

A man and a woman are shown in profile, looking at each other. The man is on the left, wearing a light blue t-shirt and glasses. The woman is on the right, wearing a dark top and glasses. They are standing on a balcony or rooftop with a railing. In the background, a city skyline is visible under a dark night sky filled with stars and a faint nebula. The overall mood is romantic and contemplative.

# BECAUSE

*a story of tenderness and turbulence,  
fragility and family, loss and love*

# WE

# HAVE

# EACH

*a documentary by sari braithwaite*

# OTHER

**PRESS KIT**



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**ONE LINE SYNOPSIS**

A story of tenderness and turbulence, fragility and family, loss and love.

**TECHNICAL INFORMATION**

Production year: 2022

Country of production: Australia

Language: English

Duration: 89 minutes

Format: DCP

Screen ratio: 1.85:1

Sound format: 5.1 Surround sound & Stereo

**SHORT SYNOPSIS**

An intimate documentary five years in the making, *Because We Have Each Other* chronicles the life of Janet and Buddha and their five adult children.

They're a neurodiverse family on the working-class fringe. With too many pets and a whole lot of bills to pay, they're dreaming of bigger futures in a society that refuses to see them.

Life has been hard, and blended families can be messy. But amidst the chaos, their love is as real as it is unconventional.

At times deeply funny, this wondrous film examines the hopes and heartbreaks of one family as they invite us into their extraordinary home.

# BACKGROUND ON THE FILM



Made over five years with the participation of the Barnes/Sharrock family, *Because We Have Each Other* observes the minuscule and the monumental in a story of love, neurodiversity and struggle in forgotten working class suburbs.

“I was catching a flight and I read a story in the paper about the family and in particular, Becky’s incredible memory,” says director Sari Braithwaite. “I’d just finished making a film about a woman losing her memory, and I thought, what would it be like to be unable to forget? I ripped the article out, tucked it away and thought about it for two months before contacting the family. When we met, everyone gathered in the living room and I was so taken by their warmth. I thought they were all amazing. Also...I had no idea how I would make a film about seven people.”

In 2018, Sari began taking trips from her home in Melbourne to Logan to record a vast archive of audio interviews with the family in their home. Developed from Sari’s background in oral history, the interviews amounted to close to 70 hours of unstructured audio recorded over five years.

The City of Logan, on the outskirts of Brisbane, Australia, has a reputation for crime and unemployment. It’s a place often depicted with scorn and disrespect. But it’s an incredibly beautiful and dynamic place, with more cultures living together than New York City, a high population of young people and 6% of the population live with a day-to-day disability. “Our home is our little patch of paradise,”

Janet says. “The house is bursting at the seams. But it’s where we prepare ourselves for the battles outside.”

The ambition of the film was to centre the family and their way of seeing their lives. “Buddha and Janet have such a wealth of lived experience,” says Sari. “They have a way of being in the world which is deeply philosophical and spiritual. I learnt so much about what it is to be alive from them.” She says the film is a story about love and family rather than a social-issues film. “My hope is conversations about disability, class, mental health and trauma are given space to continue outside this film.”

Producer Chloé Brugalé from Arenamedia came on board in 2019. Development Funding for *Because We Have Each Other* was provided by Vicscreen and the Logan City Council and the Queensland government through their Regional Arts Funding initiative, followed by Screen Australia. The production was eventually co-financed by Screen Australia’s producer fund, MIFF Premiere Fund (which builds MIFF’s relationship with filmmaking talent and builds a pipeline of quality Australian content for MIFF), Vicscreen, with support of post production Post Lab i.o, Arenamedia and Distributor CinemaPlus.

In 2021, amid the pandemic and border closures Sari and her family relocated to Brisbane and production formally began. Filming continued for a year, following a unique collaborative approach with members of the Barnes/Sharrock family and building on the audio interviews. In August 2022, *Because We Have Each Other* will premiere at MIFF70.



