



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

HOST ORGANISATION

Asia Pacific Autism Conference 2029/2031

APAC is the Asia Pacific region's premier conference dedicated to advancing knowledge, practice and outcomes for autistic people and their families.

Expressions of Interest Open: 30 September 2026
Submission Closing Date: 1 December 2026
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Invitation to Register Interest

The Australian Advisory Board on Autism (AABA) is pleased to invite eligible organisations to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) to host the Asia Pacific Autism Conference (APAC) in 2029 or 2031.

APAC is the Asia Pacific region's premier conference dedicated to advancing knowledge, research, practice and policy outcomes for autistic people, their families and the wider autism community. As owner of APAC, AABA appoints a host organisation through a competitive process to deliver the conference on its behalf, whilst AABA retains strategic oversight, governance and responsibility for the conference's reputation and legacy.

The appointment for APAC will generally be made two to three years prior to the conference, enabling effective planning and delivery. AABA welcomes EOI submissions from both Australian and international organisations with the capacity, experience and commitment to deliver a world-class conference in 2029 or 2031.

Submission Deadline

Completed EOIs must be submitted via email to the Secretariat at secretariat@autismadvisoryboard.org.au by **1 December 2026**. Late submissions will not be considered without prior written approval from AABA.

1. About APAC

The Asia Pacific Autism Conference (APAC) has been the premier forum for the autism community across the Asia-Pacific region since its inaugural event in Sydney in 1997. APAC brings together autistic people and their families, researchers, clinicians, educators, service providers, policy makers and government representatives to share knowledge, celebrate practice innovation and build the networks that support quality of life for autistic people.

APAC is designed to:

- Advance knowledge, research and evidence-informed practice in autism
- Promote inclusion, accessibility and participation
- Share innovation and emerging developments across the region
- Foster collaboration and networking across the autism community
- Support engagement between autistic people, families, researchers, practitioners, policy makers and government representatives
- Strengthen understanding of autism-related issues across the Asia-Pacific

The conference is typically held over three days, with at least one day held on a weekend to support participation by families and individuals who are unable to attend on weekdays. APAC has been hosted in cities across Australia and internationally, including Singapore in 2019.

Recent & Upcoming APAC Conferences	Host Organisation
APAC 19 - 2019, Singapore	Autism Resource Centre (Singapore)
APAC 25 - November 2025, Perth	Autism Association of Western Australia
APAC 27 - November 2027, Adelaide	Autism SA
APAC 29 - 2029, TBC	To be determined through this EOI process
APAC 31 – 2031, TBC	May be determined through this EOI process

2. Why Host APAC?

Hosting APAC is a significant and rewarding opportunity for your organisation and city to be at the forefront of autism sector leadership across the Asia-Pacific region. Beyond the conference itself, hosting APAC delivers lasting strategic, reputational and community benefits.

Strategic Influence	Play a central role in shaping the conference agenda and influencing the direction of autism policy, research and practice across the region.
Sector Leadership	Position your organisation as a leader within the Asia-Pacific autism sector, strengthening relationships with AABA, peer organisations and key stakeholders.
Networking Opportunities	Facilitate connections between local, national and international participants, practitioners, researchers, policy makers and community members.
Showcasing Your City	Highlight the cultural strengths, accessibility and amenities of your city to an engaged national and international audience.
Economic Impact	Generate local economic activity through increased tourism, business engagement and media attention.
Community Legacy	Leave a lasting legacy for your local autism community through enhanced awareness, partnerships and accessibility outcomes.

3. AABA's Strategic Framework

As owner of APAC, AABA's strategic objectives are central to the conference's purpose and direction. All applicants are expected to demonstrate how their proposal aligns with and advances AABA's strategic priorities. This alignment is not merely administrative - it reflects a genuine commitment to the values and vision that underpin APAC's standing as the region's leading autism conference.

