



Program Update

Engaging the strengths and interests of autistic individuals in the workplace

Former UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon called employers to action through providing employment opportunities for autistic individuals to champion the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Autism@Work Forum at ICC Sydney

An Australian-first event, the Autism@Work Forum held at ICC Sydney in conjunction with APAC17, highlighted the benefits of workforce neurodiversity for both employers and employees.

Attendees heard from employers including SAP, SunPork Farms, ANZ Bank, Microsoft and DXC.Technology on how their investments are delivering lessons for better engaging the skills and interests of all employees, not only those on the autism spectrum.

Keynote speakers – Professor Susanne Bruyere, Director of the Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability at Cornell University, and Jeanette Purkis, autism employment advocate, writer and speaker – addressed the elements and benefits of effective neurodiverse workplaces from their perspectives, as a renowned academic in the field of disability and employment, and as an employee with the lived experience and autistic advocate.

In the afternoon, an Autism@Work Employment Fair gave autistic individuals and their families the opportunity to meet with employers, service providers and researchers, to find out about current employment programs, services and policies.

The Autism@Work Forum was held in conjunction with APAC17 at ICC Sydney in September.

During the day, Autism CRC employment projects were showcased, including the Integrated Employment Success Tool (IEST) to assist employers, Better Outcomes and Successful Transition for Autism (BOOST-A) career pathway tool and AS Careers digital employment community, all generating interest from those in attendance.

In this edition

CEO Welcome... p2

Engaging the strengths and interests of autistic individuals... p3

A better start through better diagnosis... p4

Spotlight on Autism CRC scholars... p6

Enhancing learning and teaching... p8

Finding a place in society... p10

Integrated Employment Success Tool

The Integrated Employer Success Tool (IEST) is designed to help employers determine and implement effective workplace accommodation adaptations best suited to the needs of autistic employees.

Better Outcomes and Successful Transitions for Autism

The Better Outcomes and Successful Transitions for Autism (BOOST-A) tool is an online, vocational planning program to support autistic adolescents to prepare for life beyond high school.

Digital employment hub for autistic job seekers and employers

Digital employment hub, AS Careers, is connecting autistic job seekers, employers and service providers and is being developed by La Trobe University, Salesforce, DXC Technology, Specialisterne and Autism CRC.

[Read more about each of these exciting research initiatives on page three.](#)



Welcome

Mr Andrew Davis
Chief Executive Officer, Autism CRC

At Autism CRC, our vision is to see autistic people empowered to discover and use their diverse strengths and interests.

Our mission is to motivate, facilitate and translate collaborative autism research across the life span, underpinned by inclusive practices.

Our programs take a whole-of-life view from diagnosis and the early years, through the school years and into adult life. Our work is predicated on inclusive research practices and coproduction of outcomes with those on the spectrum and their families to ensure our research provides practical and tangible outputs that benefit the community.

To date, we have invested in more than 60 projects to develop research outcomes and translate these to practice across our three programs.

Professor Sylvia Rodger's legacy

On 9 June 2017, family, colleagues, students and the autistic and autism communities gathered to celebrate the life and outstanding achievements of Autism CRC's Research and Education Director, Professor Sylvia Rodger AM, who sadly passed away after a long battle with cancer.

Sylvia's contribution, both nationally and internationally, to the field of occupational therapy, and specifically to autism practice and research, was outstanding. The world has sadly lost a passionate researcher, clinician and academic. Her love for her vocation was brilliantly illustrated throughout her distinguished career.

Autism CRC was Sylvia's dream come true with its high-quality, end-user focused, collaborative research program, disseminated and implemented by those with the lived experience, service providers and policy makers.

The team at Autism CRC was privileged to work with Sylvia and we are proud to continue her legacy to make a real difference to the world, particularly for the autistic and autism communities.

Chief Research Officer appointment

Professor Andrew Whitehouse will continue Sylvia's vision for our comprehensive research program, following his appointment as Chief Research Officer for Autism CRC in July this year.

Andrew has been the Director of our Early Years Program and will be responsible for driving high quality research outcomes and their translation into practice.

Andrew has developed key partnerships for Autism CRC since its inception with organisations such as the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), which has led to the development of Australia's first national guideline for autism diagnosis, being released for final consultation at this year's Asia Pacific Autism Conference.

