic students.

1990s

Early intervention teams developed the first widely distributed information pamphlets on autism, while community awareness grew through initiatives such as *The Autiser* newsletter.

2000s

Autism SA led the way in diagnostic training for professionals across health and education, launched major fundraising campaigns, and formalised its Training and Consultancy team.

2013

Hosted the Asia Pacific Autism Conference (APAC), celebrated 50 years of service, and initiated the first national Future Leaders Program to elevate autistic voices. The rollout of the NDIS began in South Australia.

2016–2019

Established the Autism Friendly Charter, opened new hubs across Adelaide, partnered with SunPork Farms and Autism CRC to create autism employment pathways, and launched The Spectrum website as a trusted online resource.

2020–2023

Introduced new research collaborations including LEGO® Robotics and Minecraft® programs, opened our Tonsley Hub, refreshed our brand, launched the Autistics' Guide to Adulthood, partnered with Drakes to introduce Quiet Hour, and became an Adelaide Fringe Accessibility Partner.

2024

Autism SA celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary with community fundraising, strengthened inclusive employment pathways and worked with Zoos SA to introduce Communication Boards at Adelaide Zoo and Monarto Safari Park.

2025

Autism SA updated our Constitution, launched Neuro-inclusive Recruiting, established Lived Experience and Neurodivergent Committees, and created Communication Boards in partnership with Nature Play SA.





## Message from the Board Chair



**Robert Dempsey**  
Board Chair

It is my privilege to present the Chair's Report for Autism SA, reflecting on a year of dedication, change, and progress in supporting the Autistic and autism community across South Australia.

Over the past year, Autism SA has continued to play an essential role in empowering autistic individuals and their families to live fulfilling lives. Through our programs, services, and advocacy, we have supported thousands of people, ensuring they have access to information, guidance, and opportunities to connect. Our work remains deeply rooted in the principles of inclusion, respect, and enabling choice.

At the same time, the sector in which we operate continues to face significant challenges. The evolving nature of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has brought both opportunities and complexity. For our clients and families, navigating the NDIS can be overwhelming, and for our organisation it requires ongoing adaptation to ensure sustainability while meeting the diverse and individualised needs of the community. Despite these challenges, Autism SA has remained steadfast, innovative, and responsive—always putting the needs of the Autistic and autism community first.

This year also marked an important transition as Autism SA entered into a management agreement with Torrens Foundation.

**This partnership brings stability, expertise, and new opportunities for growth. It ensures that Autism SA remains strong, resilient, and positioned to continue its vital mission well into the future.**

We are confident that this collaboration will allow us to expand our reach, strengthen service delivery, and provide even greater support to individuals and families.

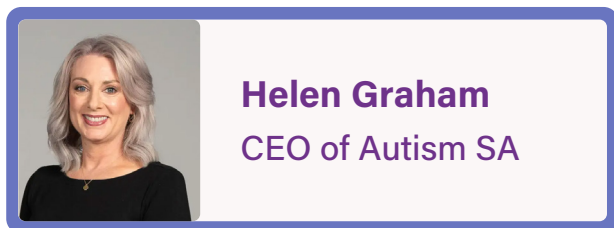
None of this would be possible without the remarkable dedication of our people. I extend my heartfelt thanks to our talented staff who bring passion, skill, and compassion to their work every day. To our CEO, whose leadership has guided us through change with clarity and vision, and to my fellow Board members, who continue to provide wisdom and governance in the best interests of the organisation, I am deeply grateful.

We are also indebted to our supporters, donors, and partners whose generosity sustains and grows our services.

**Every contribution makes a difference, and it is through this shared commitment that we can continue to create inclusive opportunities for autistic individuals to thrive.**

As we look to the year ahead, we remain focused on strengthening our voice, expanding our impact, and adapting to the ever-changing environment in which we operate. With the continued support of our staff, Board, community, and partners, Autism SA will remain a leader and advocate for the Autistic and autism community in South Australia.

# Message from the CEO



**Helen Graham**  
CEO of Autism SA

This year has been one of transformation, growth, and renewed stability for Autism SA, marked by our partnership with the Torrens Foundation, significant achievements in service delivery, and continued commitment to empowering the Autistic and autism community through our peak body work.

One of the most significant milestones this financial year was the establishment of our partnership with the Torrens Foundation. This collaboration provides greater stability, improved efficiencies, and access to the expertise and support of the Torrens Foundation and its associated entities.

**Strengthened by this partnership, Autism SA is well positioned to build on more than 60 years of service to the Autistic and autism community, with confidence in a sustainable and impactful future.**

This year, Autism SA took important steps to further strengthen the voice of the Autistic and autism community in shaping our work. The update of our Constitution, the establishment of a Lived Experience Advisory Group, and the creation of a Neurodivergent Staff Committee each reflect our commitment to embedding lived experience and diverse perspectives into decision-making at every level of the organisation.

Across all areas of our work — from supporting families and building individual capacity to enhancing access and inclusion at community events — our staff have demonstrated Autism SA's commitment to promoting participation, inclusion, connection, and belonging for every autistic person.

This commitment was evident in a number of significant initiatives: The launch of Neuro-inclusive Recruiting, a three-year national initiative funded by the Department of Social Services, and the expansion of community participation through Mobile Sensory Zones, Communication Boards, and inclusive events across South Australia.

**Through a partnership with Disney and Aspect, Autism SA supported new audiences to access theatre via the Beauty and the Beast Relaxed Performance.**



Autism SA CEO Helen Graham with Gino Mignone and Lee Bishop from efex.

