

# DXC Dandelion Program

## 2019 in Review



# Welcome to DXC Technology



**Seelan Nayagam**  
Managing Director  
DXC Technology  
Australia & New Zealand

DXC Technology commenced its journey into neurodiversity in 2014 with the establishment of the DXC Dandelion Program. As the executive sponsor of the DXC Dandelion Program, I am extremely proud of what we have been able to achieve and the support we have provided to neurodiverse individuals across Australia and New Zealand. Since the program began, we have assisted over 120 individuals with employment opportunities.

With the constant demand for new talent in the IT industry, today, more than ever, organisations are recognising the importance and value of integrating individuals with autism into the workforce and the advantages that a neurodiverse workforce brings.

In 2019, five new DXC Dandelion teams were implemented in organisations across Australia. In addition, based on its success and benefits, five existing clients with programs that had reached maturity, renewed their respective programs and extended the partnership. These forward-thinking organisations recognise the benefits that neurodiversity brings to their business.

One of the most significant milestones achieved during the year was the establishment of an Enterprise Centre with Autism New Zealand aimed at helping individuals gain jobs in industries such as hospitality, accounting, agriculture, and IT. This new Enterprise Centre in New Zealand offers one of the world's first on-site training and learning facilities aimed at preparing young autistic people for the working world.

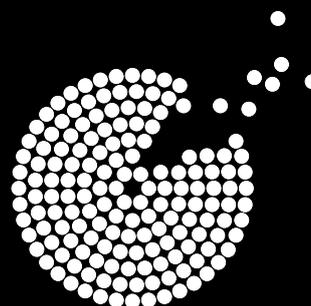
The DXC Dandelion Program is part of DXC Technology's Social Impact Practice which reflects DXC's broader commitment to communities in Australia and New Zealand. The Social Impact Practice aims to build relationships with community groups, peak bodies and representative academic organisations – both locally and internationally. Its key objective is to better understand regional social issues and engage with business to co-design solutions that benefit the community and improve employment opportunities.

As corporates we have a responsibility to address social issues and challenges using our business knowledge and scale. Moving forward, the DXC Dandelion Program will continue to focus on the issue of sustainable employment and provide program participants with technical, life and executive functioning skills to increase their employability and pursue career opportunities in information technology.

## Vision

Our vision is to build valuable information technology, life, and executive functioning skills to help establish careers for people on the autism spectrum.

Through ongoing evidence-based research, along with our experiences and learnings, we have designed a sustainable program, to create the right environment, with the right support structure, to ensure that individuals are able to learn and grow as employees and as individuals.





**Michael Fieldhouse**

Social Impact Practice Executive  
DXC Technology  
Australia & New Zealand

# Introduction

I would like to thank everyone for making 2019 another successful year for the DXC Dandelion Program. The program continues to change the perception of employers regarding the value of embracing neurodiversity in the workplace.

With an unacceptably high rate of unemployment in the autistic community, the DXC Dandelion Program continues to build environments that support and embrace the talents and skills of people on the autism spectrum, and to focus on the issue of sustainable employment.

DXC established new, critical partnerships in 2019 that continue to propel Autism@Work programs to the forefront of workplace inclusion. The program maintained its growth both nationally and internationally, and continues to be recognised for its leadership, innovation and commitment to helping people on the autism spectrum. It is identified as a true collaboration between government, private organisations, academia and the community – who all share the same vision of helping autistic and neurodiverse individuals obtain meaningful employment and more importantly, achieve successful careers.

During the year, the DXC Dandelion Program also received recognition from various industry, client and independent organisations with a number of awards for its support of individuals on the autism spectrum.

In August 2019, the DXC Dandelion Program was featured on ABC TV's weekly news-documentary program, Compass, which looked at how robots are increasingly being used with individuals on the autism spectrum. DXC's involvement was filmed in March during a DXC Dandelion assessment workshop at ANZ bank in Melbourne.

The success of the DXC Dandelion Program has been made possible through our relationships with community groups, individuals in the program providing feedback, our clients and strategic academic partnerships such as Cornell, Stanford and La Trobe University.

As a result of open-sourcing our program material over 500+ organisations across 94 countries, with a readership base of over 6,000, have downloaded the DXC Dandelion Program material.

The program continues to grow. Discussions are currently underway with existing and new clients to establish additional DXC Dandelion Program teams in Brisbane at Queensland Department of Education, and in Canberra at the Australian Department of Defence.

I would like to thank the DXC Dandelion Program team and our partners for their hard work, dedication and commitment to the program. I look forward to the coming year as we continue to expand the program with clients, within DXC, and to share our learnings and research with the greater community.

## Initiatives undertaken during 2019

- Participation in an Autism@Work initiative with the Australian federal government to help disability employment service providers
- Development of mental health programs to help support individuals, co-workers, managers, support workers and carers
- Greater expansion into other segments of neurodiversity in the community
- The continuation of sustainable and long-term employment for people on the spectrum
- Testing of new support models based on research from our partner organisations
- Continuation of our partnership and collaboration with Israeli-based Ro'im Rachok – the world's oldest autism program
- The successful hosting of the third Autism@Work Summit in Melbourne, Australia
- The first Autism@Work Summit on the east coast of the United States in collaboration with our partners SAP, E&Y, JP Morgan Chase and Els Foundation

# 2019 key achievements



Five new DXC Dandelion teams established for new and existing clients



Eleven DXC Dandelion teams across Australia, employing 120+ individuals



178 national talent pool participants



Winner of six industry awards



Renewed and extended existing programs with partners



Hosted World Autism Awareness events across Australia and New Zealand



Hosted 3rd Annual Autism@Work Summit in Australia



Expansion of neurodiversity hub initiative



On-going strategic partnerships with global research organisations

## DID YOU KNOW?

There were 205,200 Australians with autism in 2018, a 25.1% increase from the 164,000 in 2015.\*

\* Australia Bureau of Statistics

## Key achievements in 2019

Over the last five years, eleven DXC Dandelion Program teams have been established across Australia, employing over 120 neurodiverse individuals, along with over 20 technical and support leads. We have also established several successful and ongoing client partnerships including:

- Public sector organisations:
  - Services Australia – Brisbane, Adelaide and Canberra
  - Department of Defence – Canberra
  - Department of Home Affairs – Canberra
  - Department of Social Services – Canberra
  - Department of Industry, Innovation and Science – Melbourne and Canberra
  - Queensland Department of Education – Brisbane
- Commercial organisations:
  - Australia and New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ) – Melbourne
  - National Australia Bank (NAB) – Melbourne

## Implementation of new teams

2019 saw the implementation of five new teams across Australia:

- **ANZ bank – Melbourne.** DXC introduced a second cohort of seven people within the ANZ data analytics/ cyber security department
- **National Australia Bank (NAB) – Melbourne.** DXC established a partnership with NAB to implement their Neurodiversity at NAB Program program, introducing a team of eight people into the bank's cyber security department
- **Department of Social Services (DSS) – Canberra.** DXC partnered with DSS to implement an Autism at Work Program and established a data analytics team
- **Department of Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (DIIS) – Canberra, Melbourne.** DXC partnered with DIIS to implement the Autism Talent Engagement program, introducing individuals in Canberra and Melbourne
- **Services Australia – Brisbane.** As a reflection of the success of the existing team, Services Australia, (formerly the Department of Human Services), extended their partnership with DXC to implement a second cohort of ten people into their software testing practice

## Renewal of existing programs

In 2019, a number of existing programs reached maturity. Given the success and benefits of the program, our clients were eager to extend the partnership with DXC to renew their respective programs:

- Department of Home Affairs, Canberra
- Services Australia, (formerly the Department of Human Services), Brisbane and Canberra
- ANZ bank, Melbourne
- Department of Defence, Canberra



Untapped is a network of autism professionals, recruiters, software developers, training providers, researchers and workplace consultants, who are passionate about neurodiversity inclusion. Untapped works in partnership with DXC Technology to expand the breadth and reach of autism at work initiatives and develop a sustainable neurodiverse employment ecosystem.

## Autism@Work initiative – Australian federal government

In collaboration with our partner Untapped, the DXC Dandelion Program team has been working with the Australian Department of Social Services (DSS) to implement an Autism at Work initiative which has been designed to assist disability service providers with employment for people on the spectrum.

This initiative forms part of the Australian coalition's 2019 Disability Support Plan which includes the government's intention to partner with DXC to expand the successful DXC Dandelion Program:

*Provide \$2 million to support people with autism to find and keep a job, including a \$1.5 million national expansion of the successful DXC Dandelion Program in partnership with DXC Technology.*

### Morrison Government's Plan to Support People with Disability

[liberal.org.au/latest-news/2019/05/02/morrison-governments-plan-support-people-disability](http://liberal.org.au/latest-news/2019/05/02/morrison-governments-plan-support-people-disability)

The Autism@Work initiative leverages DXC's Dandelion Program approach and knowledge together with Untapped's tools, to support the Australian federal government disability employment services program.

