

26 April 2022

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STOCKLAND IMPROVES ACCESSIBILITY AT RETAIL TOWN CENTRES WITH SENSORY MAPS

Stockland has worked with Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect), Australia's largest service provider for people on the autism spectrum, to be the first property company to create sensory maps of its shopping centres to assist customers with autism and their families.

Sensory maps give customers with sensory processing differences, like autism, an opportunity to plan ahead before visiting new environments, to better navigate situations that may overwhelm or cause anxiety or stress.

Sensory stressors can be any combination of noise, light, smell, touch as well as crowding or busy areas. Sensory issues can be exacerbated by stress caused by waiting, or the unpredictability of public spaces.

Both Stockland and Aspect have learned a lot from the collaboration to design the first-of-a-kind sensory maps for shopping centres. To develop the sensory maps, Aspect's Autism Friendly team carried out assessments at Stockland's Retail Town Centres at Green Hills, Merrylands, Shellharbour, Wetherill Park, Point Cook, and Wendouree.

Assessments involved autistic consultants visiting the centres on a typically busy day and providing feedback on their experience and advice on potential positives, challenges, and solutions for common areas.

Michelle Abbey, Executive General Manager for Retail Town Centres said: "We are delighted to be starting the roll out of sensory maps at our Retail Town Centres during World Autism *Understanding* Month, which is a positive step towards one of our sustainability goals to improve equitable access to our assets.

"For some time, we have had Sensitive Santa sessions at our centres for children with sensory differences so families can capture a Christmas memory in a quiet and relaxed environment, usually before most stores open.

"We're now creating more opportunities for customers on the autism spectrum, and those with other hidden disabilities, to access our centres with colour-coded sensory maps that highlight different zones from sensory friendly zones in blue to high sensory zones in red.

"We've been working with Aspect on improving inclusion and accessibility within our retail assets since 2020, and we look forward to rolling-out sensory maps across our whole Retail Town Centre portfolio over the next two to three years," said Ms Abbey.

Jacqui Borland, Aspect CEO said: "These types of inclusionary projects are just so important.

"Something as simple as going to the local shop can be fraught with anxiety due to a range of unknowns about the environment.

“Having knowledge about that environment, prior to arriving, will help provide certainty and go a long way towards reducing anxiety. It is just such a great step towards a more inclusive and understanding society,” said Ms Borland.

Sensory maps can be viewed and downloaded from the websites of [Stockland Green Hills](#), [Stockland Merrylands](#), [Stockland Shellharbour](#), [Stockland Wetherill Park](#), [Stockland Point Cook](#) and [Stockland Wendouree](#) are also available from Customer Care Desks in our Retail Town Centres.

ENDS

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About Stockland

Stockland (ASX: SGP) was founded in 1952 and has grown to become Australia’s largest diversified property group – owning, developing and managing a large portfolio of retail town centres, residential communities, retirement living villages, workplace and logistics assets. Stockland is recognised as one of the most sustainable real estate companies in the world by the S&P Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI) and as a global sector leader by the Global Real Estate Sustainability Benchmark. Stockland is also an Employer of Choice for Gender Equality, as recognised by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA).

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