We are grateful to the many partners and sponsors whose contributions make this work possible. In particular, we acknowledge the ongoing generosity of Baiada Charity Nest, which continues to enhance our reach and support for the community. We also thank the individuals and groups who support us through fundraising initiatives such as City-Bay, the Team Gorilla Gorilla Gorilla, and the many individual donors whose efforts strengthen our ability to deliver resources, advocate for inclusion, and support the Autistic community across South Australia.

A defining feature of the year has been the passion, resilience, and commitment demonstrated by our staff.

**Guided by our neuro-affirming values, our teams have delivered a comprehensive range of supports and services that enable autistic individuals across all life stages to plan for and achieve their personal goals.**

This has included the provision of 24/7 care for some of South Australia's most vulnerable community members, the delivery of affirming therapies and tailored supports, and the creation of inclusive community spaces and events. Through this work, our staff have continued to advance Autism SA's vision of an inclusive society.

As we close the 2024–2025 financial year, Autism SA is energised by what has been achieved, and excited about the year ahead.

**It is through the dedication of our staff, together with the passion and leadership of the Autistic and autism community, that we continue to create meaningful impact and progress toward a more inclusive future.**



Main image: Autism SA CEO Helen Graham speaking at the launch of Neuro-inclusive Recruiting. Circle image: Helen on the set of the Neuro-inclusive Recruiting video shoot.



Natalie Davies, Laura Craig, Hannah Badenhop and Autism SA CEO Helen Graham at the 2024 Christmas Pageant.

# Digital Assets and Reach

In 2024-2025, Autism SA grew its digital presence, strengthening our role as Australia's longest-standing autism peak body and extending our reach to hundreds of thousands of people across South Australia and beyond.

## Digital Assets



### Autism SA

**412,400+** visitors



### Autism Friendly Charter

**7,800+** visitors    **76** businesses listed



### The Spectrum

**345,000+** visitors



### Autistics' Guide to Adulthood

**2,029,137** reach    **31,000+** visitors    **3,602** module engagements



### Neuro-inclusive Recruiting

**2,725,620+** reach    **33,000+** visitors    **1,143** resource downloads

## Digital Channels



### Facebook

**17,600+** followers    **↑ +4.76%**  
**26,670** visitors



### LinkedIn

**4,600+** followers    **↑ +12.2%**  
**2,833** visitors



### Instagram

**3,900+** followers    **↑ +14.71%**  
**3,600** visitors



### Infomail

**9,000+** subscribers

# Impact Overview: Sector Leadership and Advocacy

In 2024-2025, Autism SA delivered impact through research, projects, advocacy, events, and training, reaching thousands, and building a more inclusive society for all. Amplifying autistic voices, shaping policy, and driving systemic change in South Australia.

## Research Impact



**6** research applications reviewed



**3** active projects advancing therapy, health access, and social collaboration

## Project Impact



**14** grant applications



**6** successful applications



Autistics' Guide to Adulthood



Neuro-inclusive Recruiting



## Representative Impact



**3** submissions made to shape local, state and national policy

**5** advisory roles held



**5** radio features reaching national audiences

## Community Impact

**5+**

inclusive events such as Beauty and the Beast Relaxed Performance, sensory zones at AFL Gather Round and more

**5**

major expos, including Autism Summit as Gold Sponsor



## Education Impact



**1,000+**

professionals trained across education, health, councils, and industry

### Key initiatives

Inclusive Storytimes, Audiology Australia Conference and Communication Boards



# Impact Overview - Service Delivery

Autism SA's Service Delivery, which includes Clinical Services as well as Community Support and Inclusion services, remains a core part of the supports we provide for the Autistic and autism community.

## Autism SA Service Delivery 2024-25



**2,859+**

clients were supported



**178,941+**

hours of care and support

## Community Support & Inclusion | Home, Living and Lifestyle

Our Community Support & Inclusion and Home Living and Lifestyle service encompasses Individualised Support Worker services and Supported Independent Living, providing 24/7 supports to individuals and families, from children through to adults.



**52+**

clients were supported



**132,800+**

hours of support provided

## Occupational Therapy | Speech Pathology

Autism SA's dedicated Speech Pathologists and Occupational Therapists continued to use neuro-affirming and evidence-informed practices, resources and strategies to support clients of all ages to achieve their personal goals.



**840+**

clients were supported



**15,652+**

hours of support provided

## Behaviour Support | Psychology and Counselling | Social Work

Throughout the year, we have worked to support the psychological, emotional, and behavioural needs of individuals by providing tailored support and delivering a wide variety of programs designed to foster personal growth and well-being.



**350+**

clients were supported



**6,711+**

hours of support provided

## Diagnostic Services

Autism SA recommenced autism assessment services, providing individuals and families with timely access to diagnosis and support.



**109** child assessments



**19** adult assessments

## School Readiness Program

Our School Readiness Program supports children aged 3–5 to build the foundational skills they need to thrive in early learning environments. Delivered by a multidisciplinary team, the program helps children develop confidence, connection and readiness for kindy or school. By providing tailored group options and partnering closely with families, we ensure each child feels supported, understood and equipped to take their next steps in learning.



**35**  
clients were supported



**1,527**  
hours of support provided

## Autism Inclusion Program

Our Autism Inclusion Program provides practitioner support in the environment that best suits each child, whether at home, school or in clinic. This support may include 1:1 skill building, personalised learning resources and individualised programming that align with the child's goals. By equipping children to apply their skills beyond therapy, we help them engage more confidently and meaningfully in ways that reflect their strengths and interests.



**267**  
clients were supported



**6,293**  
hours of support provided

## School Inclusion Program

Funded by the Department for Education, our School Inclusion Program provides short-term intensive supports that build the capacity of educators to better support autistic students and their families. Our team works with teachers, support staff and school leaders across all education sectors to create inclusive learning environments. By partnering closely with schools statewide, we help ensure autistic students feel supported, valued and able to thrive in their education.



