



Study of Australian School Leavers with Autism (SASLA)

Baseline Profile 2018

**A longitudinal study of post-school outcomes for
young people with and without autism, 2014 – 2021.**

February 2019



Business
Cooperative Research
Centres Programme

autismcrc.com.au

What is the Study of Australian School Leavers with Autism?

The Study of Australian School Leavers with Autism (SASLA) is an online survey-based project, which follows young people aged 15 to 25 years over a 2-year period.

The transition between adolescence and adulthood is an important and difficult milestone for all young people.

We are interested in learning more about the rewards and challenges over this time for young people on the autism spectrum.

This snapshot provides information on the profile of the people who have completed the first of three surveys.

I just want to help others like me and I hope my information will help others. A lot of the questions hit home for me and made me think a lot, a great set of questions.

TAFE student

Who is participating?

Gender ratios



142 autistic 15-25 year olds

In line with diagnostic differences between the sexes, males outnumbered females in the autistic group.



222 non-autistic 15-25 year olds

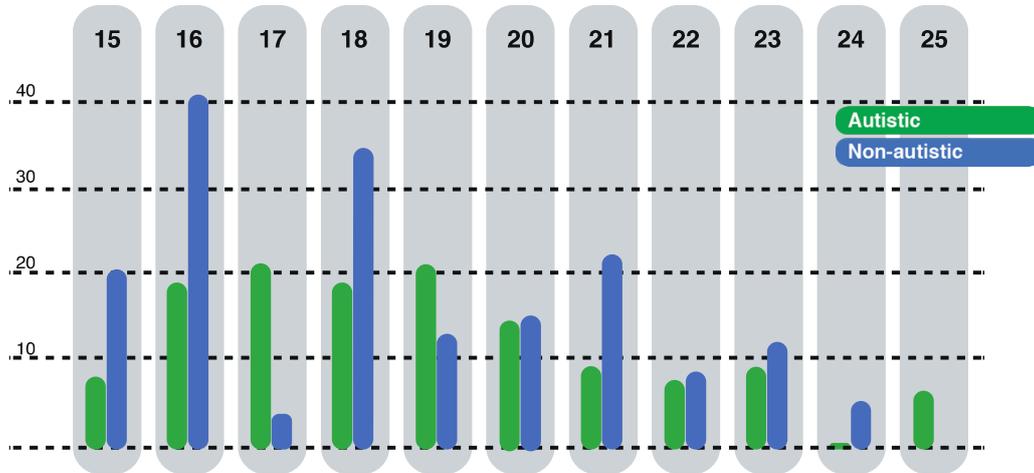
Females outnumbered males in the non-autistic group, which is similar to other online studies in non-autistic populations.



113 parents/carers of those on the spectrum

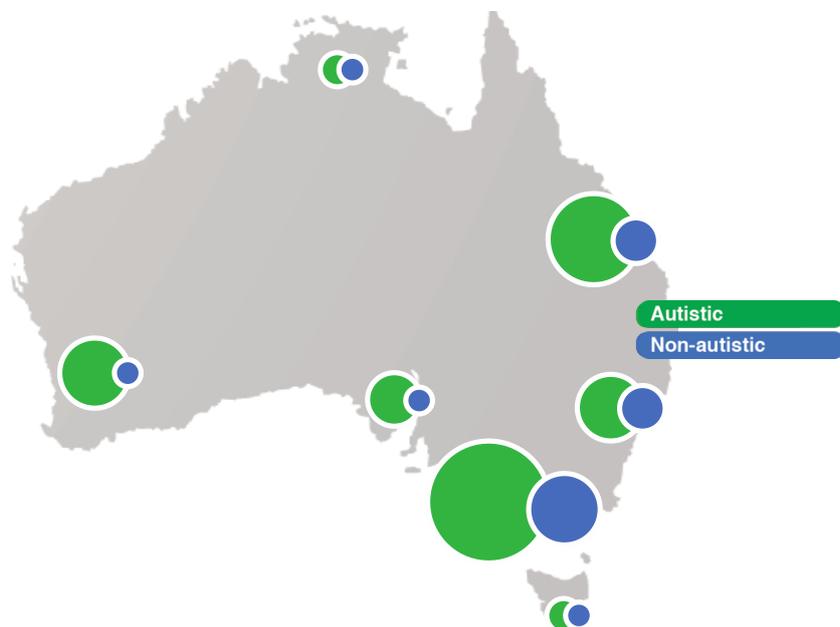
Many more mothers than fathers took part in SASLA, consistent with most research targeting parents/carers.

