



# Unlocking enormous potential: the neurodiverse geospatial workforce revolution

Geoff Smith, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Spatial Analytics  
2025 Queensland Australian of the Year

## The most relevant SDGs related to the presentation and theme of this session

1st relevant  
SDG

**8** DECENT WORK AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH



2nd relevant  
SDG

**4** QUALITY  
EDUCATION



3rd relevant  
SDG

**10** REDUCED  
INEQUALITIES



**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

International Federation of Surveyors supports the  
Sustainable Development Goals





**Australian**  
of the  
Year

**Geoffrey  
Smith**

*co-founder,  
Australian Spatial Analytics*

1 in 5  
Australians are  
neurodivergent

1 in 20  
Australians  
are  
ADHDers

80% of ASA's  
workforce is  
neurodivergent

80% at ASA  
have a long-  
term illness,  
condition or  
disability

10% of  
Australians  
are  
dyslexic

1 in 70  
Australians  
are  
autistic

~20% of the world's population is  
neurodivergent—1.6 billion people!

# The impact of autistic unemployment



"Decreasing the unemployment rate among individuals with ASD by one-third could lead to a substantial \$43 billion increase in the Australian Gross Domestic Product."

Lee, E.A.; Black, M.H.; Tan, T.; Falkmer, T.; Girdler, S. "I'm destined to ace this": Work experience placement during high school for individuals with autism spectrum disorder. *J. Autism Dev. Disord.* 2019, 49, 3089–3101.

# Geospatial & Engineering Skills Shortage



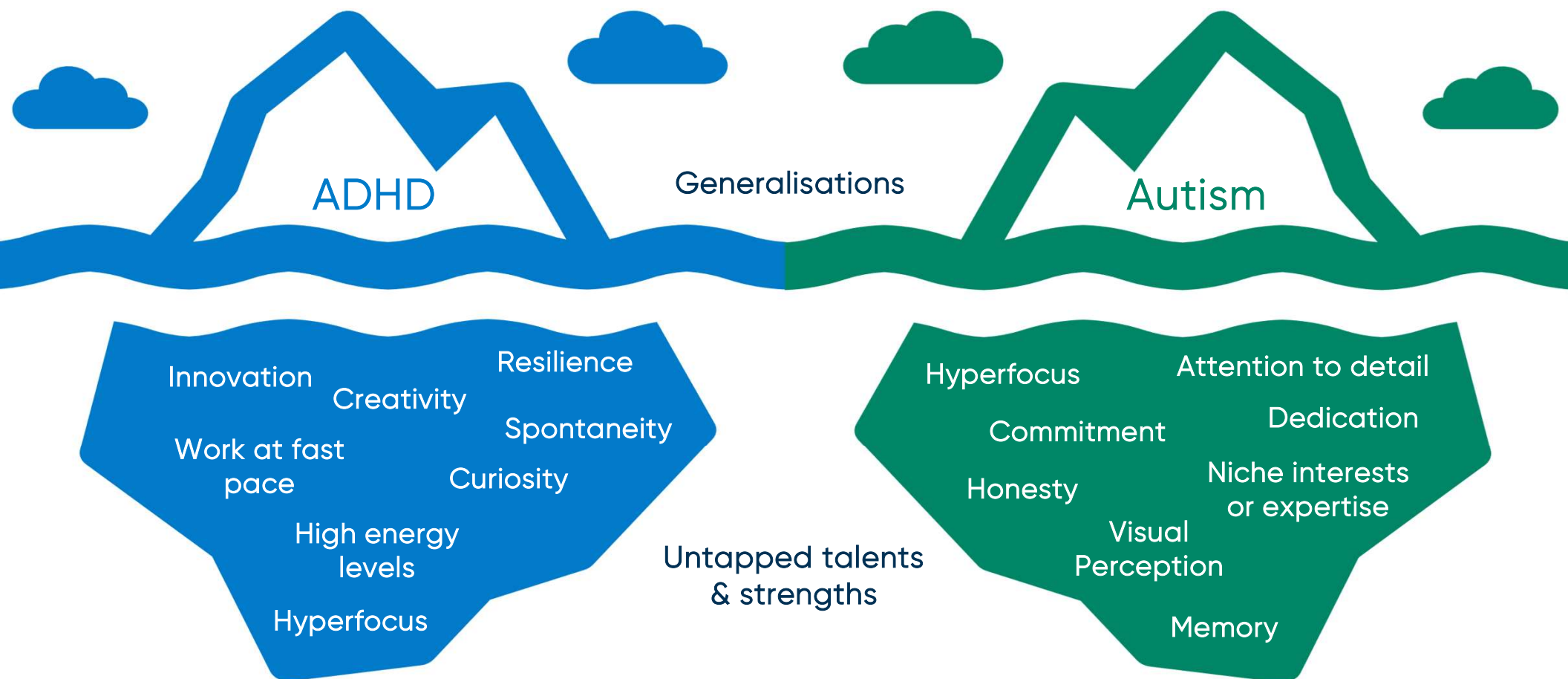
Where do we find this workforce?