# KEY CREDITS

**DIRECTOR:** Sari Braithwaite

**PRODUCERS:** Chloé Brugalé, Sari Braithwaite

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS:** Robert Connolly, Robert Patterson

**CINEMATOGRAPHER:** Jeremy Virag

**EDITOR:** Patrick McCabe

**SOUND MIXER & DESIGNER:** Lachlan Harris

**COMPOSER:** Munro Melano

## PARTICIPANTS

Janet Barnes

Buddha Barnes

Becky Sharrock

Jessica Sharrock

Kylie Barnes

Brendan Barnes

Dylan Barnes

## PARTNERS AND INVESTORS





# INTERVIEW WITH SARI BRAITHWAITE

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As a filmmaker, I'm interested in the heart of things. For Janet and Buddha's family, what is despairing often hangs together with what is beautiful. In the midst of so much pain, there is always a lot of laughter. That's where grace lives — when things are awful and joyous all at once — and this family walks that tightrope every day.

## ON CENTRING NEURODIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

Right now is a powerful moment of reckoning in how stories of neurodiversity are told. We're aware that as Neurotypical filmmakers, we needed to work with the family and Neurodiverse consultants with lived experience, to educate ourselves. We built a way of filming with the family that worked to their incredible strengths. Six members of a family have a disability, and they all have very different relationships to their disabilities. We thought it was vital we recognised that variety in how we worked and how we represented them in the final film.

## ON THE FILM AS A LOVE STORY

Janet and Buddha are deeply, deeply in love. Smitten with each other. It's the kind of love that people yearn for. It's so rare to see a sparkly-eyed love with a couple in their 50s. Buddha and Janet have absolutely nothing in common and yet they understand each other so deeply. I find it extraordinary, and so moving, that they found each other. The more time I spent with them, the more I felt that the universe threw them together.

## ONE THE FAMILY AS COLLABORATORS

Buddha and Janet gave me a key to their house before we started production. When people give you that much trust, you feel a strong sense of responsibility to honour it. I have a deep love and respect for Janet and Buddha, who so generously opened their lives to me and taught me so much. Our relationship is one of family.

We spent so much time just being together — watching TV, hanging in the workshop, learning about motorbikes, and celebrating holidays together. The family brought as many ideas to the table as I did. We got things done because Buddha and Janet are unstoppable, and everyone involved gave it everything we had. We made something that is not a singular vision — it is our film because we did it together.

**'Buddha and Janet gave me a key to their house before we started production. When people give you that much trust, you feel a strong sense of responsibility to honour it.'**



Filmmaker Sari Braithwaite's documentary films have played at Melbourne International Film Festival, Sydney Film Festival, Adelaide Film Festival, New Zealand International Film Festival, DocPoint and the British Film Institute in London. Her film *Paper Trails* (2016), about Australian journalist Anne Deveson, earned her a Directors Guild Award. She was a recipient of the 2015 AFTRS Creative Fellowship to create her first feature-length experimental work [*CENSORED*], which was awarded Best Documentary at the Chicago International Film Festival. *You Will See Me*, her five-channel video installation made in collaboration with Conor Bateman and Field Carr, was commissioned by the Australian Centre of the Moving Image (ACMI) and will be on display until 2031.



# KEY CREATIVES & STATEMENTS

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## PRODUCER, CHLOÉ BRUGALÉ

*“Sari and I made our first film together in 2018, an archival essay film called [CENSORED]. The central ideas that emerged from the film were the gaze of the filmmaker, the lens through which we make films, observe our subjects and the version of them we offer to our public. Through this voyage into the history of films, we witnessed with deep discomfort the unabashed power imbalance between those behind the camera and those in front of it. It made us wonder as filmmakers, how that imbalance could be addressed? How could people being filmed have more agency in the work?”*

*As documentarians, our responsibility is authenticity, truthfulness, respect and compassion. Working along Sari and watching the deep respect and warmth she shows to her subjects and the uncompromising intellectual rigour she applies to her practice has been exhilarating.*