Age



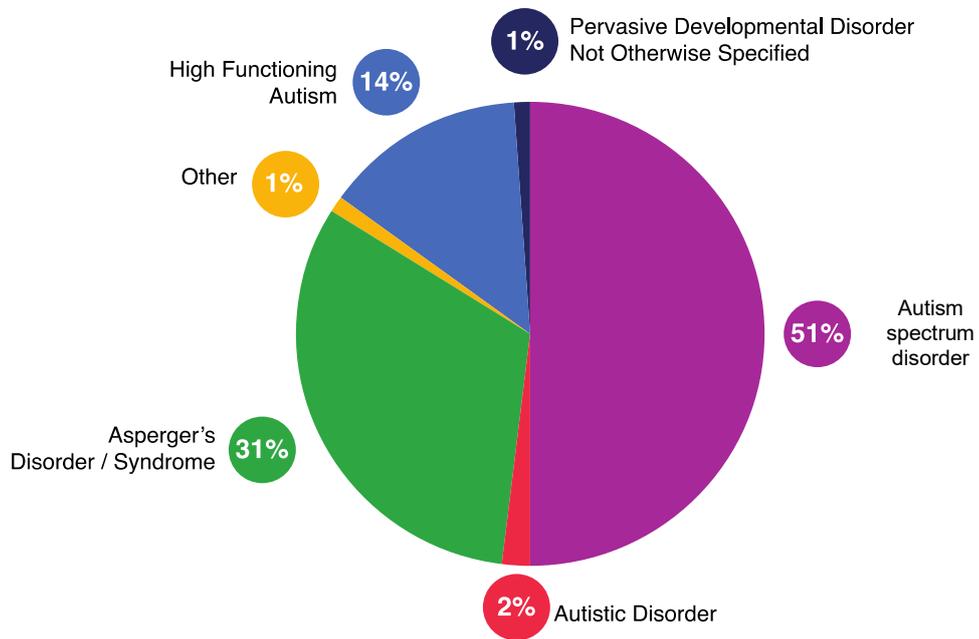
SASLA participants span the entire target age range, with no differences between the two groups.

Location

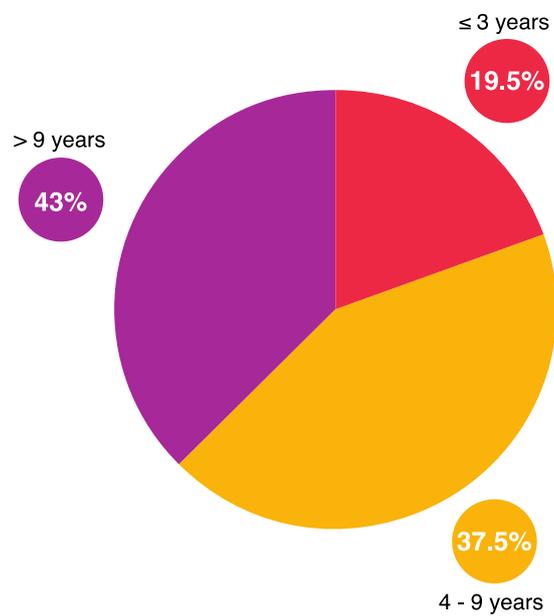


Majority of all young adults reported living at home with their parents, being born in Australia, and being mainly English speaking.