**1,099+**  
clients were supported



**15,087+**  
hours of support provided

# 2024-2025 Sector Leadership and Advocacy

As South Australia's peak body for autism, Autism SA continues to amplify the voices of autistic people, influence policy and practice, and provide co-designed resources and programs that drive systemic change. Our work this year demonstrates the breadth and depth of our commitment to inclusion, empowerment, and collaboration.

## Research

Autism SA's Professional Practice Committee supports the engagement of the South Australian Autistic and autism community in autism-related research, ensuring that research reflects their experiences, perspectives, and priorities.

- **Research applications**  
6 research applications were submitted.
- **Committee membership**  
Niki Welz (Chair), Associate Professor Verity Bottroff, Professor Robyn Young, Research Associate Dr Julia Harris, Dr Neil Kirby, Zoran Bekric

## Projects, Grants and Tenders

Autism SA continued to secure grants and tenders to lead and collaborate on projects that deliver practical outcomes for the Autistic community:

- **Grants and Tenders**  
14 applied | [6 successful](#)  
(including Autism SA-led, consortiums, and supported bids)
- **Key Projects**  
[Autistics' Guide to Adulthood](#)  
Further expansion of the digital platform providing free life-skills modules co-designed with autistic adults

### [Neuro-inclusive Recruiting](#)

The creation of a digital platform focused on equipping employers to attract, recruit, onboard and support neurodivergent employees

### [Strengthening Pathways to Inclusive Employment](#)

Tailored employer support to increase autistic employment across South Australia.

## Training and Consultancy

Autism SA's consultancy and training programs strengthen understanding and foster inclusive practices across industries. This year we partnered with schools, councils, hospitals, outpatient services, Australia Post, Girl Guides, and therapists to deliver educational support.

Highlights include:

- Inclusive Story Times with Burnside Library
- Communication Boards installed with Nature Play SA
- Audiology Australia Conference – keynote training on autistic communication, sensory, and cognitive needs
- Ongoing partnerships with organisations to strengthen inclusive practices across SA

## Resources produced

- Autism SA's Language Position Statement and Guide updated in consultation with the Autistic community and latest research
- Autism SA Milestone document reviewed and expanded, marking more than 60 years of impact
- Strengthening Pathways to Inclusive Employment Guide published.



Strengthening Pathways to Inclusive Employment Posters.

## Advocacy

Autism SA actively contributed to state and national policy conversations:

- **Submissions**  
3 (City of Onkaparinga strategy, State Disability Strategy consultation, National Autism Strategy)
- **Committee and Advisory Roles**  
Representation on the Australian Advisory Board on Autism, Australian Autism Alliance, Adelaide City Council Disability Inclusion Committee, Central Adelaide Local Health Network DAIP Committee, West Torrens Disability Inclusion Committee and National Roadmap to Improve the Health and Mental Health of Autistic People
- **Media Engagement**  
ABC Radio features across the year on topics including the National Autism Strategy, autistic unemployment and inclusive hiring, education reforms, and autism in schools
- **Autism Connect Service**  
We continued our partnership with Amaze on the national autism helpline - Autism Connect, providing the Autistic and autism community with up-to-date information, advice, referrals, and resources relevant.



Playing at Nature Play SA.

## Events and Expos

Autism SA worked with partners and communities to deliver inclusive events, sensory spaces, and awareness campaigns across South Australia.

- **Key Events**

Beauty and the Beast Relaxed Performance – presented in partnership with Disney and Aspect – featured sensory zones and access and inclusion strategies

Sensory Zones at the AFL Gather Round, Adelaide Fringe, City to Bay, Touch a Truck, Nature Play event and Christmas Pageant

Community events including Autism Awareness Day booths, client family days with Nature Play SA, and the Lighting of the Christmas Tree event.



Team Autism SA at the Beauty and the Beast Relaxed Performance.



# The launch of Neuro-inclusive Recruiting



Minister Nat Cook, Autism SA CEO Helen Graham, DSS Janette Miller, project team members, national advisory group members, talent and those that helped bring the project to life.

In February 2025, Autism SA proudly launched Neuro-inclusive Recruiting, a free, online resource designed to support employers build their confidence and ability to create neuro-inclusive workplaces.

## About the project

Developed over three years and funded by the Australian Government's Department of Social Services, this innovative platform provides employers with practical tools, tips, and strategies to attract, recruit, onboard, and support neurodivergent employees.

The official launch, held at the Adelaide Convention Centre, brought together the project team, national advisory group members, talent, researchers and industry leaders to celebrate the resource and its role in reshaping recruitment practices across Australia.

“Supporting neurodiversity isn't just about being inclusive, it's good for business. It widens your talent pool, boosts innovation, and strengthens your brand

### Employer

National Advisory Group member

## Recognising the barriers

Traditional hiring processes often create barriers for neurodivergent job seekers, leaving many overlooked. Complex job descriptions, high-pressure interviews, and rigid selection methods can all disadvantage candidates with different communication or processing styles.

**These barriers contribute to autistic people in Australia experiencing an unemployment rate of 18.2% - more than six times higher than the general population.**

In response, Autism SA secured a grant that set out to design a resource that would challenge these barriers and create simple, practical pathways to fairer, more accessible recruitment.