# Awards in 2019

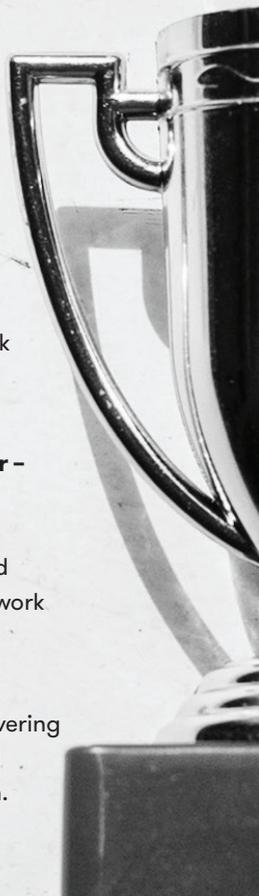
## PREVIOUS AWARDS

- 2018 ISG ANZ Paragon Awards – Impact category
- 2017 ACT Chief Minister’s Award for Excellence and Inclusion in Business
- 2017 AAGE Graduate Recruitment Industry Awards: Will Spensley Memorial Award
- 2017 AIIA iAwards South Australia: Community Services
- 2015 AIIA iAwards ACT: Inclusion and Community
- 2015 Asia Pacific Autism Conference: Outstanding Service in the Autism Spectrum Field
- 2015 Amaze Community Awards: Excellence in Business Leadership

Over the years, the DXC Dandelion Program has received recognition from various organisations for its impact to the community and support of individuals on the autism spectrum.

In 2019 we were honoured to receive the following awards:

- **2020 iTnews Benchmark Awards: Diversity Project of the Year for 2019**  
The DXC Dandelion Program was awarded Diversity Project of the Year for 2019. The award celebrates the efforts of organisations to deliver products and services that are accessible to the maximum number of Australians, regardless of their ability, and the efforts of IT teams to make their teams more diverse.
- **2019 NAB Supplier Awards: Diversity, Inclusion and Sustainability**  
The DXC Dandelion Program was awarded the Diversity, Inclusion and Sustainability Award at the 2019 NAB Supplier Awards for the successful implementation of the NAB Neurodiversity@Work Program. The NAB Supplier Awards are an opportunity to bring together leading Australian and global NAB suppliers to celebrate their success and to learn more about NAB’s future organisational strategy.
- **2019 ACS Digital Disruptors Awards: Skills Transformation of Work Teams – Medium**  
The DXC Dandelion Program received the Skills Transformation of Work Teams award for demonstrating the use of innovative solutions to help develop, upskill and transform a medium sized team to improve performance, culture, competencies and/or productivity.
- **2019 ACS South Australian Young Professional of the Year (Felicia Vozzo)**  
In August, Felicia Vozzo, manager of DXC’s Dandelion Assessment Program, won the 2019 ACS South Australia Young Professional award, the first woman to win the prize in its twenty year history. Felicia won the award for her work in leading and overseeing assessment and work experience programs to build a talent pool of individuals on the autism spectrum.
- **2019 ACS Digital Disruptors Awards: Young Professional of the Year – Gold Disruptor (Felicia Vozzo)**  
DXC’s Felicia Vozzo was awarded the 2019 Young Professional of the Year (Female) Gold Disruptor award. Having won the state award earlier in the year, Felicia progressed to the national awards for her work in developing programs for individuals on the autism spectrum.
- **DXC Award for Service Delivery Excellence**  
The DXC Dandelion Program team was recognised internally for delivering excellent client experiences, excelling in delivery implementation and leadership, and reflecting DXC’s CLEAR values and technology vision.





iTnews Benchmark Awards



NAB Supplier Awards



ACS South Australian Young Professional of the Year



## DID YOU KNOW?

The unemployment rate for people with autism spectrum disorders was 34.1%, more than three times the rate for people with disability (10.3%) and almost eight times the rate of people without disability (4.6%).

# Events in 2019

DXC hosted a number of events across Australia and New Zealand during 2019 to raise awareness of the skills and strengths of individuals on the spectrum. Designed to encourage organisations to establish sustainable autism employment programs, the events showcased the benefits to the community and the value to organisations of employing people on the autism spectrum.

“People on the autism spectrum represent an untapped resource and an opportunity to expand a business’ diversity and inclusion ... [the events are] a tremendous opportunity to highlight the value of a marginalised group of people.”

**Yohan Ramasundara,**  
ACS President

## **World Autism Awareness Month, April 2019**

World Autism Awareness Month is a globally recognised opportunity to raise awareness about people on the autism spectrum. This year DXC partnered with the Australian Computer Society (ACS) to deliver a series of events on World Autism Awareness Day and World Autism Awareness Month, in Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney and Wellington.

Across the region over 400 people attended these events and learnt about the experiences of, and opportunities for individuals on the spectrum.

In Australia the events included panel discussions with learned colleagues involved in related autism spectrum programs and organisations such as Bankwest, BHP Autism Academy for Software Quality Assurance (AASQA), Xceptional, SAP, DTA, Marymead, and Commonwealth Bank of Australia.

To celebrate World Autism Month in New Zealand, DXC partnered with Autism New Zealand to host an executive luncheon in Wellington to explore how employing a neurodiverse workforce could offer advantages to businesses.



World Autism Day, Wellington, New Zealand



World Autism Day, Brisbane, Australia

## Asia Pacific Autism Conference, June 2019

Information showcasing the DXC Dandelion Program in Australia was well received and sparked much interest at the 2019 Asia Pacific Autism Conference held in Singapore on 20-22 June. The conference theme, "Thriving with Autism" reflected the aspiration towards achieving quality of life for all people with autism, their families and the professionals serving in the community. Attended by 1,800 delegates from 33 countries, the event included 30 international speakers and 300 presenters. This was the first time the APAC event had been held outside Australia since its inception in 2009 and was the largest autism training event held in the region.

DXC's presentation and workshop were well attended and our audiences were very engaged. Our representation built upon the presence DXC already enjoys in the region and gave us an opportunity to provide conceptual and practical examples of how autistic self-advocates together with community groups and the commercial sector, can embark on a journey together.

The keynote, plenary and other speakers' presentations reinforced the DXC Dandelion Program approach and shared our message of a sustainable model to deliver results for individuals and clients, and the importance of building foundations of safety, security and predictability to enable autistic individuals to thrive.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Studies have shown that approximately 4 times as many men are diagnosed with autism than women.



## **Australian Autism@Work Summit, July 2019**

DXC Technology, in partnership with Autism Cooperative Research Centre (Autism CRC) and supported by our valued partners National Australia Bank, ANZ bank, SAP and Untapped, hosted the third annual Australian Autism@Work Summit in Melbourne in July 2019.

Featuring international guest speakers Professor Lawrence Fung and John Marble, the theme of the summit was “Transition to a neurodiverse workforce”. The extremely successful event was attended by over 250 people including employers, industry organisations, partners and individuals from the autism community.

An executive breakfast was organised before the summit which involved a panel of speakers including representatives from the Australian Department of Defence, National Australia Bank, ANZ bank and DXC.

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

Even though some individuals on the autism spectrum have managed to obtain employment - often it's in the wrong role or in the wrong environment and is not sustainable for them.