Diagnosis

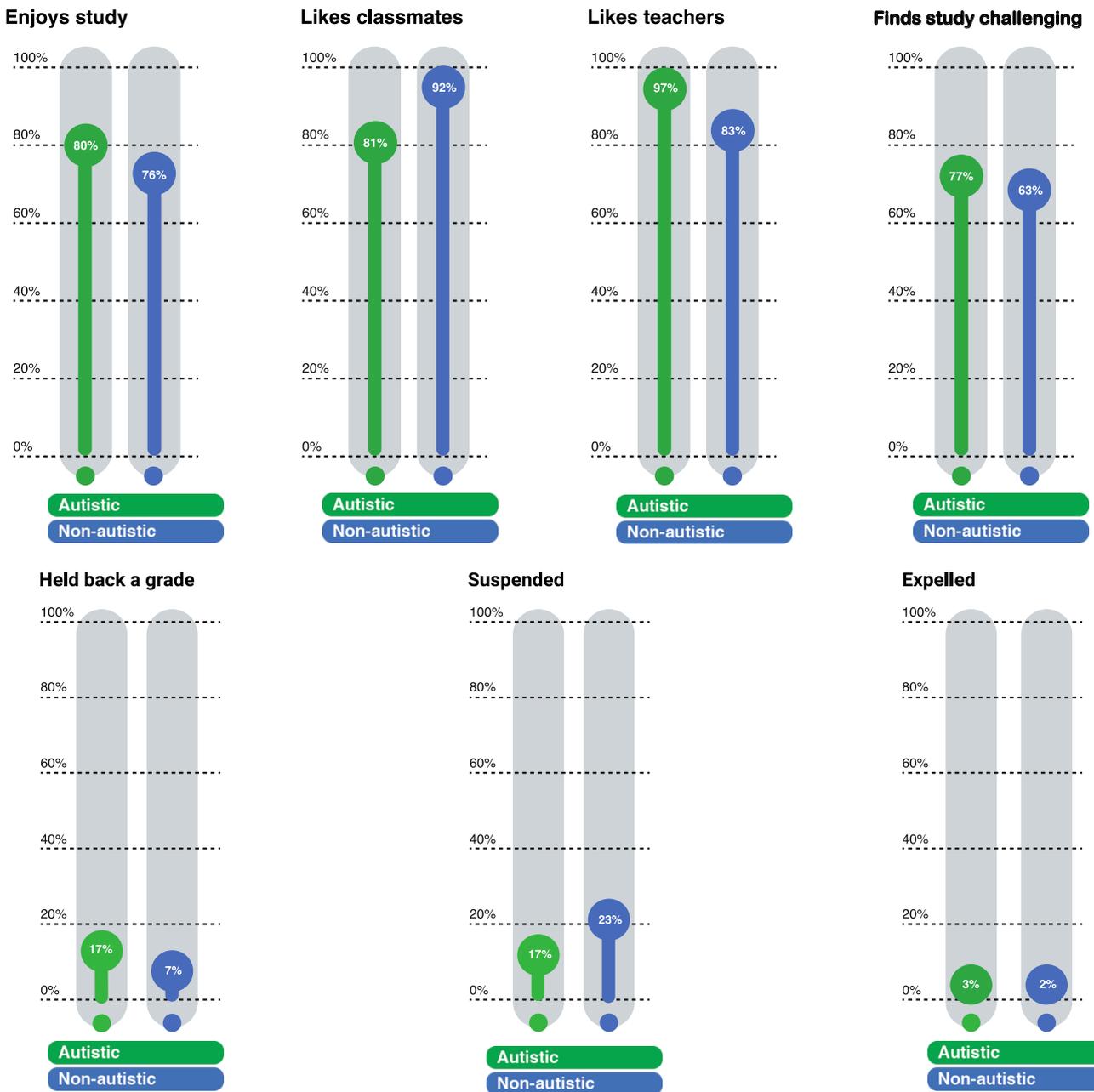


Age when diagnosed



Large numbers of autistic participants reported receiving a diagnosis after 3 years, beyond early diagnosis guidelines.

