

# Update of the National Guideline for Assessment and Diagnosis of Autism in Australia

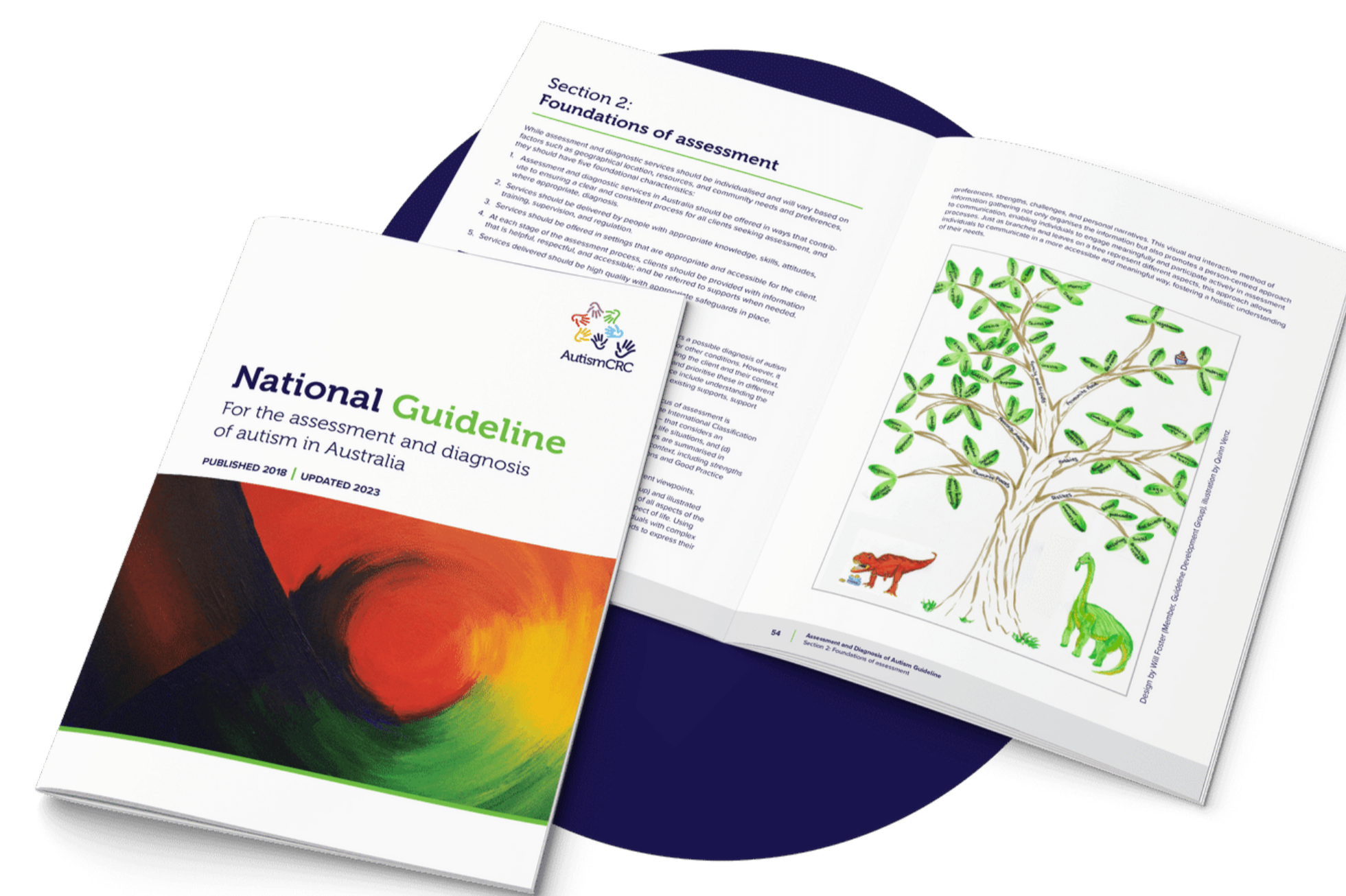
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To access the Guideline visit [autismcrc.com.au](http://autismcrc.com.au)

## Project aim

The National Guideline for Assessment and Diagnosis of Autism in Australia was first published in 2018.

In 2023, it was updated to reflect contemporary community views and preferences and the best available evidence.



## Background

- The National Guideline was first published in 2018 to support practitioners engage in evidence-based, accurate, timely, and appropriate assessment and clinical diagnosis of autism in Australia.
- The Guideline was approved by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and is widely adopted throughout Australia.
- To remain relevant, Guidelines must be updated periodically to account for changes in community views and preferences, as well as research evidence, over time.
- The update was led by a 17-member Guideline Development Group including members with personal and professional expertise in autism.