## Co-design at the heart

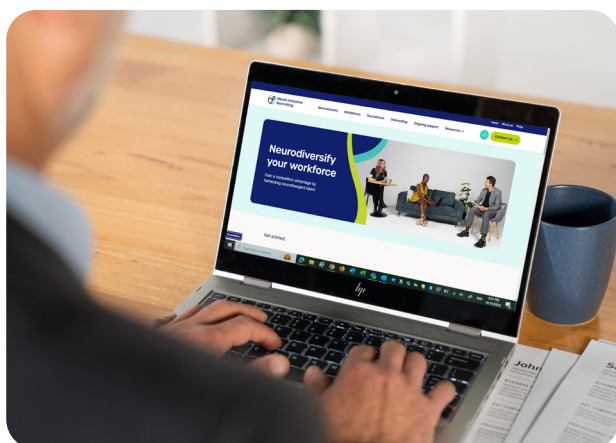
Neuro-inclusive Recruiting was built through a co-design process that engaged more than 260 people, with over half identifying as neurodivergent. Three National Advisory Groups, monthly consultations, surveys, interviews, and lived-experience stories ensured the resource was truly shaped by those it was designed to support. By blending community insight, employer input, and academic research, the project produced a resource that is both credible and deeply practical.

## Unlocking the benefits of neurodiversity

The resource highlights the immense benefits of neurodiverse teams. Employers who embrace neuro-inclusion access an untapped talent pool, gain fresh perspectives, improve problem-solving capacity, and foster a more dynamic workplace culture. It demonstrates that inclusion is not only the right thing to do, but also a powerful driver of business success.

## A step toward long-term change

Neuro-inclusive Recruiting is more than a resource — it is a call to action for employers to take practical steps toward equity and inclusion. By addressing hidden barriers and embedding neuro-affirming practices, Autism SA is helping to create neuro-inclusive workplaces where every person can show their real potential.



## Gain a competitive advantage



**Boost productivity  
and performance**



**Innovation  
and creativity**



**Workplace culture  
and staff retention**



Autism SA CEO Helen Graham, Autism SA Board Chair Rob Dempsey, Autism SA Board Director Marilyn Pattison AO and Autism SA Client Representative Director Dr Gillian Hood.

## Access free resources

To learn more about Neuro-inclusive Recruiting and how to create neuro-inclusive workplaces, scan the QR code or visit [neuroinclusiverecruiting.org.au](https://neuroinclusiverecruiting.org.au).



## Service Delivery - Clinical Services

In 2024–2025, Autism SA delivered a wide range of clinical services that supported autistic people and their families to set and achieve personal goals. Guided by our neuro-affirming values, our multidisciplinary teams provided support in schools, clinics, homes, and communities across metropolitan, regional, and remote South Australia.

### Autism SA Clinical Services:

- Autism Inclusion Program
- Counselling
- Diagnostics
- Occupational Therapy
- Positive Behaviour Support
- Psychology
- School Readiness Program
- School Inclusion Program
- Speech Pathology
- Social Work
- Therapy Groups

Together, these services represent the heart of Autism SA's mission in creating environments where every autistic person can achieve their personal goals.



Clinical Lead Speech Pathologist Emma Connell on the swing in the therapy room.



### Autism SA Clinical Services 2024–2025



**2,719+**

clients were supported



**45,270** hours

of therapy, inclusion, and advisory support delivered across SA



services expanded with  
**Diagnostics launched in January 2025**



reach extended to **regional and remote South Australia** through School Inclusion Program

# Service Delivery - Community Support & Inclusion

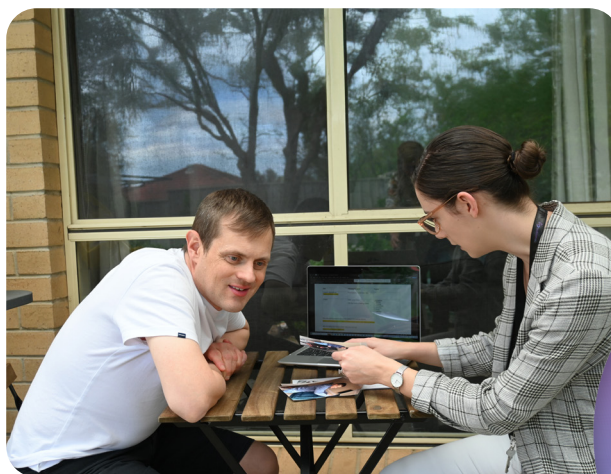
In 2024–2025, Autism SA delivered a wide range of community and inclusion care services that supported autistic people and their families across South Australia.

With care provided by our passionate and dedicated staff, services were delivered both in the home and within the community to meet the diverse needs of individuals and families. We offered a continuum of supports, from group programs and short-term accommodation through to 24/7 care, tailored for children, young people, and adults. These services were designed to promote independence, build life skills, and enhance quality of life while ensuring safety and inclusion.

This year, we also acknowledged and honoured the clients who have been central to these services, recognising their contributions to the community of Autism SA. Their engagement and feedback continue to shape our approach, ensuring our services remain responsive and impactful.

## Autism SA Community Support & Inclusion:

- Supported Independent Living (SIL) support
- Department for Child Protection Disability Residential Care
- Short Term Accommodation
- Support Coordination
- Individualised Support Worker services
- Work My Way Employment Program
- Explorers Group
- Alpha Group
- Kandu Group



Clinical Lead Speech Pathologist Emily McVeigh supporting Community Support & Inclusion client Mark.

## Autism SA Community Support & Inclusion 2024–25



**140+**

clients were supported



**133,671+**

hours of care and support



# Dungeons & Dragons Therapeutic Group



Main image: , Dungeons & Dragons facilitators Ryan Bateman and Lauren Sweeney.