Experiences at school



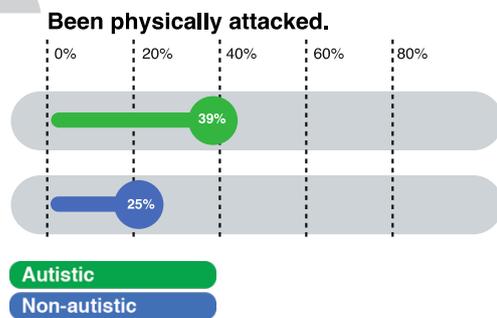
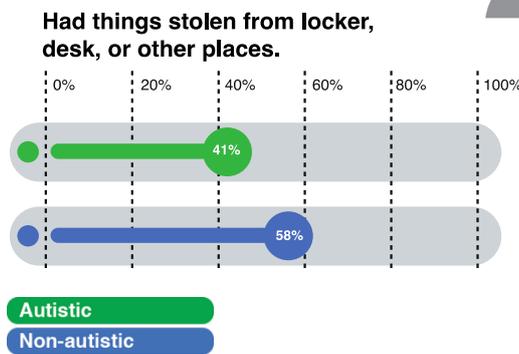
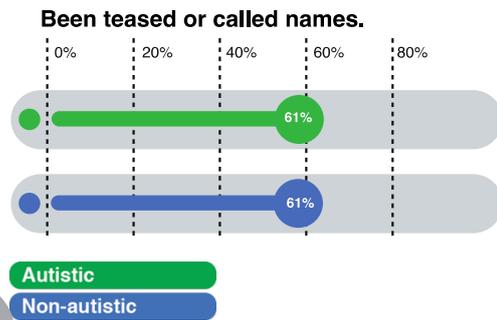
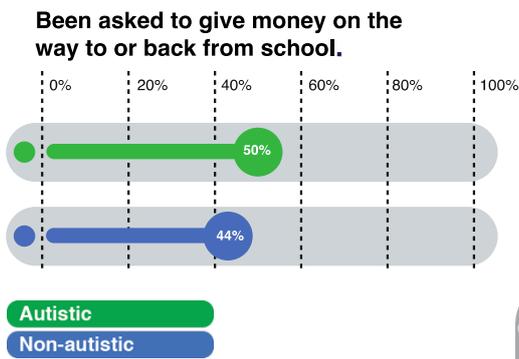
The majority of all young adults said that school/study was challenging and enjoyable.

Autistic respondents were more likely to say they liked their teachers.

There was no difference in adverse school outcomes (e.g. being suspended) between the groups.

Overall, school/study experience was similar among all young people in the SASLA sample.

Bullying

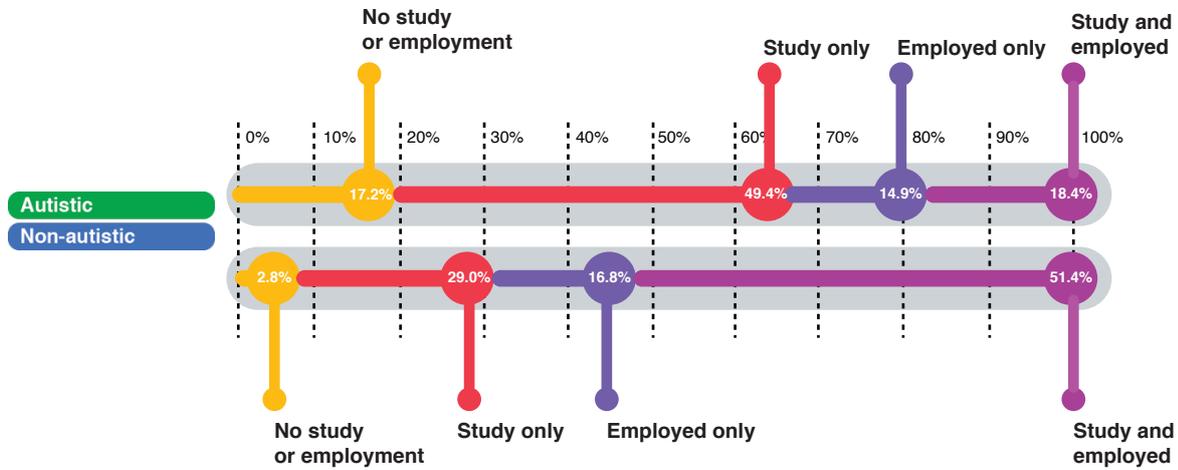


Bullying was commonly reported among all young people participating in SASLA. Autistic young people were more likely to have been asked to give money, while non-autistic young people were more likely to have things stolen.