*Sari likes to quote Agnès Varda, who once said: “Nothing is trite if you film people with empathy and love.” This was Sari’s compass throughout the making of this film, never wavering from engaging with the Barnes family members with absolute care, honesty and compassion.*

**In turn, the family gave us incredible access, welcoming this crazy bunch of filmmakers with open arms and trust, and letting us put their everyday lives under the microscope. With bold, encouraging investors and EPs who trusted us from the beginning, Sari and I surrounded ourselves with like-minded creatives. In a world where finances and resources are scarce for documentaries, our team went above and beyond, not just for the film, or for Sari and I, but for the family.**

*Filmmaking is hard. It’s relentless and you need to deeply believe in what you are doing. But the rewards are profound. At the end of the tunnel is a unique film, told in a way not often seen on our screens, of real people living real lives, with love.”*

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Chloé Brugalé is a screen practitioner with more than 20 years’ experience working across drama and factual productions, distribution and festival programming. For over eight years, Chloe held the role of General Manager of Robert Connolly’s production company Arenamedia, contributing to many artistically innovative productions including *The Turning* (2013), *Spear* (2015) and the box office hits *Paper Planes* (2014) and the award-winning documentary *Chasing Asylum* (2016).

Since 2018, Chloé has been developing her own slate of factual projects. Her producer credits include writer/director Santilla Chingaipe’s documentaries, short film *Black as Me* and ABC Art Bites series *Third Culture Kids* and Braithwaite’s experimental documentary *[CENSORED]*. Their second feature doc, *Because We Have Each Other*, will premiere at the Melbourne International Film Festival in 2022.







### CINEMATOGRAPHER, JEREMY VIRAG

**"I came on board with a fairly simple brief; a single camera verite project with the family; intimate and patient, handheld, and; keep it a bit wobbly. We developed a set of rules on the camera language for the film, including a close intimate human experience, long unflinching camera takes and embracing camera movement."**

*Around the same time I had been restoring a news film archive, and I was inspired by the openness and discovery I was finding in some of these moving images created in the early days of handheld camera. In the footage, often outtakes and unseen, I found an affinity for this sense of experimentation and sincerity though the frame, often from the operator's unfamiliarity in a setting and from the subjects lack of weariness to the camera- and desired to bring this sense of observation and responsiveness when filming the family. I feel this gave a sense of optimism and hope to the footage, while not denying the family's experiences or challenges.*

*It became clear on some shoot days that we had to let go of our rules. Sari always had an innate sense of when the right time was to be there with the camera, and we filmed extensively, capturing the everyday and homely, to the high octane, emotional scenes.*

*For the most part I embraced the natural light we had, it's such a signifier of the location for me and quite unique at times. With night scenes, I let them sit where they fell, quite a few ended up making the final cut. Shooting long handheld takes in the Queensland sub-tropics could be trying at times, but I fondly remember navigating the curious pets, always ready for a pat between operating, using deft footwork while carrying a frame- but once I did get stuck in Buddha's wet paintwork!*

*Ultimately it was such a rewarding project, seeing the way Janet, Buddha and family embrace life wholeheartedly, and an engaging experience with the collaborating filmmakers."*

**'It became clear on some shoot days that we had to let go of our rules. Sari always had an innate sense of when the right time was to be there with the camera, and we filmed extensively, capturing the everyday and homely, to the high octane, emotional scenes.'**

Jeremy Virag is a cinematographer and camera operator whose work has screened at MIFF, BFI London Film Festival, Visions du Réel, Oberhausen, Centre Pompidou, Alchemy Film and Moving Image Festival, Uppsala Film Festival and QLD Film Festival. His short film credits include Alena Lodkina's *Mercury* (2019) for Prototype, and *A River Twice* (2017) and *Magic Miles* (2014) by Audrey Lam. His TV credits include the inaugural season of *Renovate or Rebuild*, *Open Homes Australia*, *Ready Set Reno* and *Australia's Best Pools*. His work on music videos includes Tim Finn's *Unlikely Friend* (2022) and Robert Forster's *Inferno* (2019). Jeremy also works at the Australian Cinematheque at QAGOMA and as a film archivist at Channel 7. His work for QAGOMA has included documentaries for artists Patricia Piccinini and Nick Cave.