AABA's strategic objectives for APAC include:

- **Sector Leadership:** Strengthening AABA's voice and influence across the autism sector in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region, including through government relations and policy engagement
- **Regional Collaboration:** Deepening relationships and knowledge exchange across autism organisations, researchers and communities throughout the Asia-Pacific
- **Accessibility and Inclusion:** Ensuring APAC is genuinely accessible and inclusive for autistic people, their families and diverse community members
- **Knowledge Advancement:** Advancing evidence-informed practice, lived experience leadership and innovation in autism research and service delivery
- **Reputation and Legacy:** Protecting and enhancing AABA's reputation as the trusted steward of APAC, and delivering a lasting positive legacy for each host city and community
- **Community Engagement:** Actively engaging the autism community, autistic people and families in all aspects of conference planning and delivery

AABA will retain strategic oversight of APAC throughout the planning and delivery period. Applicants should be prepared to engage with AABA's nominated Director as a member of the Conference Organising Committee, and to provide formal progress reports at agreed milestones. The host organisation and AABA will work collaboratively to ensure the conference program, themes and keynote priorities reflect contemporary autism research, practice, lived experience and policy priorities.

A note on regional leadership

AABA places particular emphasis on applicants' capacity to advance the conference's Asia-Pacific dimension - including engagement with autism organisations, researchers and communities beyond Australia. Applicants who can demonstrate established regional networks, partnerships or a clear strategy for strengthening regional participation will be well-regarded.

4. Key Responsibilities of the Host Organisation

The host organisation takes full responsibility for the management, leadership and delivery of APAC. This includes operational, financial, legal and reputational responsibilities associated with hosting a major international conference. AABA will provide strategic support and guidance throughout the planning process, but the operational management and financial administration of the conference remains with the host.

4.1 Hosting Fee

The host organisation is required to pay a hosting fee to AABA and is calculated as:

- Fixed Fee:** \$15,000 payable upon signing of the Host Agreement
- Variable Fee:** 3% of gross conference registration revenue exclusive of GST, payable within 14 days of the close of the event

The hosting fee is exclusive of GST. Where GST is applicable, AABA will issue a tax invoice and the Host must pay the applicable GST amount in addition to the Hosting Fee.

4.2 Governance and Oversight

The host organisation will be required to:

- Establish a Conference Organising Committee with relevant expertise across program development, logistics, finance, marketing, communications and accessibility
- Appoint AABA's nominated Director or delegate as a member of the Conference Organising Committee, with participation in all strategic discussions
- Provide formal progress reports to AABA at agreed milestones, including updates on program development, sponsorship, budgeting, registration, accessibility planning and risk management
- Consult with AABA on key program themes, keynote priorities and strategic content
- Ensure AABA is recognised in all conference materials, including logos on all printed and electronic materials, and welcome addresses at opening and closing ceremonies
- Include a welcome note from the Chair of AABA in the Conference Handbook
- Pay an agreed hosting fee to AABA in recognition of its contribution to the conference's success

4.3 Conference Design and Accessibility

APAC is intended for autistic people and their families, practitioners, researchers, educators, service providers, policy makers and others with an interest in autism. The host organisation is expected to:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive Accessibility Plan, provided to AABA for review prior to the conference launch
- Ensure the venue is physically accessible and provides quiet and sensory-friendly spaces, accessible wayfinding and appropriate facilities for autistic delegates
- Provide Auslan interpretation, captioning and easy read materials
- Capture accessibility requirements during registration, including dietary and support needs
- Ensure venue staff and volunteers receive autism awareness training
- Conduct meaningful consultation with the autism community and individuals with lived experience throughout planning and delivery
- Hold the conference over a minimum of three days, with at least one day on a weekend
- Develop a diverse and balanced program including keynote, plenary, paper and workshop sessions, with a call for papers published approximately twelve months before the conference

4.4 Financial and Risk Management

The host organisation is responsible for the financial viability and risk management of APAC. Key financial obligations include:

- Preparation of a detailed preliminary budget, including projected registration numbers and revenue, expenditure, sponsorship and risk assumptions
- Development of a registration fee structure that is contemporary, includes differentiated rates (professional, family/concession, single day, early bird) and includes GST
- Identification and pursuit of sponsorship and partnership opportunities, including government funding from relevant state and federal departments
- Management of all financial, legal and insurance obligations associated with hosting a major conference

- Provision of complete post-conference financial reconciliation and outcomes reporting to AABA

5. Eligibility

Expressions of interest are open to both Australian and international organisations. To be eligible, applicants must:

- Be a legally constituted organisation with a demonstrated focus on autism or disability services, research or advocacy
- Have demonstrated experience in organising and delivering major conferences or events of comparable scale
- Have the financial capacity and organisational infrastructure to manage a conference of APAC's size and complexity
- Be able to demonstrate commitment to the values and strategic objectives of AABA as outlined in this document
- Be able to secure an appropriate venue in the proposed city capable of accommodating at least 1,000 delegates, with plenary, breakout, exhibition and social event facilities

International applicants are welcome to apply. All applicants, regardless of location, are expected to demonstrate a clear understanding of AABA's strategic framework and a credible plan for engaging the Asia-Pacific autism community throughout the planning and delivery of the conference.

