



Aspect Macarthur School Annual Report

For the year 2017

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Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is Australia's largest not-for-profit provider of services and supports working with people on the autism spectrum and their families.

Knowledge about autism has come a long way since 1966 when six families founded Aspect as the Autistic Children's Association of NSW to provide schooling and support. Now, Aspect operates one of the world's largest networks of schools and satellite classes for students on the autism spectrum with an enrolment of around 1000 students across the 9 Aspect schools in New South Wales and South Australia.

We offer evidence-informed services and supports across all life stages and share this evidence-informed Aspect practice and applied research internationally.

At Aspect, we provide people on the autism spectrum with the opportunity to realise their unique potential, as well as providing much needed support to their families, carers, friends and colleagues. Aspect's vision is to provide the best possible opportunities for people on the spectrum. We believe that people on the autism spectrum are a different brilliant.

Message from the Principal

Aspect Macarthur School proudly provides person centred autism specific educational services to 107 students aged between 4 and 17 yrs. Our school fosters a commitment to the individual person and provides opportunities for autism specific and academic achievement. In the Macarthur region we have an administrative and base site at Cobbitty, primary satellite classes in Campbelltown, Minto and Holsworthy, and high school satellite classes at West Hoxton. In the Northern Rivers region we have a satellite site in Alstonville and a new base site at Coffs Harbour.

Student achievements and accomplishments were showcased throughout 2017. 3 students won art awards at the local show and our representative at the Combined Schools Swim Carnival won first place in three events. Student work has been proudly displayed in classrooms and the school office and hall. Our focus was to continue to build on our reputation as a provider of individualised support for students and their families on the spectrum.

We focused on expanding our community participation programs this year; increasing our capacity to capitalize on student's strengths and interest areas. By weaving Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals into key learning areas and working collaboratively with families, we improved our

engagement of learners and their capacity to achieve. Each student's IEP goals are focused on the four domains of autism: Social Communication, Social Interactions, Behaviour and Sensory. As a transition setting, goal acquisition, self-regulation and independence is paramount in preparing our students for their next most inclusive setting.

Our educational approach is the Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA). The ACA approach is positive, supportive and acknowledges the learning style, strengths and interests of people on the autism spectrum. In 2017 we participated in a peer review audit, partnering with Aspect Vern Barnett School to further enhance our adherence to the ACA. A detailed overview of the ACA can be found on the Aspect website. www.autismspectrum.org.au

In 2017 there are many people who deserve thanks for their generosity and efforts. Aspect Macarthur School is fortunate to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people supporting our students. We continued to focus on maintaining a service delivery that is person centred and committed to celebrating 'a different brilliant'.

Elizabeth Watson
Acting Principal



Message from the P&F

Raising awareness of autism within the local community was a significant component of Aspect Macarthur School's Annual Action Plan. Commencing with a stand at the Camden Show, which is a first for our school. Students from all sites entered artworks and the students from our Cobbitty site created a scarecrow which earned them a highly commended certificate. We were also very proud and excited that a number of students from the Minto satellite classes won awards for their artwork.

Aspect Macarthur School participated in Aspect's 'Walk for Autism' and held a Community event at Camden Bicentennial Equestrian Park. Even though the weather was not in our favour we had more than 200 participants involved in the 5km walk and family friendly circuit. This event was well supported by local businesses and services.

We were invited by Camden Council to take part in their 'Camden Play Day'. This is a free event that the council runs to showcase local services for young families. This was a great opportunity for our school to raise awareness about autism and the services Aspect offers.

As part of the school's endeavour to provide opportunities for our families to participate in community activities we organised an autism friendly movie night at Campbelltown's Dumaresq St Cinema. This was well attended with some families commenting that this was the first opportunity they had to go to the movies as a family. We hope to make this an annual event.

During Term 3 we held a Trivia Night which in spite of it being in the middle of a flu epidemic was well attended and an entertaining evening.

These fundraisers make a huge difference, raising funds to support the school in providing services and programs for students and families with Autism.

We are very grateful for the support of our families, staff and the local community. It has been a successful year and we look forward to an exciting 2018.



Student performance in standardised national and state-wide tests and examinations

Each student has an individual profile of characteristics that outlines strengths and interests, current levels of functioning and areas for development in the autism-specific areas of learning: social communication, social interaction, behaviour and sensory processing which are integrated into the NSW Education Standards Authority mainstream curriculum - the Key Learning Areas (KLAs). The school uses a multi-disciplinary team approach, working collaboratively with families to develop the best possible outcomes for the students. The school provides information and training workshops to families to help them support their child.