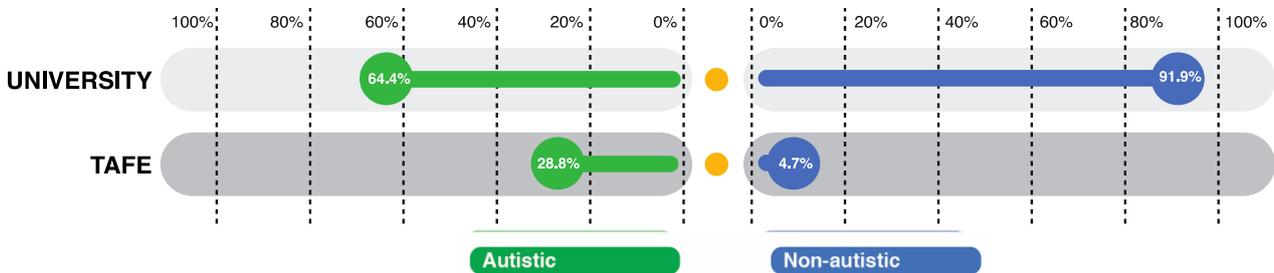
[I would have liked] support in the form of what to expect – the differences between uni/TAFE etc. and high school would help prepare the transition.

Job seeker

Post-high school activities



After high-school, most young people were either studying or employed, but the number of those engaged in these activities were higher among non-autistic young people.

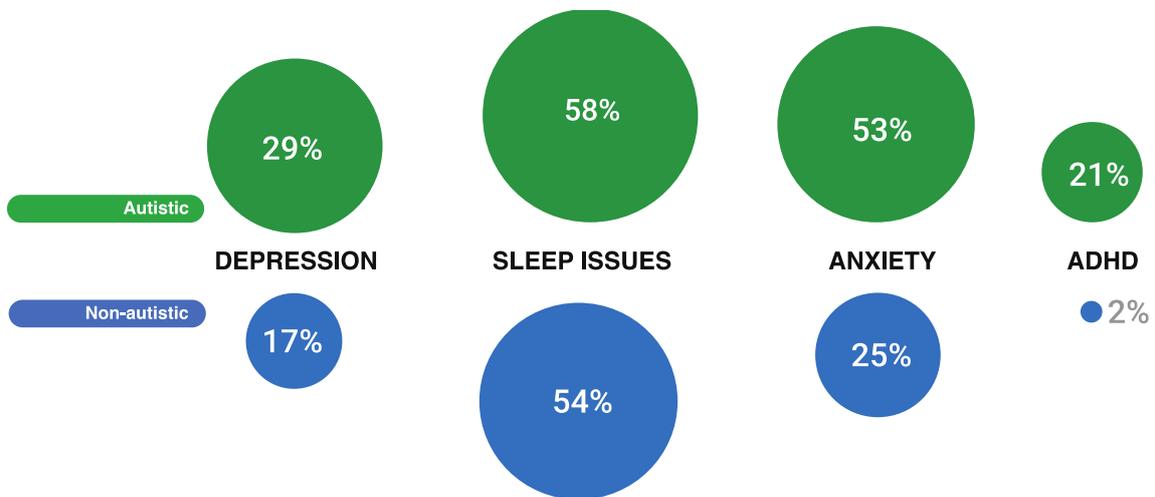


More non-autistic young people were studying at university, while more of the autistic young people were studying at TAFE.

I would have liked a clear understanding of my condition and how it affects me, so I could choose a career more suited to my capabilities.

