

# Autistic Identity and Connection

Information Pack

2022

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# Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Sylvia Rodger Academy's Autistic Identity and Connection Program, delivered in partnership with Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect). We are excited to be able to offer autistic adults in Tasmania, and select areas of New South Wales and Victoria, the opportunity to apply for our program.

This Information Pack will:

- explain the **different activities** in the Autistic Identity and Connection Program, and;
- explain **how to apply**.

## Who can apply?

To apply for the Autistic Identity and Connection Program, you need to:

- identify as **autistic**
- be **aged 18 or older** (no upper age limit) as of 31 December 2022
- live in **New South Wales, Victoria or Tasmania \***
- be willing and available to **participate in all Program activities**, and
- have an interest in
  - exploring autism and autistic identity
  - developing skills in wellbeing and self-advocacy from an autistic perspective
  - connecting with other autistic people and community.

You do not need to have any particular experience or background to apply for this Program.

\* Some select areas of NSW and Victoria are not eligible. You can check your postcode [on our website](#).

## Program activities

The Sylvia Rodger Academy is offering two versions for this Program: an online version, and an online and face-to-face version.

### Online version

This version of the Program involves the following activities.

Activity	Date
Complete 4 <a href="#">modules</a> on topics including identity, wellbeing, and self-advocacy online or by mail	February to April 2023
Attend 4 <a href="#">sessions</a> with other people in the Program, via Zoom or phone	February to April 2023
Attend 6 <a href="#">masterclass</a> online sessions with other people in the Program, via Zoom or phone	June to August 2023

### Online and face-to-face version

This version of the Program involves the following activities. Please note that this is called the 'face-to-face' version in the rest of the document.

Activity	Date
Complete 4 <a href="#">modules</a> on topics including identity, wellbeing, and self-advocacy online or by mail	February to April 2023
Attend 4 <a href="#">sessions</a> with other people in the Program, via Zoom or phone	February to April 2023
Attend a 3.5-day/3-night <a href="#">workshop</a> in an Australian capital city	May 2023

You can select which Program you want to apply for, or which one you prefer, in the application form.

There is no cost to participate in either version of Program. For the face-to-face version, travel, meals and accommodation costs will be paid for by the Sylvia Rodger Academy.

## Modules

The first part of Autistic Identity and Connection Program is 4 modules. These will be emailed to you, but we can post these to you if you would prefer.

The modules are an introduction to topics including autistic identity, wellbeing and self-advocacy. Each module includes a range of videos, readings and activities.

There won't be any tests or graded assessments. Instead, the modules are a chance to **start thinking about autistic identity and learn skills in wellbeing and self-advocacy**.

You will be asked to:

- **explore content.** This will include written content as well as other formats like videos, depending on your learning needs
- **reflect on that content,** and
- **share your thoughts and questions** with others in the group in the online session if you feel comfortable. See '[Online sessions](#)' for more information.

It is estimated that you will need to allow approximately **2 hours per module**.

You will have at least 2 weeks to read the modules and complete the activities before the online session. See '[Online sessions](#)' for more information.

## Module dates

<b>Module 1</b>	Monday 6 February 2023
<b>Module 2</b>	Monday 27 February 2023
<b>Module 3</b>	Monday 20 March 2023
<b>Module 4</b>	Monday 19 April 2023

Before you start, you will be given a **Preparation and Wellbeing Toolkit** to complete to help you prepare.

## Online sessions

The online sessions are an opportunity to:

- **meet from other autistic people** in the Program
- **share your thoughts and questions** about the module content and activities, if you feel comfortable, and
- **hear other autistic people's life experiences.**

There will be 5 online sessions in total. The first online session (Session 0) will be an opportunity for the group to meet each other and practise using the technology. The next 4 sessions will be about the module content. Each session will be 90 minutes.

You can attend the online sessions via Zoom or by phone. You do not need to have your camera on if you prefer, and can type using the 'Chat' function rather than speak.

The sessions will be facilitated by an autistic person. There will also be approximately 15 other autistic people who are also completing the Program.

You can tell us your availability for the online sessions (for example, daytime or night-time) in the application form.

## Online session dates

<b>Session 0</b>	Week of 6 February 2023
<b>Session 1</b>	Week of 20 February 2023
<b>Session 2</b>	Week of 13 March 2023
<b>Session 3</b>	Week of 3 April 2023
<b>Session 4</b>	Week of 24 April 2023

## Residential workshop

Only participants enrolled in **the face-to-face version** of the Program will attend the residential workshop.

The residential workshop will be held in **May 2023** in an Australian capital city for 3-nights. The workshop will be attended by all face-to-face Program participants and Delivery Team members. There may also be some guests and support staff from Autism CRC and/or Aspect.

Attendance and participation at the workshop is an **essential** part of the face-to-face version of this Program.

