

Supplementary Materials 1. Themes and Sub-themes from Focus Groups

Themes and Sub-themes	Coverage	Example Quotes
Program Benefits		
<i>Trainee benefits</i>	8 groups 20 participants	<p>Yes, to get to present opportunities for those people who would normally not consider going for [...] this sort of work, because, especially with the [organisation] sometimes entry requirements are fairly daunting for most people, let alone anyone who has [...] some sort of disadvantage. [Manager-1]</p> <p>My understanding is that their biggest challenge is to actually get engaged in full-time work, so many of them have the skills, the capability, but it's the social aspects that they struggle with the most. [Technical-13]</p>
<i>Organisation benefits</i>	8 groups 28 participants	<p>When they said that the particular personality traits or behavioural traits of autistic people into - would make very good testers, I could immediately resonate with that through having knowledge of my friend's son. Just the attention to detail and the meticulous, methodical method of going about things. Even the repetitive aspect of it. Immediately I thought, 'Oh yeah, they're so right.' [Technical-7]</p> <p>The outcomes that they deliver and what they achieve is of a high standard [Manager-5]</p> <p>It's quite good working with people that are actually quite committed to achieving the outcomes that are necessary. [Technical-23]</p> <p>We won some important award earlier on in the year because of it and that as well. So it's certainly been well documented and well mentioned and well – and certainly bandied as a success story for us. [Technical-7]</p> <p>I've mentioned it socially, I've talked to friends about it. It's something that's cool about [organisation] [Technical-16].</p> <p>I think for us to be able to say to people outside of work that we're part of this process is a really good thing. I think it's something that we should all be proud of. It's one of the things that we should say it's a good thing to be part of. [Manager-4]</p>

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<i>Greater knowledge about autism</i>	8 groups 24 participants	<p>I guess it was important for us to know certain things to look out for, because if someone's having a bit of a moment, you'll need to be aware [Technical-1].</p> <p>So that was a great help in terms of how you would approach your work and how you would give work out et cetera - knowing what they can and can't handle. [Technical-13]</p> <p>Yeah, but they also have different—there's different—what can I say? Not everyone has the sensitivity to sound or light, so they've all got different traits. They've all obviously been diagnosed, but there might be different bits that go towards that diagnosis. [Technical-1]</p> <p>But I must admit I was expecting from that for this group of people, to be less interactive with us than what they were. It surprised me. I was expecting a group of people who didn't react well with people, or interact well with people. A number of them in particular were not that, and so it surprised me. [Manager-6]</p> <p>I dare say there's a number of permanent staff here who are on the spectrum who either don't tell people that they're on the spectrum or haven't been diagnosed. So that's one thing I've noticed that you go, 'Oh, so that's why that person's a bit like that, I reckon.' You can picture it. [Technical-2]</p> <p>[I work with] one under the program, one not under the program. You can see from a support perspective, the differences between the two, and having I guess the boundaries and the support available from the beginning of the program, for the one individual. Whereas this other person has been left to his own devices for quite some time. Trying to get him back on track has been quite difficult. It's interesting having the two in the team, and then trying to manage it, that's probably the most difficult. Because the output of one is – and the one from the [program] is a lot higher than the output from the one that's not been in the program. [Manager-5]</p>

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Program Challenges		
<i>Negative attitudes</i>	8 groups 18 participants	<p>I have just in the break room heard some things from other testers, that are interesting. That may not have been quite so positive feedback. But yeah, [...] some people I know may be mocking them a little bit. I think somebody might have been stuttering, so they were mocking that person's stuttering, in the breakroom, just things like that. [Technical-18].</p> <p>I think it's a bit of anecdotal experience, a bit of perception, but by the same token, I can't say that. Nobody we've ever given work to hasn't stuffed it up some type or other – not been able to reach the deadline, and things like this. But it probably – it's probably a lot to do with perception and the amount of pressure that you can apply on to a team. Whereas, with a normal team, I could say, 'Work your guts out for 18 hours a day – get this done in three days, then you're done.' Whereas that's something that I wouldn't consider [with the program]. [Manager-1].</p> <p>Whether all that information was necessarily good or not, I can't say, because I think sometimes it gave some preconceptions that people took on and maybe reacted to the [trainees] when they did start. [Technical-1]</p>
<i>Special treatment</i>	9 groups 25 participants	<p>Then one of the team leaders said, 'Could you make sure that you make a point of saying good morning to all the people in the [program]' [...] I thought, 'Well, I don't actually say good morning to anyone, because that's the way I am' [...] So I think there was that kind of – the forced 'I need to act this way'. To me, that wasn't necessarily the best way. [Technical-2]</p> <p>When they transitioned to ours, we were in the middle of [a] ramp up for a rather major project. Then suddenly on the Friday, we got called in to a meeting saying, 'Yeah, no, now you've got an extra – there's another 14 or whatever people coming. Redesign everything around them to include them.' It's like 'what?' [Technical-20]</p> <p>Yeah. They're not special. They're just the same as us. [Technical-2]</p>