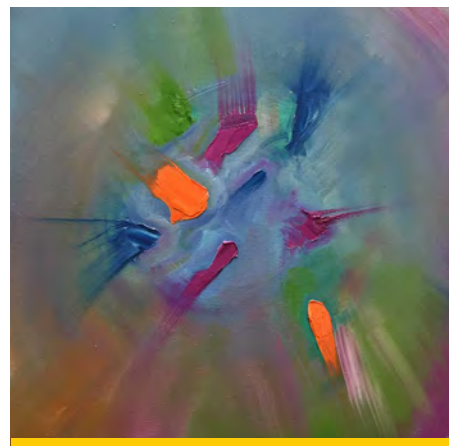
Autism CRC at APAC17

Autism CRC is proud to be a gold sponsor of this year's Asia Pacific Autism Conference at ICC Sydney. Many of our researchers are keynote and program speakers on the conference program and will be presenting their project outcomes and research findings.

Our Chief Research Officer, Professor Andrew Whitehouse, will be launching the first national diagnostic guideline for autism in Thursday's keynote in symposium one.

I look forward to seeing you during APAC17 and invite you to visit Autism CRC at booth numbers 7-10 in the Gallery Room during the exhibition.

Andrew Davis
CEO, Autism CRC



Celebrating Autism Awareness Month

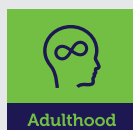
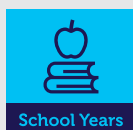
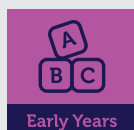
To celebrate National Autism Awareness Month in April 2017, Autism CRC ran a series of public webinars on autistic voices in research and provided up-to-date information on autism research across our three programs.

The webinars presented the latest developments in our early years, school years and adulthood programs. Audiences were also introduced to the neurodiversity movement, and learned about autistic strengths from a panel discussion with autistic adults and the ways in which the broader community can celebrate diversity and promote acceptance.

Autism CRC also hosted a special art exhibition of artists on the autism spectrum at the University of Queensland.

Around 40 pieces of art were on display during the exhibition, all submissions from the Autism CRC's Art Prize, the theme of which was Autistic Strengths.

Prue Stevenson, a Melbourne-based autistic artist whose work serves as a conduit for her autistic energy and a voice for autism advocacy, was awarded the Autism CRC 2016 Art Prize for her work Tunnel Vision (pictured). ■



Engaging the strengths and interests of autistic individuals in the workplace

Integrated Employment Success Tool (IEST)

Developed by Melissa Scott, Curtin University, Autism CRC PhD scholar

The Integrated Employer Success Tool (IEST) is designed to help employers determine and implement effective workplace adaptations best suited to the needs of autistic employees.

This workplace tool provides information about autism, the benefits of employing autistic individuals, factors considered important in the workplace for successful employment, and strategies to implement workplace modifications.

The IEST provides employers with the skills and confidence to make these workplace changes. A “construction” building theme is used throughout to represent the processes of preparing, planning, designing, and executing successful employment for autistic adults.

Information is provided according to the phases of employment, with each phase including specific workplace requirements, tips and advice, questions to consider, and checklists.

[Read more about the research methodology and results in PLOS ONE, May 2017, doi:10.1371/0177607.](#)

Better Outcomes and Successful Transitions for Autism (BOOST-A)

Developed by Megan Hatfield, Curtin University, Autism CRC PhD scholar

Autistic adolescents often have difficulties transitioning from high school to post-school activities. Despite this, little is known about the transition planning processes for this group.

The aim of this project, entitled Better Outcomes and Successful Transitions for Autism (BOOST-A), was to develop and trial an online, autism-specific program to support autistic adolescents to prepare for leaving high school. Research participants included 83 parents, 26 autistic adolescents and 53 professionals.

The project identified some unique transition planning factors for autistic adolescents and the need for a specific



transition planning process to support the individual’s needs. It also considered their anxiety, motivation and insight, resulting in a structured but flexible transition plan.

Importantly, the research identified a transition planning process developed with and for autistic adolescents, which differed from the more traditional approach.