### **The agenda featured:**

#### **Keynote speakers**

- **John Marble** – International Neurodiversity Consultant, Pivot Neurodiversity. Founder of Pivot Neurodiversity John Marble is a writer and speaker on innovation, autism and neurodiversity
- **Matt Ormiston** – an autism employment advocate, and the initial program director of the Spectrum Program at ANZ bank which at the time was an Australian first for a large corporate
- **Dr Lawrence Fung** – Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences, Stanford University. Dr Fung is a director of the Stanford Neurodiversity Project, which strives to uncover the strengths of neurodiverse individuals and utilise their talents to increase innovation and productivity of the society as a whole

## Panels and round-tables

The event included a number of panels and round-table discussions leveraging the experience and expertise from various government, industry, research and partner organisations:

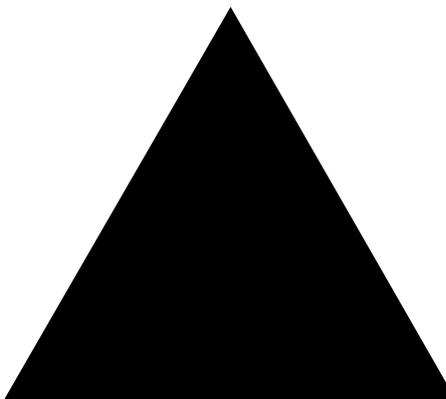
- **Session 1** – Employer panel: Transitioning the workplace. MC: Katrina Enos, Chair of NABility, NAB
- **Session 2** – Three panels. MCs: Associate Professor Marina Ciccarelli, Curtin University; Brendan James, Autism CRC
  - Mental health in the workforce
  - Neurodiversity hubs. Transitioning from school to university and preparing for the world of work
  - The making of MyWay Employability: from research to practice. MyWay Employability is a mobile-first web application to empower young people to plan and prepare for future study, training and employment
- **Session 3** – Three panels. MCs: Miranda Spencer, Resource Architecture; Wendy Elford]
  - Transitioning into the workforce: the recruitment process for neurodiverse job seekers
  - Transitioning work teams – cyber security at ANZ and NAB
  - Transitioning the working environment – “neurodiverse placemaking”
- **Session 4** – Employee panel: Transitioning to work – lived experiences of autism. MC: Andrew Baird, ANZ bank
  - A panel of autistic participants from the DXC Dandelion Program and other autism programs speaking about their experiences in the workforce and how meaningful employment has changed their lives. Participants included employees from NAB, ANZ, DHHS, Orygen, ABS, Sunpork and Kirk Cetinic (a freelance graphic designer)



For keynote videos, presentations and photographs from the event, visit the Autism@Work website: <https://www.autismatwork.org/australia>

## US Autism at Work Summit East/Fall, October 2019

DXC partnered with SAP, E&Y, JP Morgan Chase and the Els for Autism Foundation to host the Autism at Work Summit East/Fall in the United States. 290 people from 15 countries attended the event in Jupiter, Florida, which featured 21 speakers and panellists with autism, and content highlighting employment across ability levels and industries, from self-employment/entrepreneurship to professional and non-professional jobs.



# Client success stories



## National Australia Bank: Neurodiversity at NAB program

In April 2019, DXC partnered with National Australia Bank (NAB) to establish the Neurodiversity at NAB program with the intent of embedding diversity and inclusion into the culture and fabric of the bank through the employment of people on the autism spectrum.

### Establishment phase

During establishment of the Neurodiversity at NAB program, the DXC Dandelion Program application process was reviewed and evaluated. Based on learnings and research over the last five years, the selection and establishment phase was re-designed, resulting in a more efficient and effective methodology to identify suitable candidates, significantly reducing the application process.

From the initial applicants, 18 individuals were invited to attend a one-day workshop, with 12 of these candidates invited to participate in the three-week assessment program.

At the completion of the three-week assessment, candidates had successfully:

- Been introduced to the world of cyber security
- Worked on a real IT software development project
- Learnt a number of modern software development techniques
- Worked in an agile framework, using agile toolsets



- Programmed a robot with a number of features
- Worked as a collaborative team

At the end of the assessment, six individuals – five men and one woman – were offered positions in the Enterprise Security department working with the Staff Identity and Access (IdAM) team.

### Operational phase

The new team was successfully integrated into the NAB culture and working environment. Performance management was undertaken using consistent tools and methods to assess autism support and mental health management needs to ensure that trainees were not impacted adversely by working within the program.

Throughout the process, DXC leads observed the team members' strengths and capabilities, motivation, ability to integrate into an office environment, team work, and any individual needs they required.

Within three months of the team's implementation, a productivity report was generated to assess the level of output, specifically around the work tasks they were assigned. The report highlighted some amazing results that demonstrated a 26% productivity increase by the DXC Dandelion team, compared to existing teams' output.

Since starting their employment with the bank, the team have been able to establish themselves very quickly and have become valued members of the IdAM team. These individuals are now able to provide knowledge transfer and mentorship to new starters.

Placements in other areas of the Enterprise Security department began in late 2019, with team members undertaking projects in various departments, including Engineering, Oversight and Access Management, Awareness and Advisory, Detection and Fraud, Infrastructure Delivery Services and Infrastructure, Workplace and Security. Since the assignments began, many other teams in the business are offering placements to Neurodiversity at NAB team members. We anticipate many of these placements will result in more permanent secondments.

### Organisational change initiatives

DXC and NAB established working groups to initiate an internal communication strategy to introduce the Neurodiversity at NAB team to bank employees, and analysis was undertaken to establish an overall training strategy and framework, and to define and tailor initial and on-going training packages to suit the organisation's requirements.

The following autism awareness training sessions were successfully delivered to employees across several offices:

- **General awareness sessions** – an introduction to the NAB's Neurodiversity at Work program for all NAB employees
- **Manager training sessions** – more detailed and specific autism training for NAB leaders
- **NAB team/colleagues training sessions** – more detailed and specific autism training for NAB staff and interacting teams/leads
- **One-on-one leader/manager training** – leaders worked directly with DXC autism spectrum consultants to address specific challenges/scenarios and the use of specific strategies

### Program recognised by NAB

In November 2019, the DXC Dandelion Program received the Diversity, Inclusion and Sustainability Award at the 2019 NAB Supplier Awards in Melbourne. The NAB Supplier Awards are an opportunity to bring together leading Australian and global NAB suppliers to celebrate their success.

“The team at NAB has significantly contributed to supporting the Identity and Management team to achieve key targets and improve the service to NAB employees and customers by provisioning and fulfilling critical applications with high accuracy and speed. The team has added extraordinary value to improving efficiency and productivity in the business area they are working in.”

“The average fulfilment items completed by experienced NAB employees across one week is 55 work items. The DXC Dandelion team average is 69.7 – a 26% productivity increase.”

“The addition of the neurodiversity team working to reduce our fulfilment backlog has resulted in reduced numbers of incidents and escalations that the support space has received. This has allowed me to step away from managing incidents to improve our processes and assist the access revalidation team with UAR campaign.”

**Gabriel Ung,**  
IDAM Support

“I came up with a brilliant additional requirement to a toolset Ryan had been designing, upon raising the requirement to Ryan – he had not only already thought of the same, but already developed it – as it only seemed logical to him. My ‘brilliance’ was his obvious/logical solution.”

**Alec Jolliffe,**  
Reconciliation

“They have greatly aided with crucial regulatory-driven work allowing me to focus on other areas which aren't always prioritised. The program has enriched this office. Personally, it makes me reflect as a person and reinforces how diverse we all are. I think it's a really positive program and those who are touched by it will be changed for the better.”

**Rory Dickson,**  
User Access Revalidation



## **ANZ Bank: Spectrum Program**

In February 2018, DXC partnered with the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited (ANZ) to implement the DXC Dandelion Program as the foundation of the bank's new Autism at Work initiative, called the ANZ Spectrum Program.

ANZ was DXC's first corporate partner, reflecting the DXC Dandelion Program's expanding reach.

As part of the inaugural Spectrum Program, ANZ selected and welcomed nine individuals to join its group technology function within cyber security and software testing.

In the program's first year, together with ANZ, we achieved our objective of creating an environment where autistic people are celebrated and supported.

The team working in cyber security managed, and significantly matured, the business as usual phishing capability, a critical at-risk area previously untapped due to capability/capacity issues. ANZ did not expect to have a mature phishing capability before January 2019, however the Spectrum team completed the 10,000-email backlog by December 2018.

Split into two project teams, the five individuals in the testing team were introduced to various areas of software testing and, once proficient, were able to identify defects faster than the offshore coders could fix. They were then introduced to an automated testing tool (TOSCA) and continue to build their automation skills.

All nine DXC Dandelion team members were proficient four months earlier than expected, returned 12 months' value in five months and delivered more than 50% increase in productivity.

As a reflection of the performance, capability and success of the inaugural team, towards the end of 2018, ANZ transitioned four of the original team members to permanent roles as ANZ employees, and opted to grow the program by introducing a second cohort of seven team members. This new team commenced in early 2019.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Some of the fears and challenges that individuals on the spectrum have:

"A big challenge is feeling like I need to mask my autism to be able to keep my job. That's a lot of pressure."

"I worry that people will google autism and see things like 'communication deficit'... then they'll see me through those symptoms."

"When people think of disability discrimination, they think of physical or intellectual capacity ... It's hard to tell someone that they're discriminating against you on the basis of your social abilities."

#### **Andrew Baird, ANZ Operations Manager:**

"After a successful first year and transitioning four people to permanent employees we added an additional seven trainees for year two.

We focused our attention on data and cyber security roles and all the individuals have really shown their true abilities by implementing changes to tools that have saved hundreds of hours of work. They have also shown great data analytical abilities, helping to provide extra insights into our existing tech talent across the organisation globally.