6. Submission Requirements

Applicants must address each of the following components in their EOI submission. Submissions should be clear, concise and evidence-based. Supporting materials such as letters of support, venue specifications and financial statements may be included as appendices.

#	Component	What to include
1	Organisational Profile	Legal name, ABN (or equivalent for international organisations), contact person, key personnel and an overview of the organisation's purpose and structure.
2	Hosting Experience	Evidence of capability in managing and delivering major conferences or events of comparable scale. Include examples, delegate numbers, financial scale and outcomes.
3	Proposed City and Venue	Details of the proposed city and venue options, including capacity, accessibility features, availability and proximity to accommodation and transport.
4	APAC Conference Year	Indicate if your Expression of Interest is to host APAC in 2029, 2031 or be considered for either year.
5	Organisational Capacity	Demonstrate organisational capacity across project management, resourcing, financial management, marketing and promotions. Identify key personnel and governance structures. An outline of estimated costs, revenue assumptions, registration fee structure, funding and sponsorship partnerships and risk assumptions. Include projected delegate numbers at conservative, mid-range and optimistic scenarios. Evidence of financial risk management, event risk management and insurance arrangements
6	Strategic Alignment with AABA	Articulate how your proposal aligns with AABA's strategic objectives, including sector leadership, regional collaboration, community engagement and conference legacy. Describe your organisation's existing relationship with the Australian autism sector and AABA member organisations.
7	Asia-Pacific Regional Engagement	Describe your strategy for engaging autism organisations, researchers and communities across the Asia-Pacific region. Identify existing regional partnerships or networks that would contribute to the conference.
8	Accessibility and Inclusion Commitment	An outline of proposed undertakings to deliver intentional accessibility and inclusion, including consultation processes with the autism and disability communities. Evidence that the proposal has considered accessibility, inclusion and equitable outcomes for First Nations peoples, CaLD communities and regional and remote populations.
9	Stakeholder Support	Letters of support or endorsement from local or state government, tourism bodies, autism sector partners or other relevant entities.
10	Unique Value Proposition	What makes your organisation and city the ideal choice for APAC? Include reference to local government engagement, autism sector partnerships, regional opportunities and any unique features of the proposed location.

7. Evaluation Criteria and Weighting

AABA will assess all EOI submissions against the weighted criteria set out below. The evaluation process is designed to identify the organisation best placed to deliver APAC in a manner that reflects the highest standards of conference delivery and advances AABA's strategic objectives.

Each criterion will be scored by an evaluation panel convened by AABA. The panel may request additional information or interviews with shortlisted applicants before a final recommendation is made to the AABA Board.

Criterion	Weight	Assessment Descriptors
1. Alignment with AABA's Strategic Objectives and Asia-Pacific Leadership	25%	• Demonstrates a clear and detailed understanding of AABA's strategic priorities • Articulates compelling, evidence-based plans for advancing AABA's sector leadership objectives • Shows existing or well-developed relationships with AABA, Australian autism organisations and Asia-Pacific autism networks • Identifies concrete strategies to enhance AABA's visibility and regional influence through the conference • Demonstrates commitment to conference legacy consistent with AABA's long-term objectives
2. Organisational Capability	30%	• Demonstrated track record in delivering major conferences or events of comparable scale and complexity • Appropriate governance structures, experienced leadership and adequate resourcing • Robust project management processes and capacity to manage a multi-year planning timeline • Evidence of successful financial and operational management of large-scale events • Credible preliminary budget with realistic revenue and expenditure projections • Evidence of financial reserves or risk mitigation strategies to ensure conference viability • Identification of sponsorship, government funding and partnership opportunities • Comprehensive risk management framework and appropriate insurance arrangements
3. Accessibility and Inclusion	20%	• Comprehensive and credible accessibility plan addressing physical, sensory and communication needs • Evidence of meaningful consultation with autistic people, families and disability communities • Commitment to Auslan interpretation, captioning, easy read materials and sensory-friendly spaces • Demonstrated organisational culture and values aligned with disability inclusion