Activities at the workshop may include:

- Presentations and discussions
- Practical activities
- Question and answer sessions, and
- Optional social activities (such as trivia or walk around the local area).

### Here are some useful things to know about the face-to-face workshop:

- The workshop will be a **flexible space**. You will be free to engage in a way that makes you feel comfortable and able to participate (move about the room, stim, colour, etc.).
- The workshop will be an **inclusive environment**. For example, we will have a variety of seating, ensure there are no fluorescent lights, have sensory tools available, etc.
- We will use the **coloured dot system** so you can let others know if you want to talk or want some space. You can change your coloured dot whenever you want.
- Meals, transport and accommodation will be paid for.
- We will organise your travel, but will work with you to make sure it is appropriate for you. For example, we can meet you at the airport when you arrive.
- The workshop will take place at the **same location** as the accommodation, so you can go to your room anytime if you need to reduce sensory input or need a break. We will livestream the sessions so you will be able to watch from your room.
- If you live in the same city as the workshop, you still have the option to stay at the hotel with the rest of the group.
- Information about the timetable, the sessions and menus will be provided in advance so you know what to expect.
- Information and photos of the venue and the people attending will be provided in advance.

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- We will ask you for information about your **needs and requirements** before the workshop and do our best to accommodate these. This includes your sensory needs, dietary preferences and how you learn best.



## Masterclasses

*Only participants enrolled in **the online version** of the Program will attend masterclasses.*

Masterclasses will run from **June to August 2023**. They are an opportunity to learn about topics that you and other Program participants would like to explore in more depth.

Activities during the masterclasses may include:

- Presentations and discussions
- Practical activities
- Question and answer sessions.

There will be 6 masterclasses in total. Each session will be 90 minutes. The masterclasses will be at the same time of day as the online sessions. You can tell us your availability for these (for example, daytime or night-time) in the application form.

You can attend the online sessions via Zoom or by phone. You do not need to have your camera on if you prefer, and can type using the 'Chat' function rather than speak.

The sessions will be facilitated by an autistic person. There will also be approximately 15 other autistic person who are also completing the Program.

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## Graduation and evaluation

After completing the Program, participants will receive a **certificate of graduation** and **membership** into the Sylvia Rodger Academy.

It is expected that Autistic Identity and Connection participants provide **feedback** about the Program and its content.

# Application process

Applications for Autistic Identity and Connection will **close at midnight 19 December 2022**.

You can apply online or by mail.

To apply online, [click here](#).

To apply by mail, you can either:

- **Print** out [the application form at the end of this Pack](#), fill it in and post or email it back.
- **Contact Ashton** with your postal address. We will then post you an application form and a prepaid return envelope. Contact Ashton at [abartz@autismcrc.com.au](mailto:abartz@autismcrc.com.au) or 0428 994 540.

The exact information you need to provide can be found in the section '[Autistic Identity and Connection Application Form](#)'. In brief, the form will ask you questions about yourself, such as your name and contact details. You will also be asked two longer questions about why you are interested in the Program. You can read these below with some examples.

## Application Questions

1. **Please give us a brief summary of why you are interested in the Autistic Identity and Connection Program.** *Up to 250 words.*

**Example:** We would like to know **why you'd like to apply** for the Autistic Identity and Connection Program and **how you think it may benefit you**. This might include one or more of the following:

- what challenges you've experienced to exploring your identity as an autistic person
- what challenges you've experienced to participating in community (your local community or the autistic community)
- your story of diagnosis or self-identification
- why you would like to explore your identity or connect with other autistic people
- what you would like to learn from other autistic people.

**2. Optional: Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?** *Up to 200 words.*

**Example:** There's no right or wrong answer for this question, and it's entirely optional. It's an opportunity for you to let us know anything else about yourself you would like us to know. It might include your personal circumstances, background, passions and interests. It could also include your family situation, work situation, or positive or negative experience of advocacy.

### Key dates for applications

<b>Applications open</b>	Thursday 1 December 2022
<b>Applications close</b>	Monday 19 December 2022 at midnight
<b>Notification of application outcome</b>	Monday 23 January 2023
<b>Program starts</b>	Monday 6 February 2023

Applicants will be notified if their application was successful or not on **23 January 2023**.

If you accept your place in the Program, you will be sent more information. This will include the **Preparation and Wellbeing Toolkit**, which will help you to learn more about the components of Program and prepare yourself before the Program starts. You will also be sent a form so we can gather more information about you, such as your address and date of birth.

The first online module will be available on **Monday 6 February 2023**.

## Is this program right for you?

If you would like to **learn more about autistic identity, wellbeing and self-advocacy**, and **connect with other autistic people and community**, we encourage you to apply for the Program.

If you are unsure if this is the right program for you, the following resource has been created which may help you work out whether to apply for the Program. If you are still unsure, you can contact Ashton at [abartz@autismcrc.com.au](mailto:abartz@autismcrc.com.au) or text or call 0428 994 540.