## EDITOR, PATRICK McCABE

*"Because We Have Each Other is a film that Sari and I found and nurtured in the edit suite.*

*The editing process forced us to ask many questions of ourselves and of the material. How do you represent Neurodiverse people in an authentic way without framing their entire lives through the lens of Neurodiversity? How do you choose whose story to tell when you have seven important participants? And how do you find enough drama in their everyday lives to keep a modern audience engaged?*

*Early experimentation unlocked one key element: our participants were so open and vulnerable with Sari in audio-only recordings. They shared more of themselves when the camera was not around, and when we paired these very personal thoughts from their audio interviews with visuals of their everyday lives, the result felt like a magical insight into their worlds.*

**A family is a complex organism, with constantly evolving everyday lives that informed the film's narrative into the final weeks of the edit. Sari and I wanted to represent their struggles, their hopes, and the social and economic landscape that surrounds them, in a genuine way, without feeling cliché, out of place or dialled-up for dramatic effect."**

**'When we paired these very personal thoughts from their audio interviews with visuals of their everyday lives, the result felt like a magical insight into their worlds.'**



In 2014, Patrick was nominated for Best Editing in a Short Film (for Rabbit) at the Australian Screen Editors Guild Awards. Other industry recognition includes two AACTA award-winning online series for ABC TV - *Strong Women* (2021) and *Deadlock* (2018). His feature films include *How Do You Know Chris?* (2020), *Green Light* (2019), *Journey Beyond Fear* (2018) and *Exit* (2011). His documentary and short film credits include *Paper Trails* (2017), *Water* (2017), *First Contact* (2012) and *The Disappearance of Willie Bingham* (2015).

His work has reached audiences via theatrical release, top-tier film festivals, ABC TV, Network Ten, Stan, Vimeo Staff Picks, ABC iView, SBS OnDemand, and has been supported by Screen Australia, VicScreen, Screenwork and Screen Queensland.





### COMPOSER, MUNRO MELANO

*“Usually a composer is introduced to a film as an outsider. But in this film I was a member of the crew, putting on microphones, recording audio and spending ten months with the family throughout the 2021 production. I got to really get to know the people who I would end up writing music for.*

*The Barnes boys are huge Star Wars fans and the Sharrocks are Harry Potter fans. It felt like a daunting and surprising challenge to draw inspiration from John Williams scores. While the films for which Williams writes are often in the realm of fantasy and imagined worlds, we were looking for something that spoke to the real and the ordinary. But I wanted to give the family a score that they would love to see in a film.*

*A brass band can be humble yet grand. I could think of no better metaphor for the family. I’d never composed for a brass band before, so on days off from shooting, I took brass arranging lessons in Burpengarry, an hour away from our rental house in Brisbane. I was fortunate to work with Melbourne trumpet player Brae Grimes who made sure that all my brass ideas were playable and brought a lifetime of expertise to the score. Composing, recording and mixing the music for the film was done in six weeks. It was the hardest project I’ve ever done.*

*Sari is my partner, and we have a three-year-old daughter. As we were juggling (and sometimes dropping) the demanding pressures of parenting and filmmaking, I began waking at 3am each morning to write music uninterrupted.*

**My music aimed not to bring dignity to the story, but to remind people of the dignity and grace that is present in the everyday.”**

**'The Barnes boys are huge Star Wars fans and the Sharrocks are Harry Potter fans. It felt like a daunting and surprising challenge to draw inspiration from John Williams scores.'**

Munro Melano is a Melbourne-based singer-songwriter and composer. He has collaborated with Sari Braithwaite on a number of projects, including feature film *[CENSORED]*, *Paper Trails* (2017), documentaries *SMUT HOUNDS* (2015) and *Qiuqhuang* (2020), and ACMI art installation *You Will See Me*. He has also written the music for feature films *Slim & I* (Kriv Stenders, 2020) and *It All Started With a Stale Sandwich* (Samantha Lang, 2019).

