



Australasian Autism Research Council 2023 Research Priority Update: Focus on five research priority areas



Background

In 2019, the Australasian Autism Research Council (AARC) identified the top ten autism research priorities for Australia. They later published a report outlining specific areas of focus related to five of the ten research priority areas based on consultation with the autistic/autism community.

This report builds on the previous work of the AARC by providing insight into specific areas of focus for the remaining five priority areas, that were not detailed in the 2021 AARC report. These priority areas include:



Choice of living and housing



Family and carer support



Gender, diversity, and inclusion



Health and disability services delivery



Built environment.

The research presents a snapshot of needs of the autistic/autism community in relation to the five research priority areas and positions the autistic voice as central to the decision on research priorities.



Who took part

Members of the autistic and autism community took part in the study, including autistic individuals, family members of autistic individuals, professionals working with autistic individuals, with many participants falling into more than one category.



Aim

The research aimed to identify ten or more important topic areas for each of the five priority areas. It also aimed to understand the issues and challenges that impact the autistic/autism community in relation to the topic areas.



How we did the research

A community views survey was conducted with 43 members of the autistic/autism community to determine research topics within the five priority areas that were most important to them.

The topic areas identified by participants were then discussed in focus groups and individual interviews conducted with thirty members of the autistic/autism community.

These focus groups and interviews gathered detailed information about the issues and challenges that affect the autistic/autism community in each topic area as well as their specific recommendations for research focus in each area.



What we found

The community views surveys highlighted that the autistic/autism community were interested in research that considered the following issues in each priority area:



the needs and preferences of autistic people, the barriers experienced by autistic people, accessibility



health and well-being



availability of financial support



building public education about autism



fostering collaboration between autistic people and people working in each priority area.

The focus groups and individual interviews pinpointed six topics areas that spanned across all five priority areas, indicating their importance to the autistic/autism community. These were:



awareness and understanding of autism



finances



the role of family



mental health



support needs



National Disability Insurance Scheme.



Who did the research



Curtin University



Dr. Wenn B. Lawson



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AutismCRC

The AARC operates under the auspices of Autism CRC.

Find out more

Download the final report and executive summary on the Autism CRC website:

autismcrc.com.au/reports/2023AARC