25 June 2026

La Trobe University's Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre will receive $11.1 million over three years to establish the Australian Autism Knowledge Hub, as part of the Australian Government's National Autism Strategy.

This funding will strengthen Autism research and evidence to improve real-world policy, supports and services for Autistic people, their families and carers.

The Hub will bring together researchers and the Autism community to coordinate a national approach to transforming Autism research into practical tools.

La Trobe University will contribute an additional $3.8 million to the Hub, taking the total investment to almost $15 million.

The Hub will:

- Use research to create practical tools, frameworks and guidance
- Strengthen Autistic-led and co-produced research
- Support collaboration between researchers, service providers, governments, Autistic people, and the Autism community
- Build capabilities across the Autism research sector, and ensure research is culturally appropriate, trauma-informed and aligns with neurodiversity-affirming principles.

Researchers will work in partnership with Autistic-led organisations and research institutes to produce findings that reflect the diversity of the Autism community.

All Hub activities will be jointly led and co-designed by Autistic people to ensure research is shaped by lived experience.

First Nations Autistic people and carers of Autistic people will be represented through an advisory council that works with the Hub's leadership and governance structures.

This will ensure culturally appropriate engagement, community control over data, and alignment of research priorities with the government's efforts to Close the Gap.

Work to establish the Australian Autism Knowledge Hub is expected to begin in July 2026.

This funding is part of a series of grants under the Australian Government's National Autism Strategy 2025–2031.

Quotes attributable to NDIS Minister, Senator Jenny McAllister:

"The Australian Government is working to improve the lives of Autistic people across Australia by investing in groundbreaking Autism research.

“Better services, supports and policy will help build a safer and more inclusive Australia for Autistic people, their families and carers.

“Establishing the Australian Autism Knowledge Hub at La Trobe University is a key step towards better outcomes for Autistic people in Australia.”

Quotes attributable to La Trobe University Vice-Chancellor Professor Theo Farrell:

“Through this initiative, La Trobe University and OTARC aim to position Australia as a global leader in translating autism research into real-world outcomes, demonstrating how genuine partnership with the community can drive lasting and meaningful change.

“The Australian Autism Knowledge Hub represents a major step forward in La Trobe University and OTARC’s long-standing commitment to working alongside the Autistic community.”

Quotes attributable to Australian Autism Knowledge Hub Director Professor Dawn Adams:

“The initiative addresses a longstanding gap between research and impact.

“Every year there are hundreds of autism research articles published in Australia, but they’re not creating enough real-world change.

“The Hub has been designed to shift that, to create meaningful change in the lives of Autistic people across Australia.”

Quotes attributable to Australian Autism Knowledge Hub Deputy Director Associate Professor Josephine Barbaro:

“This Hub is built on the principle that Autistic people drive and lead this work, not just participate in it.

“That means being involved from the very beginning, shaping the questions, through to how findings are used in real-world services and policy.”

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