[Read more about the research methodology and results in the Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, June 2017, doi:10.1111/1471-3802.12388.](#)

Digital employment hub for autistic job seekers and employers

Developed by La Trobe University, Salesforce, DXC Technology, Specialisterne and Autism CRC

Digital employment hub, AS Careers, is being developed to connect autistic job seekers, employers and sector services. This project aims to address the underrepresentation of autistic adults in employment, with only 40 per cent of autistic adults participating in Australia’s workforce.

AS Careers developed as a partnership between the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre at La Trobe University, Salesforce, DXC.Technology, Specialisterne and Autism CRC, is a virtual employment hub to connect autistic career-seekers with potential employers.

Through AS Careers, autistic job seekers will be able to search job opportunities, while employers will be able to seek candidates. It aims to empower career-seekers to compete on the basis of their unique talents by guiding them through skills assessment, using a unique matching algorithm to suggest suitable jobs, and providing a personal profile for use in their job-seeking activity.

For employers, AS Careers will link them with an untapped talent pool as well as supply case studies, evidence-based tools and success stories on autism employment and workplace diversity.

[AS Careers is currently in its next phase of development which will also include engaging autism service providers. ■](#)



A better start through better diagnosis

Our Early Years program is harnessing existing knowledge of autism to improve diagnosis, as well as using breakthroughs in biological research to identify subtypes of autism and the most effective early interventions for these subtypes.

Australia's first national diagnostic guideline for autism

Australia's first national diagnostic guideline for autism is being released for final consultation at this year's Asia Pacific Autism Conference in Sydney.

Commissioned under a collaboration between Autism CRC and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) in October 2016, the national guideline defines a diagnostic process that is rigorous, accessible, client-centred, clinically acceptable, effective, efficient, and equitable for individuals assessed for autism.

Led by our Chief Research Officer, Professor Andrew Whitehouse, this project aimed to define a diagnostic process that ensures consistency and accuracy in diagnosis.

While access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is not dependent on a diagnosis, the project team worked closely with the NDIA to ensure the guideline aligns with the processes for access to the NDIS.

Following extensive stakeholder engagement and consultation, the draft guideline has been reviewed by the NDIA to ensure it is aligned with NDIS entry requirements, providing a consistent and integrated pathway for children and adults diagnosed with autism to access therapy and services under the scheme. For a consultation copy of the new national guideline, please visit autismcrc.com.au/guideline-consultation.

Autism subtyping, a world first

This world-first research project by Autism CRC aims to identify the most effective therapies for children on the autism spectrum based on individual characteristics.

The research will use longitudinal data collected from children receiving early intensive intervention at six Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centres across the country.



This is the second project commissioned under a collaboration with the NDIA aiming to provide the evidence-base to ensure individuals on the autism spectrum might access the appropriate supports at the earliest opportunity.

Data has already been collected from children attending the six centres during 2015 and 2016.

Through this project, we will expand the data in 2017 and 2018 to bring the total sample size to 300 children, making this the world's largest comprehensive study of preschool children receiving intensive early intervention for autism.

The outcomes of this research will provide important information on the most appropriate ways to potentially subgroup autistic individuals based on shared characteristics. The inclusion of clinical and neurocognitive data will assist in refining this at a deeper level than just by severity of symptoms or behavioural characteristics alone.

It is our hope that these subtypes will be predictive of differential intervention outcomes including transition to school that will provide a much needed evidence base to guide targeted support and intervention.

Research into very early intervention for infants

A major goal of our Early Years Program is to improve outcomes for autistic children through earlier diagnosis.

Through our Early Years research program, we seek to reduce the mean age of diagnosis so that this may occur during infancy, with half of autistic children diagnosed by the age of two.

Given that earlier, accurate diagnosis should lead to better outcomes through earlier, targeted intervention, it is critical that a parallel stream of research should also seek to develop and evaluate intervention models for infants.

The Autism CRC project is evaluating a promising 'very early intervention'.



iBASIS-VIPP is a parent-mediated program that aims to promote social communication in infants, with the aim of supporting the development of key language and social skills.

To ensure definitive conclusions can be drawn regarding this program's effectiveness, we must have sufficient numbers of infants participating in the clinical trial. To achieve this we are operating the program across two sites – in Perth, led by Professor Andrew Whitehouse, and in Melbourne led, by Dr Kristelle Hudry.