Occupational Therapist Ryan Bateman turned a shared passion for Dungeons & Dragons into a unique therapeutic program for autistic clients. First trialled as a school holiday activity, the program has grown into both school-holiday and term-time offerings for pre-teens, teens, and adults

Facilitated by a multidisciplinary team, Ryan leads as Dungeon Master, supported by colleagues such as Senior Speech Pathologist Lauren Sweeney. Together, they use the imaginative gameplay of D&D to build social connection, communication, language, and problem-solving skills in a safe and engaging environment.

Clients who once benefited from support from facilitators to navigate social situations within the group are now confidently communicating with peers and advocating for themselves by stating their communication preferences and asking for help.

One young person shared that their favourite part of the group was **"when Ryan walked around the room doing the different voices of the characters."**

This program demonstrates how interest-based, creative approaches can spark growth, confidence, and community connection.



## Autism SA in regional locations

Autism SA's School Inclusion Program has made a lasting impact in regional communities.

In 2024, Senior Autism Engagement Advisor Suzy Jenkinson visited 27 students across seven schools in Mount Gambier, Millicent, and Penola, using a new service model that included student observations, staff collaboration, and personalised resource development.

By Term 2, 2025, the program reached another 10 students across six schools, including Naracoorte and Mt Gambier High School. Demand has grown so significantly that return visits are already planned for Terms 3 and 4, expanding reach into even more schools.



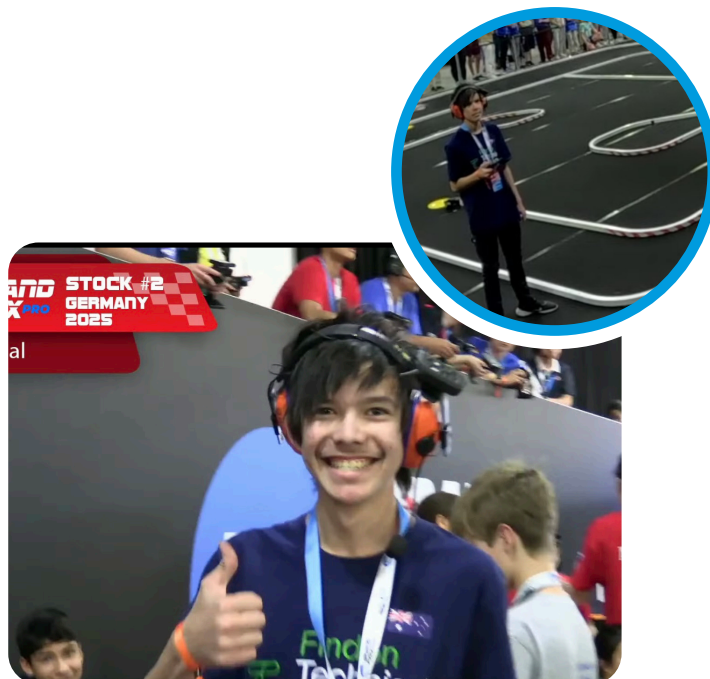
## From the classroom to world stage

One young student, supported weekly for three years through the Autism Inclusion Program, has made remarkable strides in self-confidence, advocacy, and understanding of autism. This year, his journey culminated in representing his school and South Australia at the 2025 Hydrogen-Powered Remote Control Car World Championships in Germany.

His mother reflected:

**"Look how far this boy has come. You have played an instrumental part in his development and getting him to where he is today. You've been one of his biggest cheerleaders over the years, thank you for the positive impact you have had."**

This story is a testament to the transformative impact of sustained, neuro-affirming support.



Student at the 2025 Hydrogen-Powered Remote Control Car World Championships in Germany.



# Our People



Main image: Autism SA Team Paint and Sip.

Our people are at the heart of Autism SA. We are proud to celebrate the dedication, diversity, and achievements of our team throughout the year.

## Committees

In November 2024, Autism SA established the Neurodivergent Staff Committee, followed in December 2024 by the creation of the Lived Experience Advisory Group.

These committees provide dedicated platforms for neurodivergent staff and community voices, ensuring their perspectives help shape and inform Autism SA's workplace culture, services, and practices.

### Autism SA Committees:

- Clinical and Care Governance Committee
- Employee Representative Committee
- Employee Wellbeing Committee
- Lived Experience Advisory Group
- Neurodivergent Staff Committee
- Professional Practice Committee
- Quality Risk and Compliance Committee
- Reconciliation Working Group
- Reducing Restrictive Practices Committee
- Risk and Audit Committee
- Workplace Health and Safety Committee

“The Neurodivergent Staff Committee strengthens our workplace by bringing together lived experience, collaboration, and passion for inclusion.”

**Hannah Badenhop**  
Neurodivergent Staff Committee Chair

”

## Celebrations

This year, our staff came together to recognise important days and events that highlight diversity, inclusion, and belonging, and to celebrate together:

- National Reconciliation Week
- Neurodiversity Week
- Autism Day and Month
- Social Work Day
- NAIDOC Week
- Autistic Pride Day
- International Day of People with Disability
- R U OK? Day
- National Child Protection Week
- Speech Pathology Week
- Staff Paint and Sip Day
- Elizabeth – Christmas in July, Book Week
- NAIDOC Week
- Disability Pride Month
- Occupational Therapy Week
- National Volunteer Week



### Autism SA celebrates Pride Month

A global celebration of the  
LGBTQAI+ community, equality,  
acceptance and human rights.



Autism SA Team at Elizabeth dressed up in festive outfits to celebrate Christmas.



Clinical Lead Speech Pathologist Emily McVeigh celebrating Speech Pathology Week.



# Staff Recognition Awards



Main image: Kimberley Brooks, Sahil Juneja, Samantha Chiutale, Vikas Chauhan, Nandani Kumari, Sandeep Mangat and Jasdeep Dhillon from Team Felixstow House receiving the Team Spirit Award. Circle image: David Palmer speaking at the event.