Criterion	Weight	Assessment Descriptors
4. Venue and City Suitability	10%	• Suitable venue with adequate capacity for plenary, breakout, exhibition and social functions • Physical accessibility of venue and surrounding precinct • Quality and accessibility of local accommodation, transport and visitor infrastructure • Demonstrated appeal of the proposed city as a conference destination
5. Asia-Pacific Regional Engagement Strategy	10%	• Clear and credible strategy for engaging autism organisations and communities across the Asia-Pacific region • Existing regional partnerships or networks that would strengthen international participation • Demonstrated capacity to attract and support international delegates and speakers
6. Stakeholder Endorsement and Community Support	5%	• Letters of support from relevant government, tourism, sector and community stakeholders • Evidence of broad community engagement and enthusiasm for hosting the conference
Total	100%	

Note: The evaluation panel reserves the right to seek clarification or additional information from any applicant during the assessment process. AABA's decision is final.

8. Selection Process and Timeline

The following indicative timeline outlines the EOI process for APAC 2029 / 2031. Dates are subject to change and will be confirmed by AABA upon release of the EOI.

Milestone	Indicative Date
EOI released to eligible organisations	30 September 2026
Briefing session for prospective applicants (if required)	16 October 2026
Closing date for submission of EOIs	1 December 2026
Evaluation panel assessment	2 December 2026 to 14 January 2027
Shortlisted applicants notified and invited to present	18 January 2027
Applicant presentations to AABA Board	22 January 2027
Host organisation agreement executed	Within 3 weeks of presentations

9. Submission Checklist

Please ensure your EOI submission includes all of the following items. Incomplete submissions may not be considered.

✓	Item	Notes
☐	Organisation Details	Legal name, ABN/registration, contact person, key personnel
☐	Cover Letter	Signed by the CEO or equivalent, confirming commitment and eligibility
☐	Hosting Experience	Evidence of comparable conference or event delivery
☐	Proposed City and Venue	Details of proposed venue(s), capacity and accessibility
☐	Organisational Capacity	Governance structure, key personnel, project management approach Preliminary budget including revenue, expenditure, registration fee structure and risk assumptions Financial, event and insurance risk management framework
☐	Strategic Alignment Statement	Addressing alignment with AABA's strategic objectives and Asia-Pacific leadership
☐	Asia-Pacific Regional Engagement Plan	Strategy for regional engagement and international participation
☐	Accessibility and Inclusion Plan	Preliminary plan addressing all required accessibility elements
☐	Letters of Support	From government, tourism bodies, autism sector partners or other stakeholders
☐	Declaration	Signed declaration confirming the accuracy of the submission

10. Conditions of Participation

By submitting an EOI, applicants agree to the following conditions:

- Submissions become the property of AABA and may be used in the evaluation and selection process.
- AABA reserves the right to accept or reject any submission and is not required to accept the highest scoring or any submission.
- AABA is not responsible for any costs incurred by applicants in preparing or submitting an EOI.
- All information provided in submissions will be treated as confidential by AABA and the evaluation panel, except to the extent required by law.
- The successful applicant will be required to enter into a formal Host Agreement with AABA prior to commencement of planning activities.

- AABA reserves the right to amend the EOI process, extend deadlines or withdraw the EOI at any time.
- All information provided in submissions must be accurate and complete. AABA reserves the right to disqualify any applicant found to have provided misleading or inaccurate information.

11. Contact and Submission Details

Completed EOI submissions should be directed to:

Australian Advisory Board on Autism (AABA)

APAC Expression of Interest

Contact Person: Sonja Best, Secretariat

Email: secretariat@autismadvisoryboard.org.au

Website: www.autismadvisoryboard.org.au

Enquiries about this EOI are welcome prior to the submission deadline. AABA may, at its discretion, hold a briefing session for prospective applicants - details will be communicated to registered interested parties.

We look forward to receiving your expression of interest and to working collaboratively to deliver an outstanding Asia Pacific Autism Conference.