We are in the process of transitioning another four to permanent employees with some others in the pipeline later in the year.

Autistic people at ANZ are bringing significant value, in particular, valuable problem-solving capability. The program is one way we're responding to the need to recruit the right people for in-demand capabilities like cyber security and data."



Australian Government  
Department of Social Services

# Department of Social Services: DXC Autism@Work Program



In April 2019, DXC entered into a partnership to implement a DXC Autism@Work program at the Australian Department of Social Services (DSS) in Canberra. The DXC Autism@Work model is a variation of the DXC Dandelion Program which has been successfully delivered into various federal government departments and major commercial organisations around Australia.

The three-year DSS Autism@Work Program uses and adheres to DXC Dandelion Program tools, methods and processes.

The delivery model at DSS was broken into:

- An 11-week establishment phase which identified and assessed 15 candidates on the autism spectrum, selecting a team of six individuals who were put forward as trainee data analysts at DSS
- An organisational change program which included an autism awareness package for DSS leaders/co-workers, working with the team
- A 36-month operational phase, with an appropriate support model designed to support all aspects of a person with autism to be a valuable contributor with the aim of pursuing a meaningful career
- The individuals in the data analytics team, which has been active since July 2019, initially started on a part time basis to ease them into work life. Within the first three to four months, all team members were able to transition to full time hours.

Due to the varying nature of the analysis requirements, tools and data at DSS, team members were co-located with their client supervisors from day one; different to the traditional DXC Dandelion model.

By the end of 2019, each member of the team was well on their way to learning the tools and datasets required in their data analytics positions, as well as adjusting to the workplace culture.

Through training and on the job experience we are helping team members face the challenge of fulfilling their roles at DSS as well as becoming valuable team members within their own sections. This provides them with the best opportunity to gain full time employment as positions become available.



## **Services Australia** (formerly Department of Human Services)



The very first DXC Dandelion Program team was established in January 2015 at the Department of Human Services (DHS) in Adelaide. Following completion of the three-year program, in 2018 DXC's Dandelion team was re-engaged by DHS to continue providing software testing services for a further 12 months.

At the end of 2019, the teams were re-engaged again for their professional services into 2020. This demonstrates the skills and experience the team have acquired and are continuing to deliver to the department.

2019 saw some diversification of roles taking place to recognise the skills of individuals within the team. Individuals were successfully placed in DXC account teams working on various projects for the Bank of Queensland, Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and Defence Force Recruiting for the Department of Defence.

On 1 February 2020, DHS became Services Australia.

## **2019 achievements**

- Over 200 Australian public service (APS) staff and contractors have attended autism awareness training
- Over the past 3-4 years there has been a cultural shift across the Brisbane Delivery Centre (BDC) campus where DXC Dandelion teams are located: inclusion and acceptance has changed markedly across the campus
- Autism manager training developed and piloted at BDC
- Autism information sessions rolled out across BDC



### **DXC Dandelion Team 1 achievements**

- 5 × team members employed at BDC for 4½ years – currently working in automation
- 1 × team member self-funded International Software Testing Qualifications Board (ISTQB) advanced security tester certification March 2019
- 1 × team member was placed second in a national government agency Secure Coding Challenge
- 2 × team members facilitating key BDC automation initiatives such as continuous integration and continuous delivery (CICD) and user security
- 2 × team members developed their skills in automation and became mentors to new team members
- 1 × team member was sponsored to attend Connection and Capability Chief Information Officer Group (CIOG) Test Automation Expo in Canberra



### **DXC Dandelion Team 2 achievements**

- All 10 team members passed the six-month probation
- 9 × team members completed year 1 and met all program milestones
- 4 × team members transitioned to working full-time in May 2019
- 2 × team members completed ISTQB certifications and 3 × currently studying syllabus
- 1 × team member completed Bachelor of Science degree majoring in mathematics
- 3 × team members continuing part-time studies in their respective IT degrees
- 2 × team members have achieved ISTQB foundation level accreditation in the first 3 months
- 8 × team members have successfully transitioned to various business units, working independently
- 1 × team member developed an automated regression test suite that is now improving quality and System Integration Testing



### **Other achievements:**

- 11 × team members received internationally recognised accreditation - ISTQB foundation level as software testers
- 1 × team member received internationally recognised accreditation - ISTQB agile extension accreditation
- 1 × team member received internationally recognised accreditation - ISTQB advanced security tester certification
- 1 × team member created an XML web harness application utilised by aged care testers and developers. This is a user interface that reduced test data setup time being performed manually
- 2 × team members purchased their first house
- Many have become subject matter experts within their lines of business

## **Services Australia, Brisbane**



**“The DXC Dandelion Program has provided many benefits towards my testing Capability. The diversity and skillsets, in particular those of the technical nature, have been used to uplift my test automation capability.”**

**Scott Hardingham**

Director, Business Enablement and Quality Branch  
Brisbane Delivery Centre

In September 2015, DXC implemented an inaugural team of 13 neurodiverse individuals as software testers at Services Australia in Brisbane.

In 2019, 11 of the 13 original DXC Dandelion team members are still in sustainable full-time employment: five of the individuals are working independently in key roles on a government account; three are working independently on a DXC banking account; one is working in Queensland state government; another is working for a private IT company; one is working as a federal government Australian Public Service 5 employee; and two have returned to study.

Based on the results and achievements realised from the inaugural team, Services Australia approached DXC to grow the program and introduce another team of ten software testers, and in November 2018, a second cohort of neurodiverse individuals was successfully implemented.

The second team which commenced at Services Australia in Brisbane, was comprised of ten neurodiverse employees.

Of the original ten team members: nine are still in sustainable full-time employment after 15 months; seven are working independently in key roles in government accounts; two are working in supported DXC Dandelion Program models; and one individual has been unable to continue employment for personal reasons.

**Services Australia delivery model**

The Services Australia delivery model was broken into three stages:

- An establishment phase which identified 18 neurodiverse candidates and selected a team of ten individuals as trainee testers
- An organisational change program which included the implementation of the neurodiversity awareness package for Services Australia leaders and co-workers
- A 36-month operational phase which included a support model designed to support all aspects of the neurodiverse team enabling individuals to become valuable contributors with the aim of pursuing meaningful careers

Service Australia’s general manager in Brisbane selected the DXC Dandelion model based on its proven success and the availability of in-house support staff.

## Services Australia, Canberra

During 2019 the DXC Dandelion team at Services Australia in Canberra continued to be part of the Shared Service Application Delivery (SSAD) branch. The team has undertaken testing for both the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the Tertiary Collection of Student Information (TCSI) projects, including regression, product integration and system integration testing. The TCSI is a joint project between Services Australia and the Queensland Department of Education.

Substantial work has been done in the NDIS system, including implementing a system that has documented the three NDIS portals (staff, provider and participant), and has been successful enough to attract interest from the NDIS team as a document of value. One of the original team members has been assigned as a data modeller in the Services Australia Business Intelligence solutions branch and is a highly regarded member of the team.

- The team working for Shared Service Application Delivery are currently undergoing training for the ISTQB, two of the team have been successful thus far in obtaining certification, with more scheduled in the next few months
- The team currently consists of three members from the original intake plus three new members, one of whom is in his third year at Canberra University
- One participant came second in the DHS Australian Capital Territory 2019 Mario Kart 8 Deluxe Championship, an event organised to support children's hospitals around Australia with toy and game donations
- Rajesh Shinde from Services Australia supports the team as a tech lead and Gillian Chappe de Leonval continues as autism spectrum consultant, a valued member of the program, a role she has undertaken for the past three years

"Thanks to the DXC Dandelion Program in finding and nurturing the young talent. The folks from the program are real assets to our team. Their technical knowledge in automation and commitment to delivery are testament to the success of the program."

**A J Soundararajan**  
ICT Manager, Test  
Automation Team

"I see the new DXC Dandelion team as my STEM intake, as I don't get any STEM candidates in testing. They think differently and I need people who think differently – I have plenty of people who think the same."

**A J Soundararajan**, ICT Manager, Test Automation Team

### Specific achievements:

- 300 of 500 Services Australia staff have attended autism information sessions and autism manager training
- Neurodiversity is now included in induction of all new staff and contractors
- Successful outcomes with National Disability Insurance Scheme
- The program is well connected to external support services and agencies, ie psychologists, psychiatrists, dieticians, exercise physiologists, occupational therapists, etc

# Department of Industry, Innovation and Science: Autism Talent Engagement Program



In September 2019, the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (DISER) and DXC commenced a partnership to develop an Autism Talent Engagement Program. This program differs from our others, in that all participants are all university graduates, and are employed directly by the Department as non-ongoing officers.