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		Then a few weeks ago we had someone join my team, or I joined his team, he'd been working on it for quite a while. But I guess it never really crossed my mind or it never has really affected the work at all in a negative way because of that. Just see him as a co-worker and I'd probably say he's better than most. [Technical-15]
<i>Reliance on co-workers with autism experience</i>	8 groups 17 participants	<p>Yeah, I kind of didn't go to any of those information sessions. I think when the program first started I was not in [same project], so I didn't actually – I saw the invites but didn't bother to go. Didn't really know what [program] was, up until they started sitting near me, and then started to have a chat then. [Technical-18]</p> <p>Actually the [program], they assigned some people to our team with us, only one person. We're also concerned he would like to learn all the different stuff. We give him a chance to learn this stuff [...] we're working well. [Technical-9]</p> <p>But I think it's a personal experience. I had experience with people with Asperger's before. It's an individual thing. So I think I would be okay. But I think maybe as an organisation it would be good that everyone that's involved to have those information sessions. [Manager-3]</p> <p>So I suppose in theory that's something that - I didn't go to any of the [information sessions]. However, having said that I've worked with a couple of autistic children before. So I know roughly how – well, I've got a reasonable idea on how they kind of work. [Manager-4]</p>

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Concerns about Workforce Integration		
<i>Work integration</i>	9 groups 22 participants	<p>Now some of the [trainees] have skills that have been identified and they've been moved out of the core [program] team as well. [Technical-12]</p> <p>I know we've got one or two who have moved out into other teams, so that should be celebrated – our team is actually integrating out in there. [Manager-1]</p> <p>Some of them fine, they're great, interacting from when we interacted, roughly about half I'd say. From what I've seen, won't have an issue, they'll be fine. The other half seem to be very within the [program] group and only within the [program] group. [Technical-20]</p> <p>I believe we kept the [program] team together too much. We should have dispersed them amongst all test teams not keep everyone within one team working on one application. I think one of the big challenges is that change is not always easy for people on the spectrum but in reality our workplace is about change on a daily basis, so we need to look at incorporating them into numerous team not one team. [Technical-3]</p> <p>I do think though that while they do need the support to get in, they've maybe been a little bit too supported, a bit too isolated from the general [organisation] employment, that once the project runs out. I don't know how well some of them will go, once the support ends in a year or whatever it is. [Technical-20]</p> <p>I think we tend to still have a little bit of a – there's the program and then there's [organisation] staff. I think that's something that we could do better. But it's a learning experience. [Manager-2]</p> <p>I felt it would have been better to let them branch out and let them interact with people, get them to know people more. Like how he said just then, it's just there's no – you can't really tell with some of them and I feel like if you treat them like any normal person would, they're not going to – nothing's going to happen, nothing bad will come out of it. [Technical-11]</p> <p>I think that there are a few things that should be implemented at the beginning with the mentor or say the integration – not necessarily spread out all over the place but if they're going to be given a body of work, integrate it into that team. [Technical-8]</p>

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<i>Social integration</i>	8 groups 17 participants	<p>I wouldn't even know any of their names [...] I don't know who their – do they have a boss? Do they have an ambassador? [Technical-6]</p> <p>That's right, their limit is [the program], they're the [trainees], they're known as the [trainees]. Rather than Fred, George, Harry, Robert. Those that have the better interpersonal skills probably should have been farmed out into teams individually, so they can get their independence in the working environment. [Manager-6]</p> <p>Without going into too much information about them individually, it would be nice to know who the individuals are, and if they've got – if they [unclear] and if they've got personal likes or those types of things, it just makes them a bit more – because if you do run into them, you can say, oh, hi [de-identified] ... How's your [bio-planting] going? Or how's your fishing going type of thing. [Technical-4]</p> <p>I do know that there's quite a few of them who are really into socialising and going along to social events and others who maybe aren't as – but yeah, so maybe – like I don't know if their aim is to be more comfortable in social situations through the workplace but maybe they can try and get them involved in activities along those lines. [Support-2]</p> <p>We get along quite well, I don't know if he's faking it or whatever but he tells me jokes and we laugh and I tell him jokes and like I said I work better with him than a lot of other guys just because he is so straight to the point about the work and we don't have any issues. [Technical-17]</p> <p>We've had a couple of social functions like the Mario carts and ping pong battle is about to start. Our competition for the [de-identified] ... is ensuring that the [trainees] are inclusive, talking – well I know that – I go, 'Oh, are you going to enter this, are you going to be part of this?' and things like that. Some of them just won't but others will, but that's the same as anybody. [Manager-7]</p>

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<i>Mediated interaction</i>		<p>I think [the ASC] is not just a support for the team, she is a conduit between the department nearly and to the department. [The ASC] sends out emails and updates and whatnot. [Technical-12].</p> <p>From a daily work output perspective, my job became easier. Because the team, especially the support team, the test manager and the test [lead] they actually took on responsibility for managing pieces of work. Yeah, they were very good in being able to manage for the team not being involved in, I guess other office politics, and just being able to focus on their daily work [...] Also, I think to have the support worker available there, just to give them space when they needed space, has been amazing. [Manager-5]</p>