Literacy and Numeracy Assessments

For NAPLAN results, please refer to My School website www.myschool.edu.au

Senior Secondary Outcomes

Record of School Achievement

3 students were eligible for the Record of Student Achievement, 2 were awarded the RoSA certificate.

Professional learning and teaching standards

Teacher accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of Teachers
Pre-2004 teachers (accreditation not required in 2017)	9
Conditional	2
Provisional	10
Proficient Teacher	19
Highly Accomplished Teacher(voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Total number of teachers	40

Teaching standards

All teachers have teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as

recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AOI-NOOSR) guidelines.

Professional learning

Description of professional learning activity	No. of staff participating
Aspect Comprehensive Approach for Education -ACAE review	All
Aspect Professional Code of Conduct	All
Manual Handling	All
Child Protection - responsibilities related to child protection based on state/territory legislation, federal legislation and Aspect policy and procedures	All
CPR training - skills to provide Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	All
Supporting routines visually	All
Management of Actual or Potential Aggression (foundation and refresher courses) - a framework for decision making and problem solving to prevent, de-escalate, and safely respond to disruptive or assaultive verbal and physical behaviours	40
LAMP - Language Acquisition through Motor Planning	35
Communication with Parents	21
Kids Matter	20
Eating and Autism	16
Anxiety and Autism	14
Early Play Skills	11
Anaphylaxis	9
Creating Structured Learning Opportunities based on the methods of TEACCH	6
Social Thinking	6
Good Communication	6
Managing Stress	5
Communicating Effectively	5
Introduction to Autism (Positive Partnerships)	5
Mental Toughness and Resilience	5
Staff Induction - New Starters Day	5
Giving and Receiving Feedback	4
Asia Pacific Autism Conference (APAC 2017) - an international autism community conference focusing on the shift in autism research and practice to look beyond the early childhood and school years and focus on the whole lifespan for people on the spectrum	4

Description of professional learning activity	No. of staff participating
Core Vocabulary	4
Staff Fire Safety Induction (General Evacuation Instruction)	4
Safety leadership - Risk management	4
Safety Leadership - Incident management	4
First Aid - knowledge and skills to help an ill or injured person until emergency help arrives	4
Conflict Management	3
The traffic jam in my brain	3
Maintaining Accreditation	2
Workplace Bullying Prevention	2
Complaint Handling	2
Aspect Child Protection	1
Creating Safer Independent Schools	1
HANEN more than words	1
Relax Kids	1

Composition of teaching staff

Composition of Aspect Macarthur School staff is documented on the My School website
www.myschool.edu.au

One staff is identified as of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background.

Student attendance

Student attendance rates

Year level	Attendance rate %
Kindergarten	87.9%
Year 1	86.6%
Year 2	89.7%
Year 3	90.4%
Year 4	86.4%
Year 5	87.2%

Year level	Attendance rate %
Year 6	87.9%
Year 7	86.7%
Year 8	83.3%
Year 9	84.2%
Year 10	85.35

For the whole school attendance rate, please refer to the school's data on the My School website
www.myschool.edu.au .

Managing students' non-attendance

Non-attendance is managed by the Principal. Meetings with parents can be convened in view of developing necessary supports. Supports may include but are not limited to a behaviour support plan, behaviour contract, changes to program offered (i.e. incorporating more special interest project based learning), and school attendance improvement plan.

Student retention rates

As with all of Aspect's schools, Aspect Macarthur School has a policy of transitioning students into less specialised/ more inclusive settings. The decision to transition a student is based on the student's readiness and ability to cope in a less specialised setting and is made in collaboration with families/carers as part of the student's Individualised Plan (IP). The success of the school's transition program is reflected in the relatively small number of students enrolled across the school in Year 3 upward.

In 2017, 13 students transitioned from our school. 6 students transitioned to mainstream schools and 5 to support classes.

Enrolment

Aspect Macarthur School had an average enrolment of 107 students, 19 girls and 88 boys.

Enrolment Policies

Policy - Service Entry: Schools

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) provides educational services for eligible school aged children to prepare them for transition to environments that are not autism specific.

Policy Purpose

This policy details the processes to be followed to determine eligibility for placement in an Aspect School.

Scope

For all Aspect schools.

Definitions

Eligible school aged child - Eligibility for enrolment in an Aspect school requires a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder by a pediatrician, clinical psychologist or psychiatrist and a recent cognitive assessment by a psychologist.