This is an exciting new undertaking for DXC, as we extend further into the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. The program is supporting individuals working in our traditional technology roles such as data analytics and automation, while also supporting new career paths, such as laboratory testing, physical metrology, and business development support. Team members are operating out of the National Measurement Institute (NMI) in Melbourne and in the DISER offices in Canberra.

This engagement has proven beneficial for team members in providing a first-hand view of life as a public servant, for those who have not experienced this before. DXC's autism support consultants work closely with departmental supervisors, in a hybrid pastoral care arrangement, enabling multiple points of support for participants.

Dandelion team members have been involved with professional development events, including attendance at various technology industry forums, as well as the 2019 International Day of People with Disability celebrations.

NMI Dandelion team members presented at the 4th Collaborative Research Symposium, and departmental team members were part of a divisional award for teamwork, creativity and dedication in developing the "Australian Innovation System Monitor (AISM)".

The DISER/DXC partnership and the Autism Talent Engagement program continues to mature strongly, with on-going autism awareness training sessions for new staff, and supporting team members towards public service roles.

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

45% of autistic people report that their skills are higher than those required to perform their current job





**Australian Government**  
**Department of Defence**

## Department of Defence

In 2016, the DXC Dandelion Program was established at the Department of Defence. The primary focus of the program was the support of strategic outcomes and cultural change initiatives within the Department of Defence. In 2019, the original 13-member team, completed the three-year program engagement. Driving major capability change via enhancements to client systems and services, the team is considered a trusted key strategic partner by the Department of Defence.

Due to the success of the program, in August 2019 the Department of Defence extended the partnership with DXC to establish a second program. The DXC Dandelion Program team are currently collaborating with the Department of Defence to introduce a new team of nine individuals in Canberra. The original team, who are now independent and competent with their project tasks are currently being transitioned into Australian Public Service (APS) roles at the Department.



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Home Affairs**

## Department of Home Affairs

In February 2017, the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) started its first DXC Dandelion Program with eleven team members in the Enterprise Testing and Quality Assurance section. January 2019 heralded the commencement of the third year of the program with the focus continuing on training, development and outplacement, with various team members moving to other opportunities in different business units within the department.

Due to the success of the program, the Department of Home Affairs have extended the partnership with DXC and have renewed the program for an additional twelve months.



# Neurodiversity hubs



NEURODIVERSITYHUB



Neurodiversity hubs (NDH) focus on improving employability and creating opportunities for neurodiverse students. To become more work-ready and increase their chances of obtaining a job, co-curricular programs are created to assist neurodiverse students to obtain work experience and internships with DXC and its partner organisations.

Neurodiversity hubs are also an opportunity for employers who understand the opportunity of a neurodiverse workforce to align closely with a pipeline of talent for their neurodiverse employment programs, and to leverage expertise in this area to drive research and derive further insights.

Employers, universities and service providers support and contribute to programs, providing ongoing opportunities for neurodivergent students. For further information to go: <https://www.neurodiversityhub.org>.

In 2019, the following partners have joined the neurodiversity hubs:

## **Universities:**

In Australia: La Trobe University and the Australian National University

In the USA: Drexel University and West Chester University

In the United Kingdom: University College London

## **Employers:**

VMware, BHP, GHD Engineering, BankWest, Medibank and Ultranaughts

## **Initiation and co-design process**

Between late January and early May 2018, two student interns from Cornell University in the USA were in Australia to work on a co-design process to develop the model for the neurodiversity hub. During their 14-week assignment, the interns worked with 75 individual contacts (students, advocates, professionals, academics), and 21 organisations (employers, peak bodies, service providers, universities). On 30 January a co-design workshop was held at Swinburne University of Technology, the outcome from which was a high-level Model Program of Activities.

During the balance of 2018, the Model Program of Activities was defined in greater detail and a process undertaken with various university partners to compare the Model Program to their existing programs and activities. A gap analysis was also conducted to identify gaps in a university's existing

programs where they could benefit from having access to relevant programs and materials through the hub. This work was undertaken in Australia with Curtin University, University of South Australia and Macquarie University, as well as US institutions Landmark College in Vermont, and in New York State, the Rochester Institute and the City University of New York.

## **2019: NDH phase 2 project**

At the end of 2018, a further two interns from Cornell University in the USA and an intern from Monash University in Australia were engaged to support DXC and Untapped with phase 2 of the NDH project. The intent of phase 2 was to curate or create as much of the Model Program of Activities as possible and bring it to life on a refreshed NDH website. The project ran in Melbourne from the end of January to early May 2019.

As part of the project, the interns met with fourteen large businesses, seven further colleges and universities (in addition to the existing seven members of the community of practice) and ten service providers. Meetings to discuss the NDH and neurodiverse employment were also held with a number of employer partner organisations, and extensive interaction was undertaken with each of the hub's original university partners.

In the USA, a number of colleges were involved in the NDH phase 2 project, providing valuable input and feedback on the material developed, including the Employee Expo Survival Guide, MoneyBasics financial literacy program and a thought piece on disclosure at university. Those involved included Jan Coplan, Director of Career Connections at Landmark College; Laurie Ackles, Director, Spectrum Support Program at Rochester Institute of Technology; Barbara Bookman, University Director Disability Programs at City University of New York; and Marcia Scheinr, President of Integrate Advisors.

During phase 2 of the NDH project the following material was published:

University content	Life skills / work ready skills content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Transition to university.</b> Reviewed, updated and re-presented research-based material developed by the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre at La Trobe University, Melbourne</li> <li>• <b>Peer coaching.</b> A guide for the implementation of a coaching program developed through research by Curtin University in Perth</li> <li>• <b>Disclosure at university – the art of sharing information about your disability.</b> A thought-piece on the pros and cons of disclosing autism whilst at university</li> <li>• <b>Work-ready assessments.</b> Tools were identified to help assess work-readiness and develop and create plans</li> <li>• <b>Grounding exercise.</b> A downloadable booklet, also available through Life Sherpa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>MoneyBasics course.</b> A nine-week curated curriculum looking at basic areas of financial literacy. This is based on the ANZ bank’s on-line MoneyMinded course, but with the addition of a number of curated global resources to fill the gaps in the ANZ program for autistic individuals (as identified through research undertaken by RMIT)</li> <li>• <b>Survival guide for autistic students.</b> Guidelines for universities arranging careers fairs, employer expos, etc, with tips for participating employers</li> <li>• <b>Resumes and interview guides.</b> Developed for use by students</li> </ul>

The following additional content was also added to the neurodiversity hub website during 2019:

- Disclosure at work: reveal or conceal? A paper detailing the pros and cons of autism disclosure in the workplace
- Content from various websites including Stairway to STEM, College Autism Spectrum and Mapology guides (illustrated self-help maps for life’s journey)
- Links to our sister website, Aspies@Work which provides excellent resources to help in getting a job
- Tips from Temple Grandin for hub employer partners
- Blogs for employers, including the benefits of hiring neurodiverse staff, how to be inclusive in recruitment practices and how to successfully onboard autistic employees
- A profile on the Uptimize e-Learning platform, providing training to increase awareness, understanding and acceptance of autistic co-workers

For further information go to:

<https://www.neurodiversityhub.org/resources>.

## Neurodiversity Celebration Week

The ability of neurodiverse individuals to fulfil their potential is threatened by the misconceptions many people still have about people with learning differences.

Neurodiversity Celebration Week is a global campaign to bring awareness to the strengths, talents, and capabilities of neurodiverse individuals at university and secondary school.

For further information go to:

[www.neurodiversity-celebration-week.com/press](http://www.neurodiversity-celebration-week.com/press)

# Neurodiversity hub partnerships

During 2019, there was a considerable amount of activity working closely with various university members of the neurodiversity hub (NDH) community of practice.

## Curtin University



Curtin University in Perth has continued its great work with its specialist mentoring program, run by Jasmine McDonald and Elaine Hatfield-White. This program is referenced in the NDH Resources for Universities and the Autism Academy for Software Quality Assurance (AASQA) internship training program, run by Tele Tan. Along with Jasmine, Elaine and Tele, during 2019 Sonya Girdler and Marita Falkmer participated in ongoing dialogue concerning development of the hub. Both were also involved in the NDH phase 2 project, providing valuable input for the materials being developed, including the implementation guide for the neurodiverse student coaching program. The Curtin University program was featured in an edition of the Australian Broadcasting Commission's (ABC) 7:30 Report in January 2020.