As a solo artist, Munro has released two EPs and a full-length album, with another solo album forthcoming in 2022.

### SOUND MIX & DESIGN, LACHLAN HARRIS

*"It's not often you get to work on a film that's so intensely intimate and grand at the same time. It became clear after seeing initial rough cuts that our approach to the sound design needed to reflect that. Inspired by Terrence Malick's non-literal approach to sound, we mapped out the film and assigned each scene a number – 5 representing a soundscape of full abstraction and 1 being grounded in reality. By choosing our moments to replace expected diegetic sounds with more impressionistic soundscapes, we hoped to suggest to our audience that the themes in the film are bigger than just the everyday."*

**Elemental winds and the sounds of nature became a recurring palate. Another important undertaking was to make sure the Barnes' vehicles and workshop were recorded inside out and represented authentically in the film. Over multiple sessions our team captured roaring engines, spray guns, buffers, polishers and anything we could get our hands on – with expert guidance from Buddha and Brendan!"**

**'It's not often you get to work on a film that's so intensely intimate and grand at the same time.'**



For over ten years Lachlan has worked in all aspects of sound post-production for film and television. He is known for his passion, taste and expertise in understanding how to use sound for a diverse array of genres. A graduate from the Australian Film Television and Radio School, Lachlan has won awards and nominations for his work as sound designer and sound effects editor on films including *Hotel Mumbai* (2018), *Sweet Country* (2018) and *Loveland* (2021).





**'Sari Braithwaite and Chloé Brugalé's previous documentary, [CENSORED], typified a spirit of innovation and bold storytelling that is at the heart of all of Arenamedia's projects. Their latest film, *Because We Have Each Other*, follows in this same spirit of innovation – allowing us to see into the life of an Australian family in a way not usually portrayed on our screens.**

**Filming across such an extended period of time permitted Sari to capture the many highs and lows that might confront any family over time, from the mundane to the monumental. And although having their own unique character and circumstances, this family's hopes, joys and struggles are entirely relatable and universal.**

**By giving the family agency in the telling of their story, *Because We Have Each Other* is also much more than an observational documentary about a family living at the urban fringe of a major city – it is a thoughtful, moving and reflective work of cinema. It is ultimately a story of the hopes, the fears and the dreams that unite us all..'**

#### **EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, ROBERT CONNOLLY**

Robert Connolly is the writer and director of the feature films *Blueback* (2022), *The Dry* (2020), *Paper Planes* (2014), *Underground: The Julian Assange Story* (2012), *Balibo* (2009), *Three Dollars* (2005) and *The Bank* (2001).

For TV, he was one of the featured directors on the International Emmy-nominated miniseries *The Slap* (2011) and also directed the TV series *Barracuda* (2016) for Matchbox/NBCU and *Deep State* for Fox International (2018).

As a producer, Robert is recognised as a champion of new talent, innovation, and bold and compelling works for the screen. His productions include the feature films *The Boys* (1998), *Romulus My Father* (2007), *The Turning* (2013), *Spear* (2015), *Chasing Asylum* (2016), *Ellipsis* (2017) and *Acute Misfortune* (2018) as well as the TV series *The Warriors* (2017) and *Gallipoli* (2015). Robert has won multiple screen awards and has screened his films in over 30 major international film festivals including the Berlin, Toronto and San Sebastian International Film Festivals.