Aspect School Enrolment Committee - is the school based committee that meets once per term to determine if a child is eligible for placement. It comprises:

School Principal

School Family Counsellor

School Coordinator

Aspect Eligibility Committee - is the Education Committee, convened by the National Director, Aspect Education that clarifies applications sent by the Aspect School Enrolment Committee.

Procedures

Each Aspect School Principal is responsible for:

1) Organising an information meeting once per school term for prospective parents or guardians who would like to enroll their child.

a. This meeting outlines the school program and application process

b. Application for enrolment form is available at this meeting.

2) Convening the Aspect School Enrolment Committee which meets once per school term following the information meeting to review applications submitted.

a. This committee determines if a child is eligible for placement in an Aspect School. To be eligible for placement in one of Aspect's schools, prospective students must have the following:

- a current diagnosis which clearly states that the child fulfils the criteria for ASD from a specialist medical practitioner or clinical psychologist, which is not more than 12 months old and

- a current standardised cognitive or developmental assessment (e.g. IQ Testing, Griffiths, WISC-IV, WPPSI-III, Stanford Binet V), which is not more than 2 years old.

3) Informing the parents of the outcome of their child's application for a placement in an Aspect school.

a. If the child has been deemed eligible by the Aspect School Enrolment Committee, the principal will inform the parents or guardians that the diagnosis has been confirmed and their child's name has been placed on the school's waiting list. If a vacancy arises, the school principal or delegate interviews families that might fill the vacancy regarding accommodations/adjustments for their child.

4) Referring the application to the Aspect Eligibility Committee if the diagnosis needs clarification.

The National Director, Aspect Education is responsible for:

- 1) Convening the Aspect Eligibility Committee once per school term to review any applications that require clarification.
- 2) Reporting to Aspect principals the results of the Aspect Eligibility Committee, so that they can inform the parents of the outcomes.

The School Principal will inform the parents or guardians if the diagnosis has been confirmed or not and if confirmed the child's name is placed on the school's waiting list.

A parent or guardian can appeal the decision if the diagnosis is not confirmed. The principal will consult with the relevant staff, including the National Director, Aspect Education, and inform the family of the outcome of the review.

Guidelines

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) recognises that children with an autism spectrum disorder have the right to access and equity of service regardless of their gender, race or ethnicity, religion or language. As a service provider Aspect will respond appropriately and sensitively to the needs of the entire community including people from indigenous, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds within the limit of available resources.

When vacancies arise in the school, the decision about how to fill them is made based on whether the type of vacancy available, for example, a preschool, primary or adolescent group, would be appropriate for the child, a child's age, the length of time a child has been on the waiting list, the availability of alternative placements and the family situation.

References

Policy - Service Exit: Schools

A student enrolled in an Aspect schools may leave because:

1. the student transitions to a new setting;
2. the student's parents withdraw their child from the Aspect school;
3. a safe working environment for students and staff cannot be achieved; or
4. because of the non-payment of outstanding schools fees.

Policy purpose

This policy sets out the guide for Aspect staff when a student leaves an Aspect school.

Scope

All Aspect schools

Procedures

1. Transition

When a student transitions from an Aspect school to another educational placement the Aspect school principal follows the procedure outlined in the policy 02 01 09 Transition of

Legislation

Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)

Community services (Complaints, Appeals and Monitoring) Act 1993 (NSW)

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)

Disability Standards for Education Act, 2005 (Commonwealth)

Education Act 1990 (NSW)

Education Act 1972 (SA)

Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011 (SA)

National Disability Service Standards

Standard 5: Service Access

Other Relevant Policies

Complaints by People with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, Family Members and other Aspect Clients

Contributing to Decision Making

Fee Collection

Fee Reduction

Privacy, Dignity & Confidentiality

Registration & Accreditation Procedures: Schools

School Fees and Compulsory Building Levy

Working with Families

students from an Aspect School.

2. Parent choice to withdraw their child outside the transition process

When parents, guardians or the person responsible informs the Aspect school principal that their child will be leaving the school, the school staff will discuss with the parents, guardians or the person responsible what transition and post-transition support the child may need and what support the school can offer.

The Aspect school principal will consider requests for transition and post-transition support from families and may provide this if resources are available.

Parents, guardians or the person responsible are required to give the school's principal one term's notice in writing of their intention to withdraw their child from an Aspect school. If notice received is less than one term, 1 months school fees will be payable in lieu of notice.