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## University of South Australia



University of  
South Australia

The University of South Australia was also actively involved in the NDH phase 2 project. Working with Michelle Anderson, the focus was on transition to university and creating awareness with employers and opportunities for work experience.

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## Macquarie University



In New South Wales, Macquarie University was also involved in NDH phase 2 project. Kelly Piper provided extremely useful examples from their "Light My Way" program for students at risk mentoring program for first year students and the ASPIRE student success workshop program for autistic students.

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## Swinburne University of Technology



On 21 March 2019, Swinburne University of Technology in Victoria launched their AccessAbility Careers Hub, part of Swinburne University's neurodiversity hub. Opened by the vice-chancellor, representatives from Wise Employment and Untapped spoke of the opportunities available through the neurodiversity hub. AccessAbility Careers Hub Coordinator, David Eckstein, provided some valuable sessions with the interns working on the NDH phase 2 project.

## La Trobe University



Under the guidance of Jessica Vanderlelie, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Student Success, La Trobe University in Victoria joined in October 2019 and appointed PhD-track student Beth Radulski as Project Officer: Neurodiversity, to assist the university with its implementation of the neurodiversity hub by providing her unique lived experience to help review all major university activities, such as Orientation Week, Careers Fair, Open Day, and to develop guidelines on how to make them neurodiverse-friendly.

The university transition material for autistic students, which were developed a number of years ago by La Trobe University Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC), were revised and these valuable resources were re-presented through the hub as part of the NDH phase 2 project.

## Australia National University



The Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra joined in December 2019 and Friederike (Rike) Gadow, Senior Project Officer, AccessAbility and Employability, completed work on a gap analysis between the current programs offered by ANU and the NDH Model Program of Activities. She also co-ordinated an EmployAbility Panel, around “Inclusive graduate employment for students with disability”, for the three universities located in Canberra.

### “Be Your Best” program

During 2019, work continued on the development of life skills and work-ready skills materials for the neurodiversity hub, led by Untapped. Subjects published or in development include “Be Organised”, “Eat Well”, “Mindfulness” “My Career”, “Presenting Me”, “Money Matters”, “Study Success” and the “Organisational Personality Questionnaire”.

One of the first modules, “Be Organised”, was road-tested by a number of young neurodiverse adults in various locations around the world. The “Organisational Personality Questionnaire”, which can be accessed through the Life Sherpa app, provides the participant with a personalised report of their organisational profile and can be redone over time to ascertain the participant’s progress.

For further information, go to: <https://www.beyourbest.academy>

# **DXC Dandelion Program national talent pool**

Since the successful pilot of the Work Experience Program (WEP) in Adelaide in 2016, DXC has run eight Work Experience Programs across Australia, with nearly 150 individuals on the autism spectrum assessed during three-week workshops as part of the selection process.

During 2019 the DXC Dandelion Program successfully ran a series of Work Experience programs in Canberra and Brisbane, as well as a pre-assessment program in Adelaide.

The DXC Dandelion Work Experience Program has helped to provide valuable real-world experience for the individuals involved, and the assessment workshops have helped to build a valuable talent pool of neurodiverse individuals for DXC, with all individuals registered in our national talent pool.

DXC will continue to run Work Experience Programs across Australia and New Zealand to provide a pathway for tertiary students and graduates into long-term meaningful employment.

Moving forward, DXC is looking to extend the program and embark on a new initiative to provide work experience opportunities for neurodiverse high-school students.

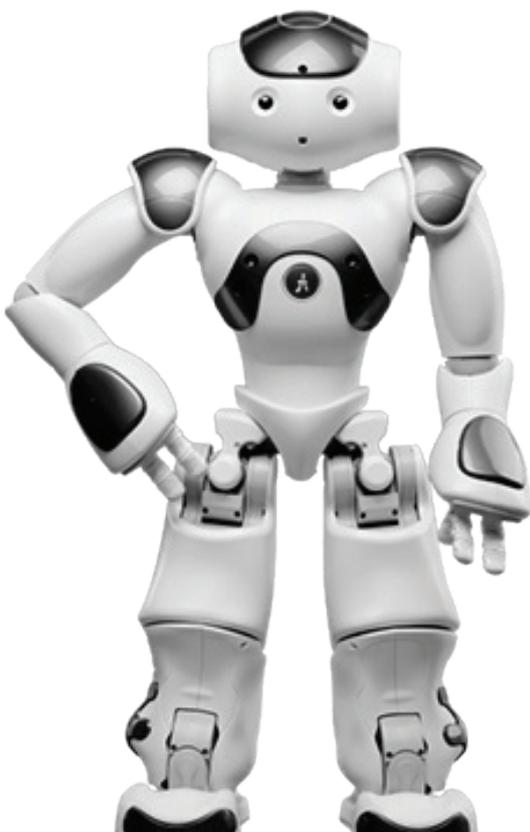
## **Neurodiversity high school work experience initiative**

Throughout 2019, DXC looked for new ways to build on our existing talent pipeline and more ways to provide pathways to long-term meaningful employment for individuals on the autism spectrum. Following consultation with both public and private sector organisations, in 2020 DXC will embark on a new initiative to provide work experience for neurodiverse high-school students.

The organisations involved in this upcoming initiative include the Queensland Department of Education's Autism Hub, Autism CRC, Autism Queensland, Department of Human Services (Services Australia), National Disability Insurance Agency and Untapped.

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

Over 50% of the people diagnosed with autism have above average to very high intelligence





# Partnerships

## DXC partners with SAP



SAP's global Autism at Work initiative was launched in 2013. It currently employs over 140 people in 12 countries. In 2018, New Zealand became the thirteenth country to launch the SAP Autism at Work initiative.

In late 2018, a collaboration between DXC, Autism New Zealand and Untapped supported SAP to identify, select and recruit four autistic individuals as employees for SAP's Auckland office. The four individuals commenced their roles in January 2019.

## Partnership with Ro'im Rachok

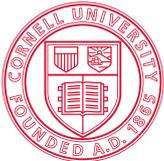


Through our relationships with the University of Haifa and the Ono Academic College in Israel, in 2016 DXC began a collaboration with Ro'im Rachok, the Israeli Defence Force Autism at Work program. Founded in 2013 by two Mossad veterans, Ro'im Rachok helps to prepare young adults with autism for future careers in technological fields.

As one of the oldest Autism at Work programs in the world, the collaboration with Ro'im Rachok, has enabled DXC to add valuable learnings and knowledge to the DXC Dandelion Program, including assessment and performance management tools, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), trauma, mental health and environmental assessment tools.



# Research partnerships



## Cornell University

### Content provided by Susanne Bruyère, PhD, CRC

Professor of Disability Studies and the Director of the K Lisa Yang and Hock E Tan (Yang-Tan) Institute on Employment and Disability  
Industrial Relations School, Cornell University

The DXC Dandelion Program methodology is open-sourced through Cornell University's K Lisa Yang and Hock E Tan Institute on Employment and Disability (Yang-Tan Institute) in the Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR) School to allow other organisations to leverage our knowledge and organisational management tools to further breakdown the employment barriers for people with autism.

Since the repository's inception in February 2017, to date there have been 6,408 downloads of the 44 materials posted, 3,456-page hits from 527 institutions from 94 countries around the world. Cornell University regularly receives new material from DXC Technology to add to this repository.

In January 2019, representatives from Cornell University, DXC, City University of New York (CUNY), Swinburne University and Untapped partnered on a panel presentation proposal on the neurodiversity hub model and the related development and implementation partnership to the Council for Exceptional Children Division on Autism and Development Disability Conference in Maui which was accepted. Michael Fieldhouse, Barbara Bookman (CUNY), Nicholas Martin (ILR '19/intern at DXC) and Susanne Bruyere (Cornell University) represented the group for an in-person presentation.

From the end of January to early May 2019, two students from Cornell University worked in the DXC Dandelion (Autism at Work) programs and Untapped in Melbourne, helping to develop and expand their neurodiversity hub for college students with autism.

Throughout 2019, Susanne Bruyere participated in meetings with Andrew Eddy (Untapped), Michael Fieldhouse (DXC) and Lawrence Fung (Stanford University) to further discuss the neurodiversity hub and application for college students around the world.

Learn more: <https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/dandelionprogram/>



## **Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC), La Trobe University**

### **Content provided by Cheryl Dissanayake, PhD, MAPS**

Professor, Director & Research Chair, Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre  
School of Psychology and Public Health  
College of Science, Health & Engineering, La Trobe University

### **DXC Employment Research Program**

The Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC) at La Trobe University is at the forefront of autism research, with our research collaboration with DXC Technology on autistic employment continuing to provide high quality international research findings and output. As a result of this research, we have established a number of international research partnerships as well as translating our research to practice. We look forward to opportunities to continue our collaboration with DXC into the future.