*"...an average of 1,500 extra surveyors and geospatial professionals needed each year to meet national demands"*

*"...more than 41,000 additional engineers estimated to fill the required engineering occupations including civil, geotechnical, structural and materials engineers."*



# Neurodivergence: untapped strengths



# Australian Spatial Analytics

## Work Integrated Social Enterprise

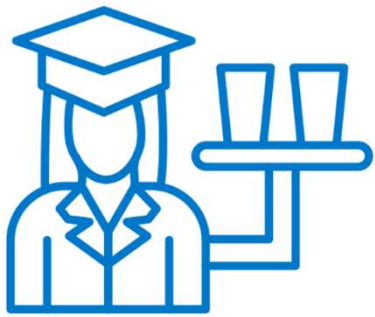
- Founded in 2020
- One of Australia's largest work-integrated social enterprises (not-for-profit)
- **Geospatial and Engineering data services**
- Team of 60+ (80% neurodivergent)
- Three offices: Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide



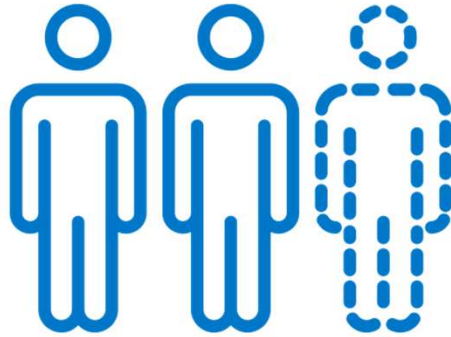
We pay full award wages to deliver real-world projects



# Supply and Demand = Our opportunity



Under-employed  
group of amazing  
people



Engineering, Geospatial  
and Surveying industry  
skills shortages



Social & Economic  
benefits

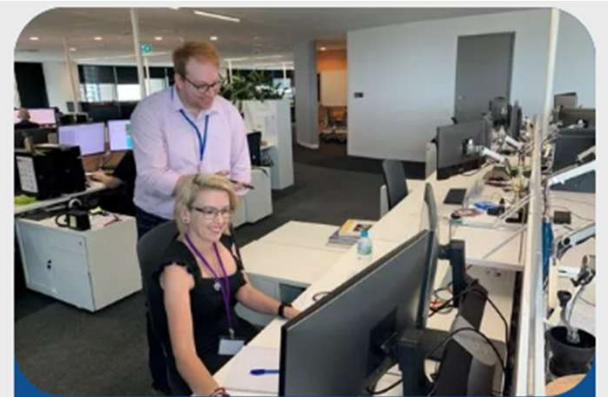
# Engaging ASA



**Data Services**

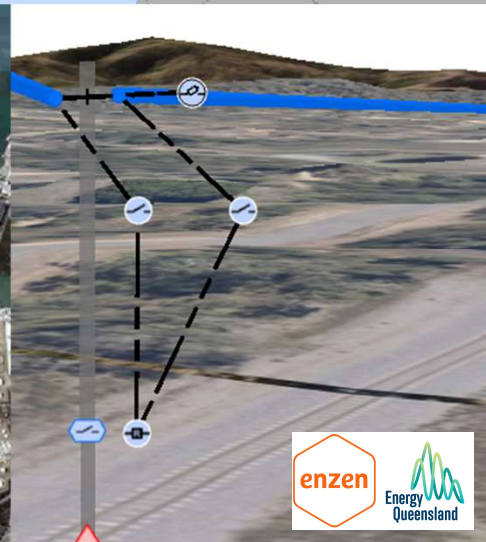
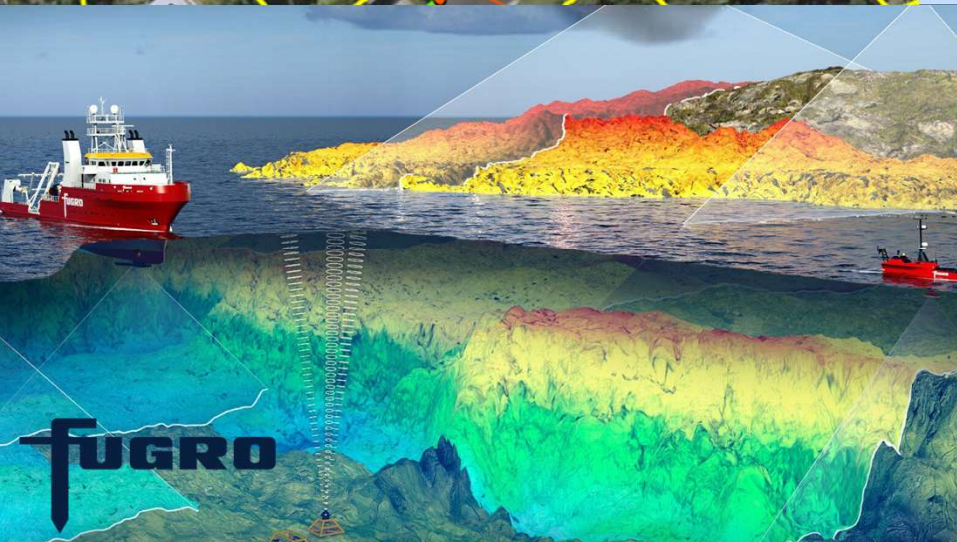


