



ASfAR Annual Conference 2026

3–4 December 2026 | University of Melbourne, Parkville Campus

Hosted jointly by the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre, La Trobe University and the University of Melbourne

Abstract Submission Guidelines

Abstract submissions are now open.

Submissions open: Friday 8th May 2026

Submissions close: Friday 3rd July 2026

Outcomes notified: Early August 2026

Questions? Contact: Conference.2026@latrobe.edu.au

Contents

About the Conference	3
Equity and Inclusion	3
Abstract Submission Process	3
Blinded Abstract Review	4
Abstract Submission Portal	4
Instructions for authors and formatting guidelines	5
Presentation Types	5
Oral Presentation	5
Poster Presentation	5
Either Oral or Poster	5
Presentation Topics	5
Adult Outcomes and Quality of Life	6
Biology, Genetics, and Neuroscience	6
Cognition, Communication, and Sensory Experiences	6
Development Across the Lifespan	6
Health and Co-occurring Conditions	6
High and/or Complex Support Needs	6
Lived Experience, Community, and Research Practice	6

Services, Systems, and Policy	6
Supports Across the Lifespan	7
Abstract Submission.....	7
Presenting Author Details	7
Co-author Details	8
Title.....	9
Keywords.....	9
Structured Abstract	9
Lay Abstract.....	9
Consent and Declaration.....	10
Conference Promotion	10
Language and Terminology Guidance	10
Reject Misleading Terms and Replace with Autistic-Preferred Terminology	10
Reframe Understanding of Autism and Autistic Experiences	11
Rethink How to Empower and Support Autistic People.....	11
Abstract Review Criteria.....	11
Abstract Outcome Notifications	12
Presenter Registration	12
Important Dates	12
Contact	12

About the Conference

The ASfAR annual conference brings together researchers, clinicians, autistic people, and allies from across Australasia and beyond. We welcome submissions on all aspects of autism research – from basic science to lived experience, practice-based evidence, and policy. Submissions are peer reviewed. All presenting authors must be members of ASfAR (see here: [LINK](#)). Attendance at the ASfAR 2026 conference is free for members.

Equity and Inclusion

ASfAR is committed to ensuring the conference is inclusive and accessible. We particularly encourage submissions from:

- Autistic researchers and self-advocates
- First Nations scholars and practitioners
- Neurodivergent researchers and practitioners
- Early-career researchers and research students (undergraduate and postgraduate)
- Researchers and practitioners from regional and rural areas
- Families and community members with lived experience of autism
- Internationally based Australasian researchers

Abstract Submission Process

The process of submitting a conference abstract is explained below.

1. Prepare your abstract according to the submission guidelines

Abstracts must follow the required format and word limit, topic categories. Because the review process is blinded, authors must remove identifying information from the abstract text, including names, organisations, project titles that make the authors easily identifiable.

You will be asked to provide author names, affiliations, contact details, and presenter information. These details are kept separate from the abstract and are not shared with reviewers.

2. Submit the abstract through the official submission system

Abstracts *must* be submitted by the published deadline using the conference submission portal. Late or incomplete submissions will not be accepted.

3. Each abstract is reviewed independently

Abstract reviewers assess abstracts against criteria, which include relevance to the conference theme, clarity, originality, significance to the community, methodological quality, practical value, and suitability for the proposed presentation format.

Abstracts are allocated to reviewers with relevant subject knowledge and will not review any abstracts in which they have a conflict of interest.

Abstracts may be accepted, declined, or recommended for a different presentation format. For example, an abstract submitted for an oral presentation may be offered a poster presentation instead.

4. Authors are notified of the outcome

The submitting author is informed of the decision by email. Notifications usually include the outcome, presentation format, next steps, and any required changes or deadlines.

5. Accepted authors confirm participation in the conference

Authors whose abstracts are accepted must confirm that they are willing and available to present. They may also need to register for the conference, submit presenter details, provide a biography, or complete speaker requirements by the stated deadline.

6. Conference program committee prepares the conference program

Once all oral and poster presentations are confirmed, accepted abstracts are placed into the conference program. Scheduling decisions are made by the conference organisers and may consider theme, audience, format, room capacity, and program balance.