### **ANZ bank collaborative program**

- February 2019 kicked off our collaboration with DXC and the ANZ bank, aimed at developing a mental health and well-being resource and training package to support the mental well-being of employees on the autism spectrum. This has culminated in an 11-module training package covering key areas of mental health and the autism experience, with targeted strategies for supervisors, colleagues and employees on the autism spectrum
- This project has benefited from key personnel at DXC and ANZ bank, two community organisations (Aspect and Different Journeys), as well as national and international experts and clinicians (eg Dr Lawrence Fung, Stanford University; and Professor Robyn Young, Flinders University)

- A pilot test of the anxiety module at ANZ bank with employees, colleagues and supervisors was well received, with personnel reporting increases in their ability to support themselves, and/or someone else experiencing anxiety
- Practical application of the developed resources has begun with collaboration with Life Sherpa, who have started to incorporate the stress, anxiety and depression modules into their platform

### **Department of Defence collaborative research program**

- Our research program supported by DXC and the Australian government Department of Defence (Dandelion@Defence) concluded in July 2019. We produced a 49-page report outlining the major achievements, research findings, and recommendations. An executive version of the report was also developed

### **Assessment and testing**

- In 2019, we continued to refine and develop our innovative and unique assessment protocol that provides a detailed work history and work profile of job candidates on the autism spectrum. Implementation of this assessment tool will continue in 2020 in collaboration with Untapped and BHP
- La Trobe has been a foundation research partner in the neurodiversity hub initiative since January 2018. However, in October 2019, La Trobe University Student Success began

participating in the neurodiversity hub initiative, providing support, resources and avenues to employment for neurodiverse students at La Trobe University

### **International conferences and collaborations**

- Dr Darren Hedley was invited and funded to provide a number of key-note presentations at several international conferences where he discussed and reported on research findings from the DXC Dandelion Program. These included:
  - University of Haifa Annual Autism Conference, Israel (Feb, 2019)
  - VII Autism: Challenges and Solutions Annual International Conference and SAP Autism@Work, Moscow, Russia (April, 2019)
  - National Institute of Mental Health Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC) Advisory Panel Workshop: Addressing the Mental Health Needs of People on the Autism Spectrum, USA (May, 2019)
- In addition, as part of a two-week study visit, Dr Darren Hedley was invited to visit the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) specialist autism program, along with several autism related employment programs throughout Israel, and to further develop research collaborations with Professor Eynat Gal and her colleagues

- Dr Jennifer Spoor presented a paper exploring neurodiversity employment at the annual meeting of the European Academy of Management, Lisbon, Portugal (June, 2019)
- Dr Hedley along with Dr Simon Bury, attended and presented research findings at the World Congress of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSIDD) in Glasgow, Scotland (August, 2019). Their symposium on “Improving employment, mental health, and well-being outcomes” was well attended and received, and connected Drs Bury and Hedley with other employment researchers from Europe
- While presenting research findings in Moscow, Dr Hedley spent time with leading autism employment researchers Dr Lawrence Fung (Stanford University) and Professor David Nicholas (University of Calgary) leading to the development of research collaborations with Professor Nicholas (including research publications and grant applications), and with Dr Fung (serving as an expert on the ANZ mental health and well-being package)

### **Local roundtables, workshops, conferences**

- At the national level, Dr Hedley attended the following events:
  - 4th Annual Workforce Inclusion and Diversity Conference, Sydney (May, 2019)
  - Amaze Victoria roundtable to contribute to the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System (June, 2019)
  - NDIS Shifting the Dial on Employment: Autism Employment Forum on improving employment outcomes in autism, Sydney (June, 2019)

- Dr Bury was an invited member of a three-person panel discussing ‘Mental Health in the Workplace’, at the Autism@Work conference in Melbourne (October, 2019)

### **DXC Dandelion Program assessment review workshop**

- Dr Hedley attended an all-day event with the DXC Dandelion support team and executives to review the assessment model utilised by DXC (May, 2019). This provides one example of the collaborative relationship between OTARC and DXC, and the translation of research knowledge to practice

### **Media**

- Dr Hedley was interviewed and featured in an article concerning the DXC Dandelion Program in the Russian Ezine, lenta.ru
- Dr Hedley was a featured researcher in “Careers with Stem”, a STEM career guide for students in Australia and New Zealand, with a readership of 150,000 students. In addition to the Ezine, hardcopies are distributed to every high school in Australia and New Zealand
- Dr Hedley was interviewed by the Diversity Council Australia for a Podcast on “autism and neurodiversity”

### **Publications**

- The OTARC team published six academic articles in 2019 (with a further four currently under review) and two book chapters accepted related to neurodiversity employment, with several of these incorporating data gathered as part of the DXC Dandelion research program. Our paper reporting longitudinal findings from the DXC Dandelion Program (“Predictors of Mental health and Well-being in Employed Adults with Autism”) was featured in (the publisher) Wiley’s Research Headlines. This selection resulted in highlights from the article, and a brief interview with Dr Hedley, being sent to over 1,800 subscribing journalists worldwide resulting in worldwide media coverage of the research findings. We continue to be involved in writing academic publications related to our research findings from the DXC Dandelion program
- Along with co-editors Dr Anna Krzeminska, and Professors Rob Austin and Susanne Bruyere, Dr Darren Hedley was an invited editor on a special issue in the “Journal of Management and Organisation”. The special issue featured several articles related to neurodiversity employment, as well as a manuscript by the special issue editorial team

# Tools and technical platforms

In 2019, the DXC Dandelion Program continued to invest and commit to developing and customising assistive tools and technologies with the aim of providing better support mechanisms to program participants and staff. Initiatives included updates to the Life Sherpa phone app, an electronic version of the previous Work Performance Questionnaire (WPQ) tool, a game-based model for better understanding of the success of participants, and a leveraged, part-time technical platform manager.



“Organisations globally will be able to leverage our experience and knowledge via an electronic platform that will provide employers ‘just in time’ training to assist with building the skills and capabilities needed to hire people on the autism spectrum and retain them. We are looking at this scalable and sustainable solution to not only provide ongoing education and training but to improve integration and inclusivity in the workplace.”

**Michael Fieldhouse**  
Social Impact  
Practice Executive  
DXC Technology  
Australia and New Zealand

## Life Sherpa

During 2019, DXC continued its global partnership with Life Sherpa. Life Sherpa is a versatile, configurable phone app platform developed by a father for his autistic son. It is used by remote and independent neurodiverse individuals to overcome challenges, such as executive functioning and emotional regulation. DXC is partnering with Life Sherpa to co-design the tool, supporting standard and individualised routines, with notifications and reminder functions for both support staff and participants.

After two pilot phases of agile development and testing, the initial production implementation was undertaken with the DXC Dandelion Program team in Brisbane, followed by DXC Dandelion teams in Canberra. The Life Sherpa tool is now being used by DXC Dandelion Program participants in locations across Australia.

In 2019, the platform was expanded introducing a range of new functions:

- A bulletin board enabling DXC to publish guidelines, documents and research materials to participants and support staff. New standard routines have been included to support emotional regulation, mental health and mindfulness
- Communications channels have been significantly fleshed out to facilitate remote support, with the introduction of in-app text, voice and video calls
- A group poke function has been introduced, so that a supervisor can contact multiple participants at the same time
- An automated status update feature has been introduced, so that someone can express their emotional status to care teams with minimal effort and words, via notifications
- As scheduled, compliance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 has been completed, along with user-side password re-set. This gives a sensitive and vulnerable demographic of our society greater peace of mind that their data is well protected

The tool can include participants’ extended support networks, and the future roadmap includes end-user statics so participants can witness their own progress. One key routine captures participants’ well-being status, and reports anomalies

to support staff, which is a differentiator for “out-placed” or remote individuals. Future possible modules will support and further develop theory of mind, emotional regulation, and mindfulness.

In the next year we will further explore integration of the autism-focused Mental Health Modules commissioned by DXC and developed by La Trobe University. Plans also include increasing user autonomy for creating routines, further refinement for supervisor notifications, and completion of the integration with the updated Work Performance Questionnaire (WPO).



## Uptimize

Uptimize is an eLearning training suite to support organisations become more autism aware.

In early 2018, Uptimize launched the latest version of its online training, specifically tailored for Australian employers. Uptimize eLearning modules support an organisation’s neurodiverse employment program by helping neurotypical employees become more aware and accepting of their neurodiverse co-workers. The modules contain nearly 1½ hours of content to cover a range of roles within an organisation, including recruiter, manager, co-worker, coach, etc. Content is provided in bite-size chunks which can be viewed on an on-demand, just-in-time basis and can be made available via a dedicated training portal or loaded into an organisation’s learning management system.