On 29 November 2024, Autism SA proudly hosted the annual STAR awards at the Arkaba Hotel, celebrating the achievements and contributions of our dedicated staff. The event brought together around 100 people, including staff members, their partners, sponsors, and Autism SA partners, to recognise and honour the outstanding contributions of individuals and teams who go above and beyond in their work, embodying Autism SA's values and commitment to the community.

We gratefully acknowledge our 2024 STAR Awards sponsors, whose generous support made the event possible:

## Award Sponsors:

- Community Business Bureau
- CBS
- efex



Community Bridging Services (CBS) Inc.



Community Business Bureau



## General Sponsors:

- Telstra
- Wallmans Lawyers
- Baiada



WALLMANS  
LAWYERS



Steggles for children's charities

Award	Recipient	Special Commendation
Person Centred (support internally) Award	Sumeet Arora	Julie Peters
Person Centred (support to clients) Award	Suzy Jenkinson	Lauren Sweeney
Brave, Bold and Brilliant Award	Amelia Delic	Ryan Bateman
Team Spirit Award	Felixstow Team	Autism Inclusion Team
Workplace Culture Award	Bianca Davidson	Melinda Alley
Innovation Award	Autistics' Guide to Adulthood Team	Minecraft® Research Team
Workplace Excellence Award	Sumeet Arora	Annabelle Oates
Paul Moroney Inclusion Award - Champion for Others	Chloe Haynes	Hannah Badenhop
Kate Parker Exemplary Service Award	Kaitlyn Baker	Amanda Rice

**18 awards were presented to individuals and teams who had been nominated by their peers. Congratulations to all the STARS who were acknowledged during the awards.**



Sumeet Arora receiving the Person Centred Award - Support Internally presented by Tracy Conniff and Reuben Flores from CBB.



Melinda Alley receiving the Special Commendation for the Community Bridging Services - Workplace Culture Award presented by Amanda Ward and Sascha Lemon-Spence from CBS.

# Service milestones

We are proud to acknowledge the outstanding service of our staff members who reached significant milestones in their journey with Autism SA.

## 5 years

Sandeep Kaur Mangat

Samantha Chiutale

Lucy Bye

Zoran Bekric

Sandra Rendich

Nzubechukwu Benard

Jaskaran Kaur

Joanne Blackman

Etienne Jabo

Dariusz Szczurowski

Indraj Singh

Mandeep Singh

Pushpesh Bishnoi

Michael Nketiah Boakye

Mahesh Gautam

Sonja Rusmir

David Peterkin

Melinda Alley

## 10 years

Keira O'Dea

Goutham Madhavapeddi

Echezona Iluno

Kerwin Seamus Rosal

Rebecca Morton

Shaonan Li

## 15 years

Vijender Singh

Niki Welz

## 20 years

David Palmer

Michael Scicluna

## 25 years

Greg Healy



Greg Healy receiving his 25 years of service milestone from Rebecca Morton and Autism SA CEO Helen Graham.



5 year service milestone recipients Sandeep Kaur Mangat, Samantha Chiutale, Peter Bishnoi, Lucy Bye and Melinda Alley accompanied by Autism SA CEO Helen Graham.



# Major Donors and Partners



Main image: Team Gorilla Gorilla Gorilla at the Autism SA City office

Autism SA is grateful for the ongoing support of government departments, businesses, charities, and community members who help us build and promote an inclusive society, so that every autistic person can live the life they choose in an inclusive society.

## Major Sponsors, Fundraisers and Donors

We acknowledge with gratitude the generous contributions from our major sponsors and donors:

- Baiada Children's Charity Nest
- MRS Property
- Efex: Smarter Tech for Ambitious Business
- Variety Children's Charity SA
- Grill'd at Marion
- Team Gorilla Gorilla Gorilla

**\$2,780**

was collectively raised through the City-Bay fun run.



Taylor Bayly and Jamie Rossiter at the City-Bay.

**We also thank the many individuals and organisations who have fundraised or donated to support Autism SA.**

Each and every contribution, no matter the size, helps us achieve our vision and make a lasting difference for the Autistic and autism community.



Baiada Children's Charity Nest has been a long-term and significant sponsor of Autism SA for the past 19 years. We extend our sincere thanks to the business and all its staff for their ongoing contribution and support, which continues to strengthen our advocacy, education, and impact across South Australia.

# Board of Representatives

The Board is required to act in accordance with the objectives of the Autism SA constitution:

1. Lead performance improvements of Autism SA through strategy formation, policy development, and monitoring of management actions.
2. Ensure compliance of Autism SA and uphold the correct conduct of Directors — both as individuals and collectively as a Board.

All members of the Board are advocates and champions for the rights of people with a disability.

Board members serve on a voluntary basis, except for out-of-pocket expenses.