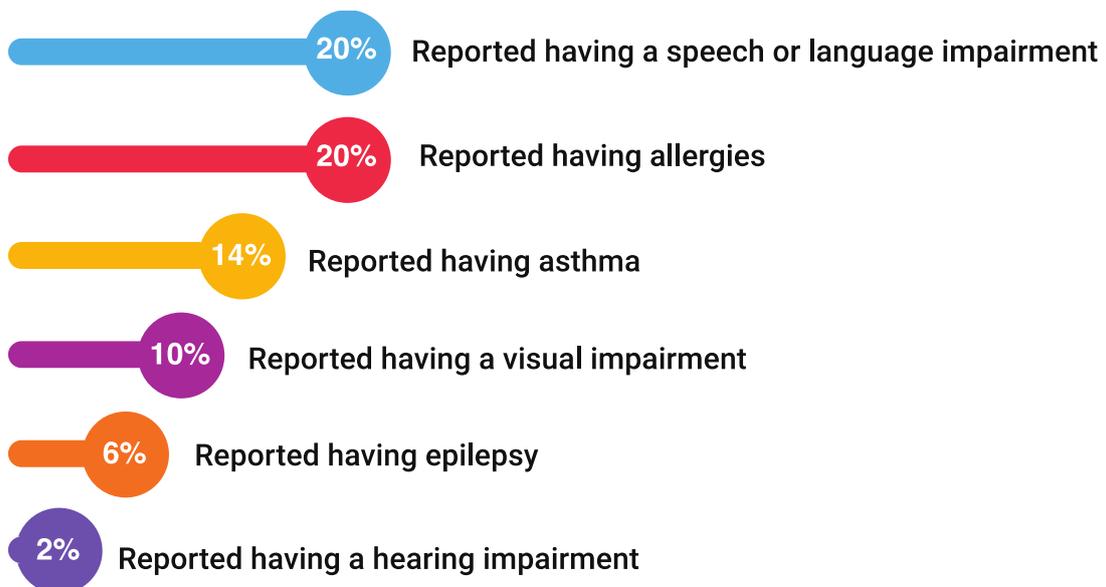
Recently transitioned out of high school

Associated conditions



Associated conditions were commonly reported among autistic young people, with higher rates of depression, anxiety, and ADHD than what was reported in the non-autistic group.

A number of other associated conditions were reported by the autistic individuals, including speech and language impairments, allergies, asthma, visual impairments, epilepsy, and hearing impairments.



Where to next?

Some people have already completed follow-up survey at 12 months and even 24 months.

Over the next three years the SASLA team will focus on the 12- and 24-month follow-ups with people who completed the first survey.

We will focus on identifying any inequalities or difficulties experienced by autistic young people, including any changes over time.

The information collected in SASLA will allow us to explore factors that can be targeted for developing appropriate supports.

[I would have liked] ... training on life skills – cooking, cleaning, time-management, finances, how to make friends, how to maintain friendships and relationships, preparing for living away from home.

University student

Copyright and disclaimer

The information contained in this report has been published by the Autism CRC to assist public knowledge and discussion to improve the outcomes for people with autism through end-user driven research. To this end, Autism CRC grants permission for the general use of any or all of this information provided due acknowledgement is given to its source. Copyright in this report and all the information it contains vests in Autism CRC. You should seek independent professional, technical or legal (as required) advice before acting on any opinion, advice or information contained in this report. Autism CRC makes no warranties or assurances with respect to this report. Autism CRC and all persons associated with it exclude all liability (including liability for negligence) in relation to any opinion, advice or information contained in this report or for any consequences arising from the use of such opinion, advice or information.

ISBN: 978-0-9953736-8-6

Citation: Lawson, L.P., Haschek, A., & Richdale, A.L. (2019). Study of Australian school leavers with autism (SASLA): Baseline profile 2018. Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC), La Trobe University, Melbourne.

Copies of this report can be downloaded from the Autism CRC website autismcrc.com.au.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the financial support of the Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism (Autism CRC), established and supported under the Australian Government's Cooperative Research Centre Program. The authors would like to acknowledge the research participants who dedicated their time to the project. We further acknowledge Dr Mirko Uljarević and Dr Ru Ying Cai for project establishment and data collection and the members of the Autism CRC Program 3 team who contributed to project content and recruitment. Staff and non-staff in kind support, including recruitment, was also provided by Autism CRC Essential and Other participants ([here](#)), other autism associations, a Victorian Secondary School, and many other individuals. We would like to thank Mick Leahy for his work in designing and formatting the report and Dr Rebecca Flower in editing the report.

The Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism (Autism CRC)

The Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism (Autism CRC) is the world's first national, cooperative research effort focused on autism. Taking a whole-of-life approach to autism focusing on diagnosis, education and adult life, Autism CRC researchers are working with end-users to provide evidence-based outcomes which can be translated into practical solutions for governments, service providers, education and health professionals, families and people on the autism spectrum.



AutismCRC

Autism CRC

The University of Queensland
Long Pocket Precinct
Level 3, Foxtail Building
80 Meiers Road
Indooroopilly QLD 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