#### **EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, ROBERT PATTERSON**

Robert Patterson has an extensive background in content creation, sales and marketing. He held a number of senior roles at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, ultimately as Director of ABC Commercial. Since joining Arenamedia, Robert has executive produced several of the company's productions including Robert Connolly's *Blueback*, the feature film directorial debuts of Frances O'Connor (*Emily*) and Jub Clerc (*Sweet As*), and Connolly's *Force of Nature*, currently in production with Made Up Stories, Arenamedia and Pick Up Truck Pictures. Drawing on his experience in the global sale of content to broadcasters, cable networks, SVOD, online and emerging platforms, Robert has also expanded Arenamedia's development slate of film, series and digital projects.



## JANET BARNES

Janet is one of the smartest, quickest, and wisest women you'll ever meet.

For ten years, Janet was a single mum with no money. She wasn't looking for a partner when she met Buddha at the RSL, but she liked him straight away. When Janet's teenage girls finally met him, they said, "You know he's a bit of a bogan, Mum," and she agreed, wholeheartedly. Against all odds, they belonged to each other.

When Janet and Buddha started living together, none of his kids were in his care. Gradually, they would take full custody of Brendan, Dylan and Kylie. Their house was heaving with five kids; Janet and Buddha moved their bedroom into the garage and built new walls to create bedrooms for everyone else. Janet is a full time carer for her adult children.



## BUDDHA BARNES

Buddha Barnes is a big man, with hands and fingernails stained from decades of working with paint. He's a softie. Janet describes him as an athlete in the body of a teddy bear. At 15, he was asked to leave high school, illiterate. No one noticed that he was dyslexic. He taught himself to read by looking at motor magazines.

Buddha spray paints motorcycles in his Logan workshop. Riding the bike is where he knows who he is.

He was 35 when he met Janet. She helped Buddha realise that he had to be a father. Just because it was hard wasn't an excuse to not try. She still needs to remind him to step up. Buddha's a good Dad: devoted, patient and silly. He's a beautiful husband; he'd die for Janet.

**Against all odds,  
Janet and Buddha  
belonged to each other**



### REBECCA (BECKY) SHARROCK

It wasn't until Becky was in her mid-twenties that the world discovered she had an extraordinary gift: Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory. Globally, Becky is one of 80 people identified with this condition, and like a flashback, each memory brings with it the vivid feeling of its circumstance.

Becky is learning languages so she can advocate autistic people like herself all over the world.



### JESSICA SHARROCK

Jessica is Janet's youngest daughter, and has always loved old Hollywood. As a kid, she would sit close to the TV screen watching the classic movie channel.

She is very smart, quick-witted and very funny. But everything can be undone when anxiety crashes through her being.



### KYLIE BARNES

Kylie was seven when she came to live with her dad and step-mum, Janet. She is the eldest of Buddha's children. She has always hated Janet.

As a teenager, all Kylie wanted was to get away from her parents and siblings, and live her own life. Since moving out of the family home, that dream has come true. She holds down a job packing household spices in a warehouse on the outskirts of Brisbane. So why don't things feel quite right?



### BRENDAN BARNES

Brendan works as an apprentice motorcycle spray-painter for his Dad.

He's a car fanatic with a hooning heart. He's softly spoken and kind: waxing on endlessly about his Calais while guzzling Monster energy drinks. He's autistic, but it's not something that people pick up on straight away.



### DYLAN BARNES

The only mum Dylan has ever known is Janet. Dylan is Buddha's youngest biological child. When he was a baby, his birth mother surrendered him to the state. After months of wrangling child protection, Janet and Buddha finally won full custody. Dylan is a kind, gentle, friendly man. He's 19 – he's not meant to know what he wants to do with his life.



# INTERVIEW WITH BUDDHA AND JANET

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## How did you find making the film?

**BUDDHA:** It's helped us reflect on our life.

**JANET:** I think we found it quite easy making the film. What you see is what you get. We haven't put on any airs and graces. We just exposed our life right out there.

**BUDDHA:** I find it bizarre that people are interested in our lives coz to us, our life is just natural, normal to us.

**JANET:** We have exposed our emotions and our fears and we've just put it all out there. I think that's a positive thing for other people to see, don't be scared to show who you are.. I hope that's one of the major things that comes out of our movie, it doesn't matter if you don't look like the people around you. Be your authentic self and be proud and true to yourself. They're the most important things that you have in this world.