Name	Qualifications	Position	Appointments	Date	Committees	Meetings
Stuart Matthews	MAICD	Client Representative Director – elected	Re-elected	28/11/2024	Finance Committee	15 Board meetings + AGM
		Acting Finance Committee Chair	Resigned Acting Finance Committee Chair	29/01/2025		11 Finance Committee meetings
Dr Gillian Hood	MB, ChB, DA, FRCA, FANZCA, Dip Clin Hyp	Client Representative Director – elected	Re-elected	28/11/2024		15 Board meetings + AGM 2 Finance Committee meetings*
Robert Dempsey	B.Bus(Acct), MBA, MAICD, JP, SJ	Board Appointed Director,	Appointed	29/01/2025	Finance Committee	6 Board meetings
		Board Chair	Elected Board Chair	29/01/2025		5 Finance Committee meetings
Richard Perkins	B.Ec, MBA	Board Appointed Director	Appointed	29/01/2025	Finance Committee	6 Board meetings
		Finance Committee Chair	Elected Finance Committee Chair	29/01/2025		5 Finance Committee meetings
Joel Hepburn-Brown	LLB B.Sc (Hons), MIRM, MAICD	Board Appointed Director	Appointed	29/01/2025	Finance Committee	5 Board meetings 4 Finance Committee meetings
Marilyn Pattison AO	AO, Associate Professor, FWFOT, MBA, B. App, Sc (OT)	Board Appointed Director	Appointed	29/01/2025		7 Board meetings
Richard Price	B.Sc (Tech) Electronics, GAICD	Board Appointed Director	Re-elected Board Chair	28/11/2024		10 Board meetings + AGM
		Board Chair	Resigned Board Chair	29/01/2025		5 Finance Committee meetings*
Dianne Rogowski	–	Board Appointed Director	Re-appointed	28/11/2024	Finance Committee	9 Board meetings + AGM
			Resigned	29/01/2025		5 Finance Committee meetings
Dr Ann Parker	Registered Psychologist, B. Arts, B. Arts (Hons), PhD	Board Appointed Director	Re-appointed	28/11/2024		6 Board meetings
			Resigned	29/01/2025		3 Finance Committee meetings*
Helen Graham	B. Psych (Hons), GAICD	Company Secretary	Re-appointed	28/11/2024	Finance Committee	16 Board meetings + AGM 11 Finance Committee meetings

# Governance

## Corporate Governance Statement

The Charter clarifies the responsibilities and boundaries of the Board in setting the strategy and direction of Autism SA and in managing and controlling the organisation.

As extracted from Autism SA's Board Charter, Autism SA is a Company Limited by Guarantee and operates as a not-for-profit organisation with the status of a public benevolent institution. It is governed by a constitution approved by members.

The Board delegates the responsibility for the management of the organisation to the Chief Executive Officer. The Board reports to members through the Annual Report, Annual General Meeting, and such other meetings as may be called by the Board or the membership.

## Membership

Membership of the Company comprises two classes: Ordinary Members and Associate Members, who pay an annual fee.

For further information regarding organisational membership, please refer to the Constitution of Autism SA, which is publicly available on the Company website at [autismsa.org.au](https://autismsa.org.au)

## Ethical Standards

Autism SA is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethics. The organisation follows good governance practices to ensure integrity and influence.

This includes:

- Board members declaring any existing or potential conflict of interest.
- Maintaining policies and third-party certification against the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) as part of quality assurance and continuous improvement.

- Meeting all legislative, regulatory, and contractual requirements to operate and provide services and supports, including compliance with:
  - ▷ DHS Child Safe Environments requirements.
  - ▷ Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth) and our Anti-Slavery Policy.
  - ▷ Work Health & Safety legislation.
  - ▷ Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles.

## Privacy Policy

Autism SA values the support of the community and is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information entrusted to the organisation. We comply with the Australian Privacy Principles under the Privacy Act 1988 (as amended, including the Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024), which govern the collection, use, disclosure, and security of personal information. Autism SA also meets obligations under the Notifiable Data Breaches scheme.

Our Privacy Policy and internal data protection procedures provide clear governance for employees and contractors, ensuring consistent compliance, accountability, and safeguarding of personal information. Respect for privacy is central to the trust we maintain with all stakeholders.

This report can be obtained online from [autismsa.org.au](https://autismsa.org.au)

# Treasurer's Report



**Richard Perkins**  
Treasurer

This is my first Treasurer's Report for the Autism Association of South Australia, with my appointment taking place on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2025.

My involvement commenced at a challenging time, when the organisation was in the midst of navigating the flow on effects of several years of significant trading deficits.

I would like to thank Stuart Matthews for acting in the role of Treasurer immediately prior to my appointment, during which time there were significant efforts made to develop a foundation for the organisation's improved financial performance.

**I am glad to report that the operating result for the 2025 Financial Year has markedly improved from prior years.**

The organisation has incurred a deficit for the year of \$198,311 compared to the operating result for 2024 being a deficit of \$3,320,528. The level of this turnaround is extraordinary and is mostly due to revised strategic imperatives supported by the commitment and dedication of the management team. Specifically, the improvement is largely due to improved management practices within the revenue generating units together with an ongoing improvement in overhead efficiencies.

From a cash flow perspective, cash and cash equivalents, including realisable investments, did reduce during the year. This was largely due to the cash collections for some services provided to clients being unfortunately deferred. It is expected that this situation will reverse this financial year, contributing to stabilised cash flows.

In support of Autism SA's ongoing financial stability, the organisation had net assets of \$2,437,756 at the end of the year.

The audit report for the year is unqualified, and the auditors have accepted the preparation of the accounts on the basis that the operations of Autism SA will continue into the foreseeable future.

Whilst this year has been positive, there is still a significant amount of work to be done to ensure and improve the financial strength of the organisation. Initiatives to further improve the operating results are continuing and the Board expects the organisation's financial strength to improve again this year. The initiatives undertaken and ongoing include:

- Implementation of a shared services model for key operational areas to further improve overhead efficiencies
- Improvement of management of revenue generating divisions and operating efficiencies
- Active monitoring of cashflows and working capital.

In summary, the organisation has made a very good start on a long journey back to financial stability, with a view to ensure that the Autism SA programmes continue into the foreseeable future.



## Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

	2025 \$m	2024 \$m	\$m Change	% Change
Income	32.0	31.5	0.5	2%
Staff costs	26.0	28.3	-2.3	-8%
Other costs	6.2	6.5	-0.3	-5%
Total Expense	32.2	34.8	-2.6	-8%
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year	-0.20	-3.32	3.12	94%
Other items	-0.07	-0.28	0.21	74%
Total comprehensive (loss)/income	-0.27	-3.60	3.33	92%
Net assets - 1 July	2.7	6.3	-3.6	-57%
Net assets - 30 June	2.4	2.7	-0.3	-11%

## Life Members

Thank you to each and every one of our Life Members for the contributions you have made to Autism SA. We are grateful for your ongoing support, as without it, we would not be where we are today.

- Assoc Prof Verity Bottroff
- Anne Nottage
- Bernard Vaughn
- Betty Jordan OAM
- Cheryl Casey
- David McLean
- Dr Margaret Kyrkou
- Dr Peter Tillett
- Dr Ruth McIntyre
- Jean Bryant
- Jean Cox
- Jenny Karavolos
- John Harley
- John Rosevear
- Joy Johns
- Judith Leeson
- Luke Dale
- Lloyd Cox
- Leigh Hall OAM
- Margaret Wilson
- Mark Morelli
- Richard Bruggemann
- Richard Price
- Rose Baker
- Roma Aimes
- Ruth Halpin
- Troy Mohler

### In Memoriam

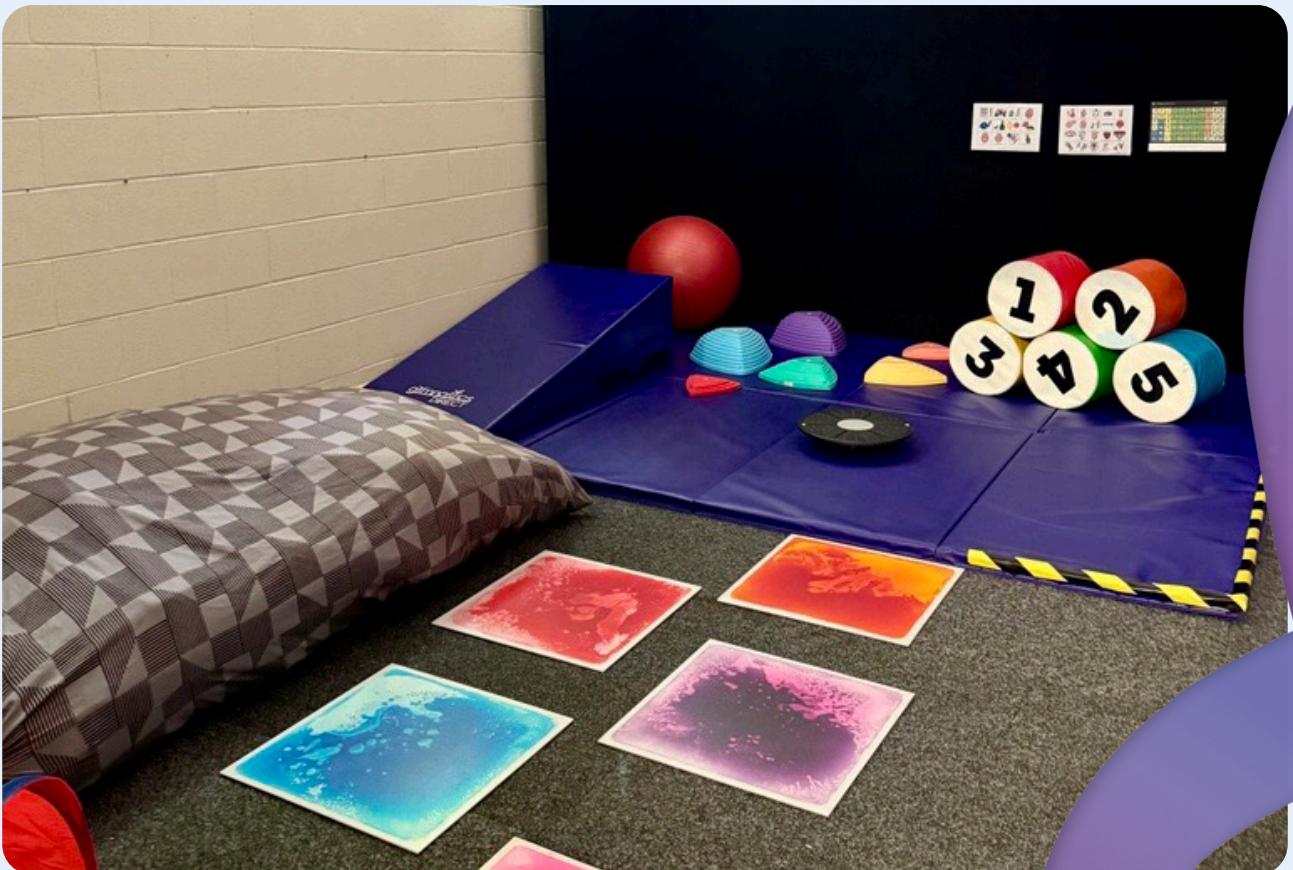
- Betty Davis
- Dudley Wilson
- Hilary Johnson AM
- Ken Foggo OAM
- Mae Saun
- Matthew Tiddy OAM
- Nerida Higgins
- Tim Fischer AC
- Valerie Retallick
- Mary Angel



Khadija and Sammy in the Elizabeth Sensory Room.



Peta Richards at the Elizabeth Shopping Centre in Autism Month.



Autism SA Sensory Zone set up.



To help support the work of Autism SA, please make a tax-deductible donation via our website at [autismsa.org.au](https://autismsa.org.au)

## Contact Us

1300 288 476

[autismsa.org.au](https://autismsa.org.au)

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1/57 Elizabeth Way, Elizabeth South Australia