Blinded Abstract Review

Blinded review means that no identifying information (such as author names, organisations) will be made available to reviewers. It is designed to reduce bias by focusing assessment on the quality, relevance, and contribution of the abstract rather than the identity or affiliation of the authors. While complete anonymity cannot always be guaranteed, especially for highly specialised work, all reasonable steps are taken to support a fair review process.

Abstract Submission Portal

The submission portal opens on Friday 8th May 2026 and closes at the end of Friday 3rd July 2026. Only abstracts submitted via the online abstract submission portal will be considered for inclusion in the 2026 conference program.

You must enter your abstract text directly into the online submission portal. You can access the portal by clicking on this link <https://airtable.com/appqffsK8jz6EN5RI/pagnQ6N3f3gnrzGn/form>

Once an abstract has been submitted, an acknowledgement email will be sent to the submitting author from the Airtable platform, where abstracts are submitted. If you do not receive this email, please first check your spam or junk folder. If it is still not found, please contact Conference.2026@latrobe.edu.au

Instructions for authors and formatting guidelines

Please review the instructions below carefully prepare your abstract for online submission.

- Please use the Language and Terminology Guidance section of this document when preparing your abstract.
- Do not include the abstract title in the abstract text fields (captured separately).
- Use sentence case throughout (do not use CAPITAL LETTERS).
- Do not include tables, figures, or images.
- Check spelling and grammar carefully – accepted abstracts will be published in the conference program and book of abstracts.

You will be asked to enter all the information below in the online submission portal.

Presentation Types

Submissions may be made for the following presentation types:

Oral Presentation

A presentation delivered verbally in person at the conference. Oral presentations will be scheduled into themed sessions. Timing details will be confirmed upon acceptance.

Poster Presentation

A printed poster displayed during designated poster viewing sessions, with opportunities for informal discussion with delegates. Poster presenters are responsible for printing their own poster.

Either Oral or Poster

If you are open to either format, you may select 'Either Oral or Poster'. The program committee will then assign the most suitable format based on the overall program.

Presentation Topics

ASfAR encourages submissions that are inclusive, neurodiversity affirming, and grounded in scientific rigour. We particularly welcome research that centres Autistic adults, incorporates lived experience, and contributes to meaningful improvements in health, wellbeing, and quality of life.

There are nine (9) topic areas for the 2026 ASfAR conference:

- Adult Outcomes and Quality of Life
- Biology, Genetics, and Neuroscience
- Cognition, Communication, and Sensory Experiences
- Development Across the Lifespan
- Health and Co-occurring Conditions
- High and/or Complex Support Needs

- Lived Experience, Community, and Research Practice
- Services, Systems, and Policy
- Supports Across the Lifespan

You will be asked to select the topic area that best fits when submitting your abstract. A full description of each topic area is listed below.

Adult Outcomes and Quality of Life

This theme invites abstracts focused on the lived experiences and outcomes of Autistic adults across adulthood and aging (18–80+). Topics may include physical and mental health, wellbeing, cognition, independence, relationships, employment, education, housing, and community participation.

Biology, Genetics, and Neuroscience

Abstracts are invited that examine the biological underpinnings of autism, including genetics, genomics, molecular and cellular biology, and neuroscience. Human studies and model systems are welcome, particularly where findings have relevance for understanding adult outcomes or clinical translation.

Cognition, Communication, and Sensory Experiences

Abstracts focusing on cognitive processes, learning, communication (including AAC), sensory and motor experiences, and repetitive behaviours across the lifespan. Both strengths based and support-oriented approaches are encouraged.

Development Across the Lifespan

Research examining Autistic development from early life through adulthood and aging, including longitudinal and cross-sectional studies. Abstracts may address developmental continuity and change, transitions across life stages, and factors that shape long term outcomes.

Health and Co-occurring Conditions

This theme includes research on medical, mental health, and neurodevelopmental conditions that commonly co-occur with autism, such as anxiety, depression, trauma, sleep difficulties, epilepsy, and physical health conditions, with particular relevance to adult wellbeing.

