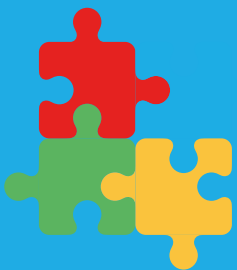




BATHURST  
REGIONAL  
COUNCIL

# AUTISM



Approximately 1 in 70  
people in Australia are on  
the autism spectrum.

## What is autism?

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a condition that affects how a person thinks, feels, interacts with others and experiences their environment. It is a lifelong disability that starts when a person is born and stays with them into old age.

Every Autistic person is different to every other. This is why autism is described as a spectrum.

## People with autism experience difficulties with:

- Communication
- Social interaction
- Restricted or repetitive interests and behaviours.

Autism is often linked with physical, developmental or mental health conditions. These could include intellectual disability, epilepsy, gastro-intestinal issues, ADHD, dyspraxia, anxiety and depression.

Many of the challenges associated with autism come about when individuals don't have respect, understanding and support.

## Talking to people with autism

While no two people with autism have the same language and social skills, the following guidelines can help ensure conversations go as smoothly as possible.

- Address the individual as you would any other person their age, do not assume the person has limited cognitive skills.
- Say what you mean. Be literal, clear and concise. Avoid the use of slang, nuance and sarcasm as they may be confusing.
- Take time to listen. This lets people know that you care and support them.
- If you ask a question, wait for a response. Sometimes individuals with autism need a little more time to absorb and process information.
- Don't speak as if the person is not in the room.