Uptimize modules were initially used to support ANZ bank’s Spectrum Program which went live in February 2018.

During the first quarter of 2019, Uptimize developed the next version of their training suite which included an “Autism 101” module that can be used to raise general awareness across an entire organisation.

“From the beginning we have set out to build training tools collaboratively, with global thought leaders, our own focus groups, and leading employers. Working with DXC – along with Cornell University, La Trobe University and Integrate Autism Advisors – allows us to incorporate and scale the distribution of better and better practices in neurodiversity inclusion globally. We look forward to continuing to work with DXC and Untapped in Australia to support other Australian employers in becoming neurodiversity smart’.

**Ed Thompson**  
CEO, Uptimize

# Testimonials from DXC Dandelion team members

“I feel confident that I am capable in this working environment. The anxieties of "am I good enough?" or "am I able to sustain a job?" are no longer a major worry.”

“I have been able to hangout, chat and ask for help comfortably from colleagues, and not be anxious.”

“I have gained a career that lets me take control of my life and live the way I want.”

“I don't have the crippling anxiety I had in previous jobs, where I was waiting to see how long they would “tolerate” me before I had to leave.”

“I have more control over my life and more opportunities to meet people that I'd otherwise lack.”

“Before coming into ANZ as part of the DXC Dandelion program, I had little sense of direction or assurance in my life. While I had completed tertiary education, my skillset did not mesh with many opportunities until finding this program. It has not only given me interesting work but has managed to use my particular abilities as someone with Aspergers in a practical manner, as well as helping guide me into taking up new, useful skills in the field.”

“I am proud of being trusted in doing a wide variety of tasks. Most of the time I enjoy this as I get to learn more new and interesting things. I am really looking forward to my time working in another team for the same reason!”

“So far, working at NAB has been an amazing experience. I look forward to coming into work each morning and feel like I’m having a positive impact for the bank and myself.”

“Having a job as part of the program has really improved overall general happiness. I enjoy the job overall, it is something I look forward to doing day to day and the people I work with all rock! Also, having a great job means that I don't have to put my effort into looking for a job which can be extremely demoralising at times. Having a steady income is nice too!”

# Testimonials from DXC Dandelion team members

“I am not paid to be autistic,  
I am paid to do a job.”

“It is said that software testing is the task that gets sandwiched in between the end of development and the software release date. I learned the harsh realities of this, which brought with it a need for flexibility, resilience, patience and adaptability – qualities that don’t always come easy to people on the spectrum.”

“The DXC Dandelion Program is not a charity program, it’s designed to employ talented people on the spectrum who are very capable and can add value to the business, but struggle to navigate through the traditional recruitment processes.”

“The DXC Dandelion Program is a tide against the sea of statistics that seem to damn those of us on the spectrum.”

“Since coming here, DXC and ANZ have made a huge impact on my life, allowing me to become more independent, both in work and outside of it. I’ve begun making headway into building my own life, and the lessons learnt will continue to help me throughout. The program has helped us to go from an unsure place to hitting the ground running in the workforce, and I want to see where it takes me next.”

“I am lucky to have found a place in DXC that challenges me and gives me an opportunity to work in high-performing, collaborative teams on exciting projects that will ultimately make a difference to people’s lives.”

# Snapshot of the DXC Dandelion Program

Key components	Ongoing innovation	Client partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unique selection and recruitment process</li> <li>• Pre-assessment workshops</li> <li>• Dandelion Work Experience programs</li> <li>• Organisational change programs</li> <li>• Employment programs:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 year models</li> <li>- 12 month models</li> <li>- Various support structures</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent research studies – various research partners, locally and globally</li> <li>• Key partnerships with industry organisations</li> <li>• Neurodiversity hubs across Australia, designed to build a continuous talent pool</li> </ul>	<p><b>Australian federal government organisations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services Australia (formerly Department of Human Services)</li> <li>• Department of Defence</li> <li>• Department of Home Affairs</li> <li>• Department of Social Services</li> <li>• Department of <i>Industry, Innovation and Science</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Commercial organisations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australia and New Zealand Bank</li> <li>• National Australia Bank</li> </ul>

## Key focus areas for 2020

- To finalise and operationalise the mental health program
- The introduction of an Autism@Work initiative to assist disability employment service providers
- The expansion of the DXC neurodiversity hub strategy in conjunction with our partners
- To continue open-sourcing DXC Dandelion Program material
- Initiate research studies to provision the development of material to support employment approaches
- Continue to build and customise DXC Dandelion Program support tools

## **Neurodiverse individuals bring unique skillsets to the workplace:**

- Over 50% of individuals on the spectrum have above average to very high intelligence
- An ability to focus, accuracy and attention to detail
- ‘Out of the box’ thinking with the ability to look at things differently and resolve problems, introduce creativity
- Pattern recognition and the ability to think in visual images
- The ability to perform repetitive tasks accurately
- A high level of technical ability
- The ability to concentrate on routine and procedures
- Excellent memory for facts and figures
- The ability to absorb and retain large amounts of information, especially about topics of special interest
- Honesty and loyalty
- Self motivated and independent learners
- Strong work ethic, with a commitment to quality and accuracy of work

## **Other benefits realised by organisations:**

- The passion of neurodiverse individuals can lead to increased overall staff productivity
- Increased morale of staff around the team members
- Managers and leaders become better leaders and managers
- Stability in the workforce with highly skilled individuals

### **DXC Social Impact Practice**

The DXC Dandelion Program is part of DXC Technology’s Social Impact Practice.

The DXC Social Impact Practice is focused on developing social initiatives that make a sustainable impact to Australia’s community.

The DXC Social Impact Practice aims to build relationships with community groups, peak bodies and representative academic organisations – both locally and internationally – to better understand regional social issues and to co-design solutions to benefit the community. Initial areas of focus include neurodiversity, veterans, disability, indigenous people and climate change.

Moving into the future, the practice aims to expand by developing new programs to benefit the community and help minority groups to engage with business and improve employment opportunities.

“As corporates, we have a responsibility to address social issues and challenges using our business knowledge and scale. DXC’s Social Impact Practice reflects our broader commitment to communities in Australia and New Zealand who are affected by a range of social issues and challenges.”

**Seelan Nayagam**  
Managing Director, DXC Technology  
Australia and New Zealand

## DXC Dandelion Program benefits

The DXC Dandelion Program has provided tremendous benefits not only to participating DXC Dandelion Program team members and their families, but also to the participating employer organisations, as well as the wider Australian community, according to research conducted and published by the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC) at La Trobe University.



**92%**  
Retention rate



**75%**  
Job satisfaction



**80%**  
co-workers say the  
program does not add  
any additional overhead



**30-40%**  
Improved productivity



**60-100%**  
additional resources added  
by 100% customers to  
expand their programs

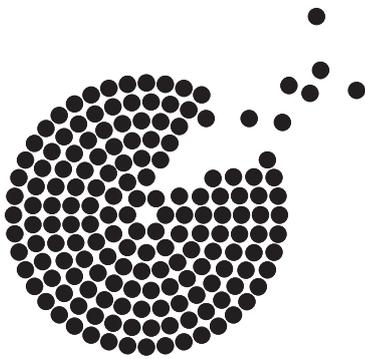


**100%**  
customers have retained  
their autistic resources  
when they have completed  
their programs

“The DXC Dandelion Program is an example of the potential for collaborative work between private companies and governments to provide employment opportunities to individuals with autism. It is an innovative supported work program designed to provide an alternate pathway to employment, and one that is sorely needed given the established high rates of unemployment amongst people with autism. These individuals, despite having specific needs and requiring some supports, also bring a set of unique skills that can provide a competitive advantage in the workplace. The DXC Dandelion Program recognises these strengths.”

**Cheryl Dissanayake, PhD, MAPS**

Professor, Director & Research Chair, Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre,  
School of Psychology and Public Health, College of Science, Health & Engineering,  
La Trobe University



**For further information about  
the DXC Dandelion Program, go to:  
[www.dxc.technology/dandelion](http://www.dxc.technology/dandelion)**

**About DXC Technology**

DXC Technology [NYSE: DXC] helps global companies run their mission critical systems and operations while modernizing IT, optimizing data architectures, and ensuring security and scalability across public, private and hybrid clouds. With decades of driving innovation, the world's largest companies trust DXC to deploy our enterprise technology stack to deliver new levels of performance, competitiveness and customer experiences. Learn more about the DXC story and our focus on people, customers and operational execution at [www.dxc.technology](http://www.dxc.technology).