Running the trial across parallel sites will also allow us to test whether those benefits observed within the trial remain when the program is delivered within local community services. ■



Collaborating with NDIA and Positive Partnerships

Autism CRC commenced a partnership with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) in May 2017 to find innovative and contemporary supports for autistic people and build capacity in inclusive communities with the aim of giving autistic people better outcomes in life.

The NDIA is an independent statutory agency whose role is to implement the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), to support a better life for Australians with a significant and permanent disability, and their families and carers.

A world-first research project is now underway to identify the most effective therapies for children on the autism spectrum based on their individual characteristics.

We also extended the reach of our education research program in January 2017 through the Commonwealth Positive Partnerships program to ensure that autistic students can access the evidence-based tools and interventions wherever they live in Australia.

Positive Partnerships is a national program aimed at improving the educational outcomes for school-aged autistic students, delivered by Aspect on behalf of the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training.

With a focus on Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, along with rural and remote communities, working with Positive Partnerships will facilitate the broader dissemination and implementation of best practice outputs in supporting students with diverse educational needs. ■

ndis National Disability Insurance Scheme

pp positive partnerships
Working together to support school-aged students on the autism spectrum



Spotlight on our scholars



Ru Cai
La Trobe University

Longitudinal study of school leavers

Ru Cai is a PhD student at the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC) at La Trobe University. Prior to beginning her PhD, Ru completed a double degree in Science and Information Systems (Computer Science & Psychology) in 2005. She then went on to complete her Science Honours (Psychology) in 2010 and a Postgraduate Certificate in Evaluation in 2012, both at the University of Melbourne.

No stranger to the world of autism research, Ru has participated in a number of studies focused on supporting autistic tertiary students. She has presented in world-renowned autism forums including the Autism Spectrum Disorder Research Forum in Melbourne, and the International Meeting for Autism Research in Toronto, Canada.

Ru has dedicated much of her research to studying psychology, specifically emotion regulation and psychological well-being. Her hope is that by understanding the relationships between the two constructs, and unravelling mechanisms that maintain psychological health problems in autistic individuals, experts can develop effective intervention programs to enhance their lives.

“Being part of Autism CRC has exposed me to other research areas and centres including site visits, given me opportunities to collect data nationally, and provided me with resources to attend conferences in order to learn from other researchers as well as share my own research findings.”



Jane Ye In Hwang
University of New South Wales

Ageing well on the spectrum

Jane is an Autism CRC scholar completing her PhD at the Department of Developmental Disability Neuropsychiatry at the University of New South Wales. Her research focuses on building an understanding of the physical and mental health needs of Australian adults on the autism spectrum. She aims to investigate these individuals’ needs, ideals and circumstances as they get older and, in particular, how the concept of ‘ageing well’ may be applied to them. This work has been presented at six domestic and international conferences and is being prepared for publication in various peer-reviewed journals.

Prior to undertaking her PhD, Jane completed a Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) (Honours) from Macquarie University in 2014. Her previous research examining the restorativeness of social environments was presented at the Australian Conference of Undergraduate Research in Canberra in 2014.

Once she has completed her PhD, Jane plans to continue pursuing her research interests in ageing and disability.

“Being a PhD scholar with Autism CRC has given me valuable opportunities for networking with other scholars, academics and professionals from around the world. I have been able to develop my skills and expand my understanding of autism and of research processes in general. Importantly, the inclusive research values upheld by Autism CRC have provided an ideal and rewarding environment in which to learn and practice.”



Megan Hatfield
Curtin University

Better Outcomes and Successful Transitions (BOOST-A)

Megan is an Autism CRC scholar completing her PhD at Curtin University. She received her Bachelor of Science (Occupational Therapy) (Honours) from Curtin in 2009. As an occupational therapist, Megan has a passion for teaching play and social skills, coaching and parent-mediated interventions, and strengths-based approaches. Her experience spans a variety of areas including autism, adults and children with disabilities, orthopaedics, neurology and general medicine.

She recently submitted her thesis, which involved the development of BOOST-A: a web-based, autism-specific program developed to prepare adolescents on the autism spectrum for leaving school and getting a job.