High and/or Complex Support Needs

Research focused on Autistic people with high and/or complex support needs, including individuals with limited or no spoken language, intellectual disability, and significant medical or behavioural support requirements. Studies addressing quality of life, services, communication, and caregiver experiences are welcome.

Lived Experience, Community, and Research Practice

This theme invites first person, participatory, and community engaged research, including Autistic led scholarship. Topics may include identity, masking, stigma, culture, gender and sexuality, family and caregiver experiences, ethics, and neurodiversity affirming research methods.

Services, Systems, and Policy

Abstracts examining service delivery, systems of care, access and equity, transitions, disability services, and policy relevant research. This theme prioritises work that informs improvements in systems supporting Autistic adults and their families.

Supports Across the Lifespan

This theme welcomes research evaluating biomedical, psychological, social, behavioural, educational, and community-based supports for Autistic people. Emphasis is placed on real world relevance, outcomes that matter to Autistic individuals, and adult focused supports.

Abstract Submission

All presenting authors must be members of ASfAR (see here: <https://asfar.org.au/membership/>). Attendance at the ASfAR 2026 conference is free for members.

Each submission must nominate one primary speaking presenter. Co-authors may be listed separately. If the main or first author is not the speaking presenter but wishes to be present on stage in a non-speaking role, this request may be made after acceptance and will be considered subject to program, room, accessibility, and session requirements.

Presenting Author Details

You will be asked to enter the following information in the online submission portal. This information is not shared with reviewers and is for administrative use only.

Where the \circ symbol is shown, this means you will need to select one of the options listed in the table below, when you submit via the online submission portal.

Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> Professor<input type="radio"/> Associate Professor<input type="radio"/> Dr<input type="radio"/> Mr<input type="radio"/> Mrs<input type="radio"/> Ms<input type="radio"/> Miss<input type="radio"/> Mx <p><i>Note: Mx (pronounced "mix" or "muks") is a gender-neutral honorific title used before a person's last name</i></p>
First name	
Last name	
Preferred name	
Affiliation	Please include Institution / Affiliation and Department / School / Country If more than one affiliation please number these (1, 2, 3 etc)

	If you are a family member or community member and do not have an affiliation, please state this.
Email address	
ASfAR Membership	<input type="radio"/> Student <input type="radio"/> Full membership <input type="radio"/> Full membership (Autistic)
Career Stage	<input type="radio"/> Undergraduate <input type="radio"/> Masters Research candidate <input type="radio"/> PhD candidate <input type="radio"/> Other postgraduate <input type="radio"/> ECR <input type="radio"/> MCR <input type="radio"/> Senior <input type="radio"/> Other <i>Note:</i> ECR= Early Career Researcher, typically defined as an academic or scientist within eight years of completing their PhD or equivalent qualification. MCR= Mid-Career Researcher
Do you identify as Neurodivergent?	<input type="radio"/> Autistic <input type="radio"/> Other neurodivergence <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say <input type="radio"/> No <i>Note:</i> Please select prefer not to say if you do not wish to disclose.
Neurodivergent description	Participants who identify as neurodivergent are invited to describe their neurodivergent identity further if they wish
Do you identify as Indigenous or First Nations?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say

Co-author Details

You will be asked to list all co-authors, other than the presenting author.

For each co-author, please include the following information:

- Title
- Full name
- Affiliation/s

- Email if known.

Title

The title must be no longer than 15 words.

The title should focus on the main findings, be descriptive and avoid jargon and acronyms.

Keywords

In addition to your abstract, submit 3–5 keywords (comma separated) that describe the focus of your abstract (e.g. methods, population, concepts).

Structured Abstract

Word limit: The structured abstract (Background through Discussion & Conclusion) must not exceed 350 words in total. The Lay Abstract is additional and must not exceed 150 words.

Please use the following headings in your abstract (included in word limit):

- Background
- Aim
- Method
- Results
- Discussion & Conclusion

Abstracts **must not** include any information that identifies the author(s) – author details are captured separately during submission.