**Talent Services**



**Neurodiversity Training**



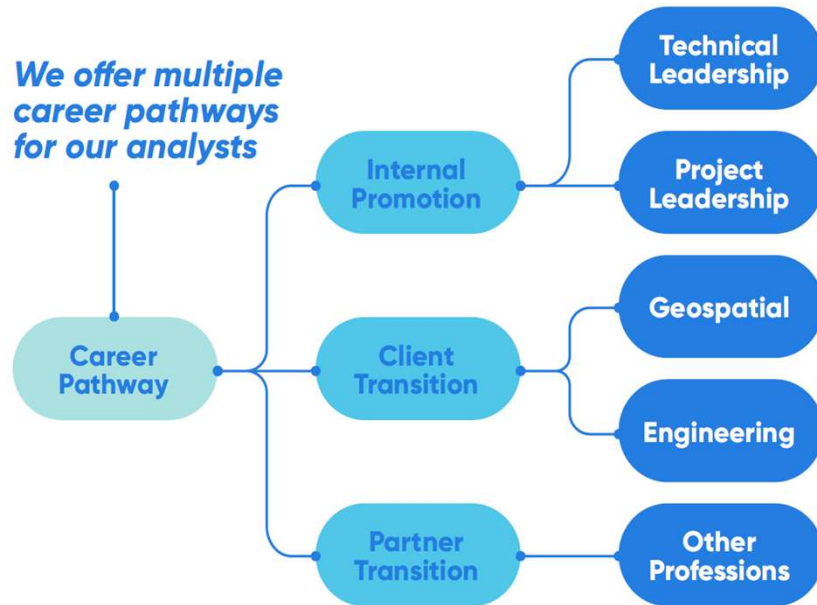




# Employment Pathways

Identify a career pathway for everyone

*We offer multiple career pathways for our analysts*





# Neurodiversity works!



"Embracing diversity in the construction industry is not just essential; it's the cornerstone of building an inclusive and fair workplace. Our collaboration with ASA has not only deepened our relationship but has also empowered us to embed and **transition ASA staff into our team seamlessly**. This newfound approach has enabled our Digital Engineering Team to welcome new neurodiverse talent, igniting a positive transformation in our workforce. It's been an exhilarating and fulfilling journey for my team and me, and we're eagerly anticipating extending this partnership throughout our entire organisation."

Daniel Easter, Digital Engineering Manager, Acciona Engineering and Design

# Award wins

— FINANCIAL REVIEW BOSS —  
**MOST INNOVATIVE COMPANIES**

 **Geospatial** x 7  
 Council of Australia



 **GEOVATION**



**THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND**  
 AUSTRALIA

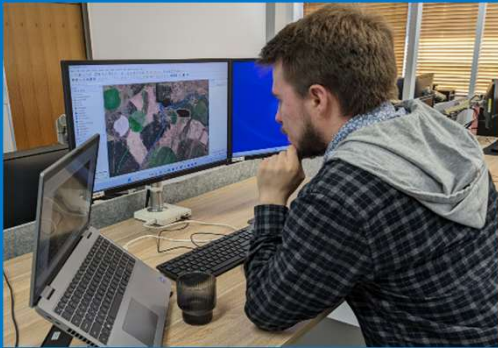
**IMPACT INVESTING HUB**



# Summary: Australian Spatial Analytics



## Workforce Shortages



Today

## New Spatial Professionals



Tomorrow

## Social & Economic Impact



Changing Lives

# Find out more!



Brisbane Airport: embracing geospatial, digital engineering and neurodiversity



Quinton Cooper



Michael Krome

Gender and Land in Spatial Governance (C8)  
Tuesday 8 April 11:30am-1:00pm

Neurodiversity as a strength: how NGIS innovates from inclusive recruitment practices



Alexandra Geer



Samantha Garbutt

Geospatial for Everyone: Diversity & Inclusion Paper Forum  
Wednesday 9 April 11:30am-1:00pm





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Thank you