Once she’s completed her PhD, Megan plans to continue working towards enhancing the lives of autistic people by bridging the gap between research and clinical work to improve the evidence-base for interventions.

“The best part about doing a PhD with Autism CRC is the practicality and real-world application of their research – they invest in projects that will have a direct impact on the lives of people on the autism spectrum. Being part of Autism CRC has allowed me to build my professional network and connect with researchers and clinicians across Australia.”



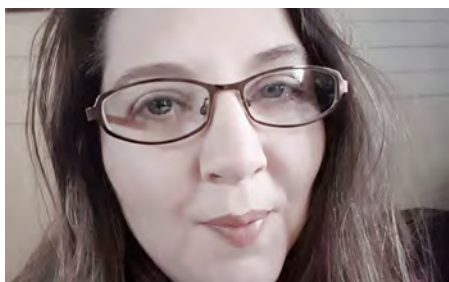
Program 3 Adulthood



Program 3 Adulthood



Program 3 Adulthood



Libby Macdonald
Griffith University

Transitions between tasks and staying on task

Libby is an Autism CRC scholar completing her PhD at Griffith University. She recently submitted her thesis, which investigates the use of structured teaching strategies to facilitate the inclusion of autistic students in mainstream educational settings.

Coming from a background in English literature and education, Libby has previously held roles as both a primary school teacher and a counsellor facilitating peer to peer support for parents of children with disabilities. She is also the parent of a child on the autism spectrum.

Libby's work has been published in the International Journal of Inclusive Education on the topic of supporting school-aged autistic children in mainstream schools.

"Autism CRC provides a supportive and stimulating environment for postgraduate study, and I am proud to be involved with an organisation so clearly focussed on tangible, real-world outcomes. I feel that the CRC will make a big difference to the lives of people on the autism spectrum."



Program 2 School Years



Melissa Scott
Curtin University

Integrated Employer Success Tool (IEST)

Melissa is in the final stages of her PhD at Curtin University. Her research focuses on developing the Integrated Employment Success Tool (IEST), a toolkit designed for employers of autistic adults. The purpose of IEST is to increase employers' confidence and understanding of autism and how to create work environments where autistic employees can thrive. The IEST toolkit has been trialled Australia-wide, with promising results of increasing employers' confidence hiring and supporting autistic employees.

Upon completing her PhD, Melissa is excited to further develop her research career, while returning to clinical work as an occupational therapist. For Melissa, a role that combines both research and clinical practice is the perfect combination.

"Getting to know both employers and employees on the autism spectrum has been a journey. Everyone has a story to tell. I feel so honoured to be part of this journey where the IEST and this research might actually make an employer feel more confident and knowledgeable regarding autism, leading to more employees on the autism spectrum remaining in jobs that are tailored to their specific needs, resulting in more successful outcomes."



Program 3 Adulthood



Cindy Nicollet
University of Queensland

Trial of an anxiety program for adults on the autism spectrum

Cindy is a Psychologist and PhD candidate at the Queensland Centre for Intellectual and Development Disability (QCIDD) at the University of Queensland. Prior to undertaking her PhD, Cindy completed a Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) in 2004, as well as a Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) in 2003.

For the past ten years, Cindy has worked with children and adults with intellectual disabilities and challenging behaviour. As the QCIDD psychologist, her work includes the development of a psychology service for adults with an intellectual disability as well as engaging in research and providing education and training to the sector. Cindy has also commenced working as a Psychologist with Asperger Services Australia (ASA), focusing on psychology services for adults on the autism spectrum.

The focus of her research with Autism CRC is the development and trial of an anxiety program for adults on the autism spectrum.

"As part of Autism CRC's Program 3, I have had the chance to address a significant gap that has been evident from my clinical experience. This was an excellent opportunity to become a leader in the area of autism, and to bring my clinical knowledge to this important area of research." ■



Program 3 Adulthood



Enhancing learning and teaching

Our School Years program aims to provide autism-appropriate educational environments and programs that optimise students' social, behavioural and academic success while equipping teachers to manage even the most complex behaviours.