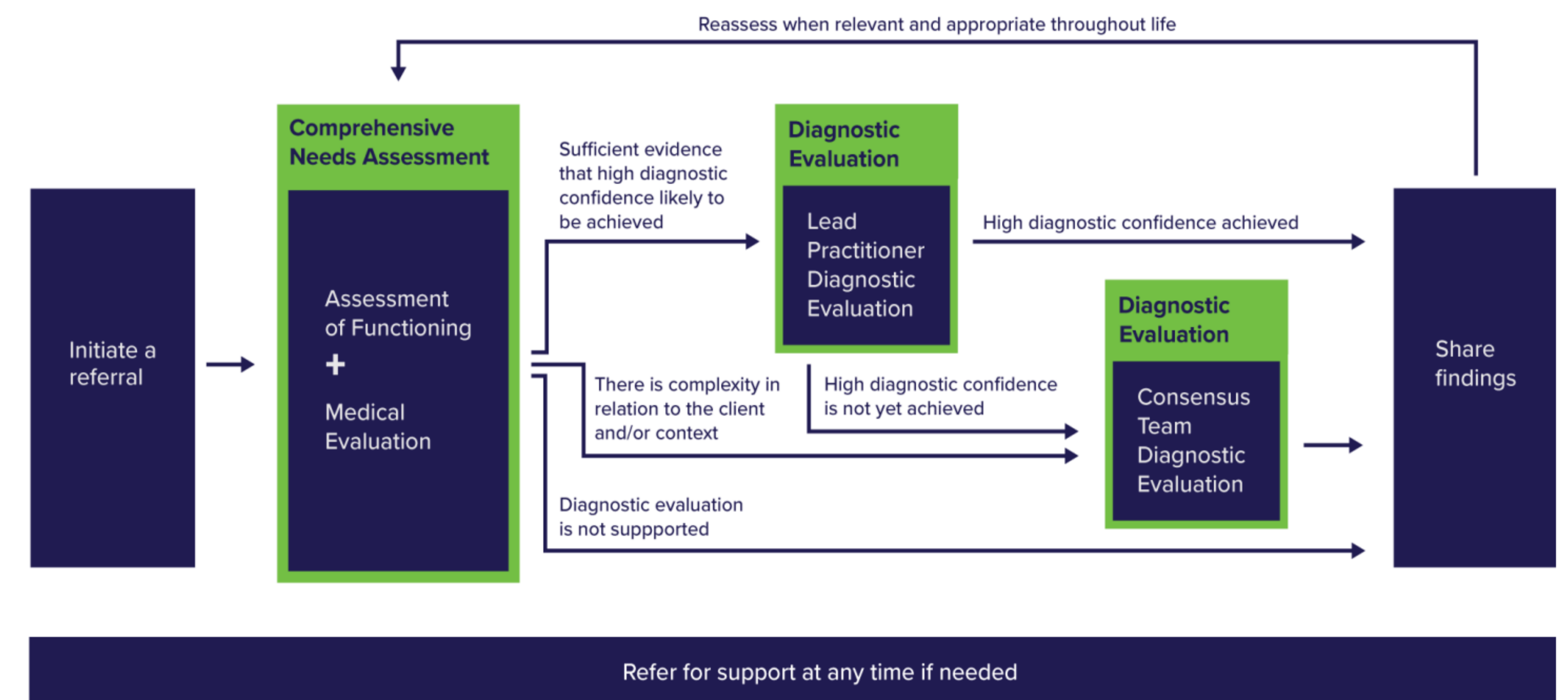
## Method

- The update focused on a review of evidence regarding (a) guiding principles, (b) foundations of assessment, (c) making a referral for assessment, (d) comprehensive needs assessment, and (e) diagnostic evaluation.
- Evidence was gathered via (a) an umbrella review of 16 systematic reviews published between 2018-2022; (b) nine focus groups involving 68 autistic adults, family members, and practitioners; and (c) an online survey completed by 805 individuals from across the autistic and autism communities.
- Recommendations were updated according to the GRADE methodology.

## Key updates

- 66 consensus-based Recommendations.
- New Recommendation layout that includes Good Practice Points to support implementation in practice.
- Updated assessment and diagnosis process (see Figure 1 below):
  - More flexibility, whilst still being a tiered approach and sufficiently structured to ensure all relevant aspects are included.
  - A shift from the wording 'Single Clinician Diagnostic Evaluation' to 'Lead Practitioner Diagnostic Evaluation' emphasising the practitioner leads the process but draws on information and evidence from all relevant sources including the involvement of other practitioners.
  - Clearer guidance for selecting a Lead Practitioner Diagnostic Evaluation or Consensus Team Diagnostic Evaluation.
- Updated language and terminology including focus on neurodiversity-affirming practice.

Figure 1: Process for assessment and diagnosis of autism in Australia.



## For more information

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