### Things to consider

The following dot points highlight some of the reasons you might like to apply for this Program.

We won't be asking you to tell us which dot points apply to you. Instead, they are to **help you to decide whether this program is for you**, and to help you to start thinking about what you might want to tell us about yourself in your application.

This Program is for you if:

- You want to learn more about the diversity of the autistic experience
- You would like to explore and develop your strengths and interests
- You want to learn how other autistic people take care of themselves
- You want to learn how you can advocate for yourself
- You want to connect with other autistic people and community.

# Autistic Identity and Connection Application Form

*This form is for mail applications only. To apply via mail, print page 14-22 of this document, and complete the application questions. Submission mail details are on page 22 of this document.*

Applications close **midnight 19 December 2022**.

If you need support completing this form, contact Ashton at [abartz@autismcrc.com.au](mailto:abartz@autismcrc.com.au) or on 0428 994 540.

If you would like more information about the Program before applying, you can:

- read this Information Pack
- visit [our website](#), or
- contact Ashton (email and phone number above).

To know more about how we handle your privacy, go to [Autism CRC's Privacy Policy](#).

**First name** *(you can use your preferred name)*

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**Last name**

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**Phone number**

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**Email**

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## State

- New South Wales
- Tasmania
- Victoria

If your state or territory is not listed, that means Autistic Identity and Connection is currently unavailable in your location at this time. If you'd like to know why, please [visit our website's FAQs section](#).

## Postcode

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## Age group (as of 31 December 2022)

- 18 to 24
- 25 to 29
- 30 to 39
- 40 to 49
- 50 to 59
- 60 or over

**We want to make sure that the Autistic Identity and Connection Program reflects the diversity of the Autistic community.** Tick as many of the following boxes that apply to you (*this is optional*).

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- Culturally and/or linguistically diverse
- LGBTIQA+
- Live in a rural or remote area
- Have one or more disabilities in addition to being Autistic
- Use a method other than spoken language as your main way to communicate

If you ticked 'LGBTIQA+', please let us know more about how you identify in terms of being LGBTIQA+.

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If you ticked 'Have one or more disabilities in addition to being Autistic', please let us know more about your additional disabilities (*for example physical disability, intellectual disability, etc*).

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If you ticked 'Use a method other than spoken language as your main way to communicate', please let us know how you communicate (*for example signing, AAC device, facilitated communication, etc*).

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Use the following box to tell us more about diverse aspects of your own identity (*this is optional*).

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**Which program would you like to apply for?** (For a description, [visit our website.](#))

- The online only program
- The face-to-face program
- Either program (prefer online only)
- Either program (prefer face-to-face)
- Either program (no preference)

**Part of the program will include attending online sessions during the week in 2023. When are you available?**

- Day time only
- Night time only
- Both

**Is there anything else you would like us to know about your availability?**

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**Optional: Is there anything else you would like us to know about you? (up to 200 words)**

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**Have you applied for or been a participant of a Sylvia Rodger Academy Program before?**

- No
- Yes - Have applied for a previous Program
- Yes - Have been a participant
- Unsure

**Have you ever been involved in a program for Autistic people and/or people with disabilities before? (e.g. a leadership program)**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please write the name of the program, the name of the organisation who offered it, and the estimated year you completed it.

**Example:** *Autism Identity & Awareness for Neurodiverse Adults - Spectrum Space – 2022*

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**How did you hear about the Autistic Identity and Connection Program?** Select as many of the following tick boxes that apply.

- Autism CRC
- Aspect
- My local council
- Facebook ad
- Google ad
- Someone I know
- Other

If you selected 'Other', please let us know how you heard about the Autistic Identity and Connection Program below.

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You have reached the end of the application form. To submit your application, you can:

- a. **Email** your application to Ashton at [abartz@autismcrc.com.au](mailto:abartz@autismcrc.com.au)
- b. **Post** your application to Ashton at the head office. The address for this is:

Attn: Ashton Bartz  
Autism CRC  
PO Box 6068  
St Lucia Qld 4067

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# Privacy

The Sylvia Rodger Academy recognises the importance of protecting your privacy when it comes to your personal information. Any information that is collected from you, including your application, is protected under Australian law and kept private. This means that your application is stored securely and we legally cannot share details of your application (or that you've applied to this Program) with unauthorised staff, visitors, or the general public. This includes family members and support persons.

For more information on Autism CRC's Privacy Policy, which has been guided by the *Privacy Act 1988*, [please visit our website](#).

## Find out more information

Please see [our website](#) for more information about the Program, including answers to some of the questions you may have.

If the question you'd like to ask is not answered on the website (including the FAQs) or in this Applicant Information Pack, please email Ashton Bartz at [abartz@autismcrc.com.au](mailto:abartz@autismcrc.com.au).



*The Sylvia Rodger Academy is an initiative of Autism CRC*