Initial learnings from the longitudinal study of Australian autistic students

The aim of this longitudinal study is to determine the relationship, if any, between child/family characteristics, their experiences of intervention, and school support and child developmental and behavioural trajectories. The research will establish and trial a series of assessments and an assessment protocol designed to explore longitudinal trajectories of children with autism.

This is the first study to examine anxiety in school-aged autistic children using an autism-specific measure of anxiety symptoms, the Anxiety Scale for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASC-ASD).

ASC-ASD is a newly developed measure designed for the assessment of typical and atypical anxiety symptomatology in autistic children. The ASC-ASD was used to examine parent-reported anxiety symptomatology in 100 autistic children aged 9 to 12 years.

High rates of anxiety symptomatology were found, with 63 per cent of parents rating their children in the clinical range. Children with a parent-reported diagnosis of anxiety disorder scored significantly higher on the ASC-ASD than those without an anxiety diagnosis.

These findings suggest that the ASC-ASD may be a useful tool for the assessment of anxiety symptomatology in autistic children.

Helping students overcome difficulties in written expression

Developed by Anne Ozdowska, Queensland University of Technology, Autism CRC PhD scholar

Teachers in schools face the daily challenge of meeting the diverse learning needs of children, including autistic children, while maintaining an appropriate learning environment for all students.



An innovative software solution has been developed by Autism CRC to help autistic children overcome difficulties with written expression, while supporting all students in the class.

Project POWTREE is designed to help all children in grades four to six improve their persuasive writing, regardless of their learning ability. The use of self-regulated strategy development and assistive technology has been individually proven to improve written outcomes for autistic students and for typically-developing students. This app combines both strategies using the POWTREE method and Texthelp's Read and Write for iPad writing support technology.

The app was tested in classrooms and focus groups during the second half of 2016, and was found to be effective in improving the quality and length of written expression for students.

Autism CRC recently approved an investment to extend this work to include videos that model strategies to support classroom writing activities, and further develop the app so that it is suitable for public release via the Apple App Store.



Learning resources for educators

The educational marketplace has many stand-alone learning resources for teachers, parents and students. These resources generally address both niche and mainstream learning needs in an ad-hoc fashion but have little pedagogical rigour.

There are currently few products or services in the market that address the holistic delivery of content in a pedagogically-sound way, or which adopt broader Universal Design for Learning philosophies.

Autism CRC tools are being developed in recognition of the immediacy of the needs of time-poor educators, and the new Education Knowledge Translation project will provide a platform for access to the latest of such tools and learnings.

The Education Knowledge Translation project is designed to deliver two independent yet interrelated products:

- a knowledge transfer methodology which provides a flexible and supportive framework to support both the design and pedagogical integrity of content; and
- a dynamic eLearning web portal that meets the professional development and classroom resource needs of educators and diverse learners across all jurisdictions. ■



Real life solutions from apps4autism Hackathon

In November 2016, Autism CRC hosted Australia's first Hackathon aimed at translating evidence-based research outputs into real-life solutions for our end-user community.

The three-day event saw teams of autistic adults, family members, developers, designers, researchers and service providers working together to develop technology solutions.

The five research projects targeted all age groups and included a program that supports adolescents to transition successfully into post-school life and an anxiety resource for adults.

The 'Relate' Team, translating research outcomes by Dr David Trembath from Griffith University, received the most votes to secure further investment to develop their app.

Relate is a collaboration space for parents, researchers and education professionals who want to improve communication outcomes for minimally verbal children on the autism spectrum.

The project team is continuing their work with a proposed public release in 2018.

Autism CRC is grateful to our partners, which include Salesforce, ANZ, The Still Dynamic, The Post Project, nVision Talent, Specialisterne Centre Australia and Bracket Labs for their generous support of Hackathon. ■



Finding a place in society

Our Adulthood program is improving opportunities for autistic people to successfully participate in higher education and employment as well as identifying best practice in physical and mental health management.

Introducing acceptance and commitment therapy

Developed by Cindy Nicollet, University of Queensland, Autism CRC PhD scholar

Many individuals with an autism diagnosis also have a co-occurring diagnosis of an anxiety disorder, most commonly, social anxiety, followed by generalised anxiety and specific phobia.

This project focused on developing strategies, tools and techniques to alleviate some of this anxiety and improve the health and wellbeing for autistic adults.