## What made you decide to go along with this crazy plan to make a film?

**BUDDHA:** I thought it'd be a bit of fun. It's something I've never done before. So I thought it'd give it a go.

**JANET:** I liked the way it involved all the family. It was a project we could all jump straight into and everyone was given the same amount of attention. Every one of us was just on an equal footing. That's what I like about the movie.

**BUDDHA:** Sari seemed like a nice enough chicky babe.

## What would you want people to know about the experience of doing this?

**BUDDHA:** Don't be scared to give something a go.

**JANET:** A lot of times people are embarrassed. They're embarrassed because they're worried about how other people will judge them. And it holds 'em back. But I'd rather be embarrassed than filled with regret.



# NEURODIVERSITY CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

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## WHAT IS NEURODIVERSITY?

Neurodiversity refers to the diversity of human neurological functioning. The human neurodiversity spectrum includes all brains – even those we consider ‘the norm’. Grammatically, you can use the language of neurodiversity similarly to how you would use the language of cultural diversity.

**Neurodiverse:** A characteristic that society or a group has. Not something a person is.

**Neurominorities:** People who fall outside the ‘norm’ (i.e. Autistic, ADHD, Dyslexic, etc.).

**Neurotypical:** A person who does not identify as a Neurominority – the privileged ‘norm’.

**Neurotype:** An entire identity group (i.e. Autism, ADHD, Neurotypical are neurotypes)

## IDENTITY FIRST LANGUAGE

Please avoid person-first language (i.e. person with Autism), and medicalised language (i.e. Autism Spectrum Disorder) when referring to Neurominorities. You can use the below table to guide you:

TERMS TO USE	TERMS TO AVOID
Autistic Person	Person with Autism
Identifies as Autistic/ADHD/Intellectually Disabled	Suffers from/has/lives with Autism/ID, etc.
Disabled person	Person with/living with/affected by Disability
Neurominority Groups/Neurominorities	On the Spectrum; with/has the condition
Autism	Autism Spectrum Disorder/Condition
Autistic/ADHD/Disability Support Needs	Is or Has Mild/Severe or Low/High Functioning
Neurotype	Disorder/Condition/Disease/Deficit

## COMMON PITFALLS TO AVOID

Here are some common pitfalls in Neurodiversity media reporting that are culturally insensitive:

- **Avoid representing Minority Neurotypes as diseases, disorders, and deficits that need curing/treating.**

Neurominorities want social acceptance, not a cure. Please don’t medicalise these identities. *i.e.: Don’t focus on how/why treatment/cures can improve lives, but how social inclusion can improve lives.*

- **Avoid reporting on Disability as an individual, family, or societal burden to overcome.**

Neurominorities are harmed by the view that they are burdens – avoid framing them as such *i.e.: Centre the Disabled person; not parental suffering, the NDIS burden to the tax-payer, etc.*

- **Avoid framing Disability as a burden, also avoid the ‘inspiring Disabled person’ storyline.**

Tell Disabled stories as human stories; not as inspiration for ‘overcoming’ their burden/Disability. *i.e.: Don’t use Disabled peoples’ ‘sad stories’ to make Able people feel better about themselves.*

- **Don’t reach out for ‘expert opinions’ from non-Disabled people (researchers, parents, etc.).**

Disabled people are experts, researchers, and parents too: platform their voices on Disability *i.e.: Don’t reach out to ‘advocacy organisations’; reach out to Disability self-advocates and researchers.*

**For Australian expert opinions on Neurodiversity you can consider the following people:**

- Beth Radulski – Autistic Autism/Neurodiversity Researcher and Academic, La Trobe University
- Prof. Sandra Jones – Autistic Autism researcher and parent, Australian Catholic University
- Dr. Rebecca Flower – ADHD-identifying Lecturer of Psychology, La Trobe University



# CONTACT

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