Section	Guidance
Background	<i>Briefly describe the context and rationale for the study. Why is this research needed?</i>
Aim	<i>State the primary aim or research question.</i>
Method	<i>Summarise the study design, participants, and key procedures.</i>
Results	<i>Report the main findings. Include key data where relevant.</i>
Discussion & Conclusion	<i>Interpret your findings and state the main conclusion or implications for practice or policy.</i>

Lay Abstract

You must also submit a lay abstract, using plain language, no longer than 150 words.

The lay abstract should be written in plain language for a general audience. Avoid jargon and technical terms. This section helps make your research accessible to Autistic community members, families, and non-specialist attendees.

Section	Guidance
Lay Abstract	<i>Write a plain language summary accessible to a non-specialist audience. Maximum 150 words.</i>

Consent and Declaration

Declarations for compliance and participation in the conference program. Please ensure all authors have agreed to submission and publication and review all consent options before submitting.

As part of your submission, you will be required to confirm the following:

- All listed authors have approved this submission.
- Consent to the abstract being published in conference proceedings (Yes / No).
Note: saying no to this question does not impact the likelihood of an abstract being accepted.

Conference Promotion

You will be asked to provide information about how you found out about the conference. This section of the online submission portal is optional.

Language and Terminology Guidance

Reject Misleading Terms and Replace with Autistic-Preferred Terminology

Instead of...	Consider using...
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	Autism
Person with autism	Autistic
Suffers from autism	Is Autistic
Asperger's syndrome	Autism
Autism symptoms	Autistic traits
At risk of autism	May be Autistic / high or low likelihood
Normal person	Allistic /non-Autistic
Co-morbidity	Co-occurring

Non-verbal autism	Non-speaking
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Reframe Understanding of Autism and Autistic Experiences

Instead of...	Consider using...
High/low functioning, severe/mild autism	Describe specific support needs
Quantifying autism on a linear spectrum	Describe strengths and challenges
Someone does not look/act Autistic	Consideration of Autistic masking
Behaviour challenges/problems	Describe expressions of distress
Autism cure, treatment, or intervention	Focus supports on Autistic wellbeing

Rethink How to Empower and Support Autistic People

Instead of...	Consider using...
Special needs, learning impairment	Neurodivergent
Mental age	Actual age
Superpower, twice-exceptional	Strengths and support needs
Restricted interests, obsessions	Specialised/focused/intense interests
Pathological demand avoidance (PDA)	Pervasive drive for autonomy (PDA)
Autistic children (referring to the Autistic population)	Autistic people
Autistic people and their families, carers and whānau (referring to Autistic perspectives and experiences)	Autistic people supported by their families, carers, and whānau (and those who make up their support network)
Autism parent or ASD parent	Parent of an Autistic person
Puzzle piece symbol	Infinity loop neurodiversity symbol

Abstract Review Criteria

All abstract submissions will be peer reviewed.

Submissions will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Relevance to the conference themes and to the autism research field
- Scientific or scholarly rigour and originality

- Clarity and quality of writing
- Potential contribution and significance to research, policy, or practice
- Inclusion of Autistic and/or diverse perspectives

Please note: Commercial program presentations will not be accepted.

Abstract Outcome Notifications

Notification of review outcomes and acceptance decisions will be sent to the submitting author in early August 2026. It is the responsibility of the submitting author to inform all co-authors of the outcome.

Presenter Registration

All presenting authors must be members of ASfAR (see here: <https://asfar.org.au/membership/>). Attendance at the ASfAR 2026 conference is free for members. Registration details will be provided upon acceptance. If registration is not completed by the specified deadline, the abstract will be removed from the program.

Important Dates

Date	Milestone
Friday 8th May 2026	Abstract submission portal opens
Friday 3rd July 2026	Abstract submission deadline
Early August 2026	Notification of acceptance decisions
3rd – 4th December 2026	ASfAR Annual Conference

Contact

For any questions or assistance regarding abstract submissions, please contact the conference organising team:

Email: Conference.2026@latrobe.edu.au

Website: www.asfar.org.au