Employing acceptance and commitment therapy, a behaviour-motivated approach, the program requires a support person who knows the adult well and is willing to support them on the journey with their goals and activities. A trial anxiety program using acceptance and commitment therapy has been completed. Although definitive analysis is yet to be completed, early evidence suggests that the ability for participants to identify and label their emotion states improved, the severity of their anxiety symptomatology lessened, and the intensity of their sensory responsivity reduced.

Improving the public transport experience for autistic adults

Developed by Mortaza Rezae, Curtin University, Autism CRC PhD scholar

The public transportation research project involves three studies, each in consultation with the research advisory group of autistic adults established through Curtin University. The aim of the research is to address community mobility challenges experienced by young autistic adults. The project will develop and pilot test a troubleshooting technology solution to improve access to, and use of, public transportation.

The study conducted focus groups across Australia with over 50 autistic young people, their families and community workers who support them. A systematic review of over 200 peer-reviewed journal articles was completed, followed



by an environmental scan to assess the adequacy of existing transport apps in market.

Through the research it became clear that there is no product in market that adequately addresses the needs of the autistic community, with the public transport system not accessible to many.

The technology solution being developed is an evidence-based intuitive app that delivers real-time assistance and strategies to reduce anxiety for autistic individuals and help manage disruptions to a planned journey.

The app will assist autistic people, and people with other cognitive challenges, to navigate the minefield of public transport safely and independently. Evidence-based anxiety management strategies are served to their mobile phone, to help the traveller stay calm at the very moment when needed most. ■



The aim of the research is to address community mobility challenges experienced by young autistic adults. The project will develop and pilot test a troubleshooting technology solution to improve access to, and use of, public transportation.



Autism and Agriculture, a world first

Autism and Agriculture is a world-first initiative of Autism CRC and SunPork Farms that employs autistic adults in animal care.

Working together with Specialisterne Australia, the project commenced in July 2016 and developed a number of recruitment tools, selection processes and workshops tailored to the needs of autistic individuals. Further tools included autism understanding workshops for staff and extended training programs for SunPork management.

Applications were received from South Australia and Queensland. Following screening workshops and a training program, nine autistic individuals were employed in South Australia and seven in Queensland.

We are delighted to say that Queensland employees commenced work in January and South Australia employees commenced work in April 2017.

The Autism and Agriculture project was supported by the South Australian Government and the Pork CRC. ■



Autistic voices in our research

The Autism CRC Research Academy was established in 2015 and comprises autistic adults and autism researchers, seeking to work together as peers.

Inclusive practice through our Research Academy

The Autism CRC Research Academy was established in 2015 and comprises autistic adults and autism researchers, seeking to work together as peers.

This diverse membership helps to ensure our research is both appropriate for and relevant to those with the lived experience of autism.

To enable autism research to be underpinned by inclusive practices, Research Academy members learn about effective peer research, develop an understanding of its benefits and network with potential peer researchers from around Australia.

Our 2017 Research Academy took place in Melbourne in June with participants including seven autism researchers, 14 autistic adults and Autism CRC staff.

Topics included research designs, ethics, power relationships, engaging in peer research and making it work, research translation and hands-on workshoping.

Reflections from autistic participants indicated that, for many, the Research Academy was their first opportunity to experience autistic space – a space where they feel welcomed, valued and accepted without judgement.

Although it's wonderful to have provided this space for our autistic participants, it highlights the need to provide more of these opportunities, and for more peer research to be promoted to engage and empower autistic researchers. ■



AutismCRC
Research Academy

Learn more about our Research Academy at autismcrc.com.au

Our values



Inclusion

Working together with those with the lived experience of autism in all we do



Innovation

New solutions for long term challenges



Cooperation

Bringing benefits to our partners; capturing opportunities they cannot capture alone



Independence

Guided by evidence based research, integrity and peer review



AutismCRC

Autism CRC

Level 3 Foxtail Building,
Long Pocket
The University of Queensland,
Brisbane Qld Australia 4068

T +61 7 3377 0600

E info@autismcrc.com.au

W autismcrc.com.au



@autismcrc



Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science

Business
Cooperative Research
Centres Programme