

2 April 2025

Canberra Airport Marks World Autism Awareness Day by Joining Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program

In recognition of World Autism Awareness Day on 2 April, Canberra Airport is proud to announce its participation in the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program - an initiative that helps travellers with invisible disabilities, including autism, navigate the airport with greater ease and confidence.

The Sunflower lanyard, featuring a distinctive sunflower emblem, allows individuals with non-visible disabilities, such as autism, dementia, anxiety, or chronic pain, to discreetly signal that they may need extra time, assistance, or a quieter environment.

“At Canberra Airport, we are committed to making passengers’ experience as inclusive as possible,” said Canberra Airport’s Head of Aviation, Michael Thomson, “Marking World Autism Awareness Day by launching the Sunflower program highlights our dedication to supporting travellers with autism and other invisible disabilities, ensuring they have a smooth and comfortable journey through our terminal.”

To further enhance accessibility, Canberra Airport has also introduced sensory stories and sensory maps, designed to help passengers with autism and sensory sensitivities familiarise themselves with the terminal environment before they travel. These resources provide clear, step-by-step guidance on navigating key airport processes, reducing uncertainty and stress.

As part of this initiative, frontline staff at Canberra Airport have undergone training to recognise the Sunflower symbol and understand how best to support passengers wearing the lanyard. Whether it’s providing extra time, identifying quieter areas, or offering reassurance, staff are ready to assist at every stage of the journey.

“We encourage travellers who may benefit from a Sunflower lanyard to request one from our team at least seven days before their flight.” added Mr. Thomson. “By taking this step, we can ensure that every passenger - regardless of their unique needs - feels supported from the moment they arrive at Canberra Airport.”

First introduced at Gatwick Airport in 2016, the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is now recognised at airports worldwide, including Heathrow Airport, Singapore Changi Airport and Auckland Airport. By joining this initiative, Canberra Airport is strengthening its commitment to fostering a more inclusive and supportive travel experience for all.

To request a Sunflower lanyard, travellers can email info@canberraairport.com.au. For more information about the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program and accessibility initiatives at Canberra Airport, visit: <https://www.canberraairport.com.au/passenger-guide/help-services/hidden-disabilities>

Media Contact:

Melissa Evans – 0455 227 711

media@canberraairport.com.au