3. Safe working environment

Even with Aspect's very active and specialist intervention to support the student, an Aspect school principal may decide that a school is unable to maintain the enrolment of a child in

the school if it cannot achieve an acceptably safe working environment for students and staff. Such decisions will be made as a result of procedural fairness considering the steps outlined in Appendix A.

If an issue arises for any other reason, in which the principal believes that the mutually beneficial relationship of trust and cooperation between the parents, guardians or the person responsible and school has broken down, to the extent that it adversely impacts on that relationship, the principal will try and resolve the issue at the earliest indication.

If the principal is unable to resolve the issue and following discussion and agreement with the National Operations Director,- Aspect Schools, the principal may require the parents, guardians or the person responsible to remove the child from the school.

4. Non-payment of outstanding school fees

Aspect can make a decision to exit a student for non-payment of outstanding fees as outlined in the policy 08 14 02 Fees Collection policy.

Guidelines

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) provides educational services for eligible school aged children to prepare them for transition to environments that are not autism specific.

Legislation

Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)

Disability Standards for Education Act, 2005 (Commonwealth)

Education Act 1972 (SA)

Education and early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011 (SA)

Education Act 1990 (NSW)

Equal Opportunities Act 1984 (SA)

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998

National Standards for Disability Services

Standard 5: Service Access

Other Relevant Policies

Complaints & Feedback by Aspect Service Users, Family Members & the Public

Discipline - Schools

Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk

Fees Collection

Individual Planning and Review

Positive Behaviour Support

Privacy, Dignity & Confidentiality

Prohibited and Restricted Practices

School Fees

Transition of students from an Aspect School

Working with Families

Other School Policies

Summary of policy	Changes in 2017	Access to full text
<p>Student welfare</p> <p>The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment to support the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of students through the following policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person centred approach and recognition of values - define and work towards achieving individual's goals and personal lifestyle choices with support and input from those who care about them • Risk management framework - identifies risks and defines criteria for the assessment of consequence of those risks • Duty of care and dignity of risk - ensures that staff understand and implement the principles of Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk, recognising the rights of the people we support to make informed choices and take calculated risks • Safeguarding the people we support - Aspect is committed to appropriately responding to and preventing incidents of abuse, injury, neglect and exploitation of the people we support, in both participation with Aspect, and as a partner of the broader community 	<p>Approved by Aspect Governance committee as Aspect overarching policies.</p>	<p>The full text of Aspect policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person centred approach and recognition of values; • Risk management framework; • Duty of care and dignity of risk; and • Safeguarding the people we support <p>can be accessed by request from the school principal or from Aspect's website</p> <p>https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/aspect</p>

Summary of policy	Changes in 2017	Access to full text
<p>Anti-bullying</p> <p>For some young people on the autism spectrum, it can be very difficult to recognise bullying. The school seeks to develop supports to assist students to understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bullying is about the misuse of power in relationships • bullying is when someone experiences repeated verbal, physical and or social behaviour that causes harm • bullying is mean and can be very hurtful • there are different kinds of bullying • no kind of bullying is ever OK • bullying should always be reported • adults will do all in their power to take it seriously and deal with it 	<p>No changes were made in 2017.</p>	<p>http://www.positivepartnerships.com.au/sites/default/files/positive_partnerships_bullying_fact_sheet.pdf</p>
<p>Discipline</p> <p>Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) considers that the behaviour of children with autism spectrum disorders requires support and understanding. Challenging behaviours are best understood and responded to by applying a positive approach as outlined in Aspect's Positive Behaviour Support Policy.</p> <p>Positive Behaviour Support is a comprehensive approach to supporting situations where there is challenging behaviour and combines the science of learning (from Applied Behaviour Analysis) with human rights and values. PBS works in respectful collaboration with individuals and their families to use effective evidence based strategies to increase the quality of life for all involved.</p>	<p>The policy was reviewed in 2017 and was approved as an overarching Aspect policy. The policy was restructured to the new policy framework but there were no changes to the policy.</p>	<p>The full text of Aspect Positive Behaviour Support policy can be accessed by request from the school principal or from Aspect's website</p> <p>https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/aspect</p>
<p>Complaints and grievances resolution</p> <p>Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) values complaints about the quality of its service and communications to support the continuous improvement of services and management.</p> <p>Aspect's complaints management process provides a transparent framework for promptly and sensitively addressing and resolving complaints and disputes that may arise from complaints having regard to procedural fairness, confidentiality and privacy.</p>	<p>No changes were made in 2017.</p>	<p>The full text of the Complaints Management Process can be accessed by request from the School Principal.</p>

2017 school determined priority areas for improvement and comments on the achievements

AREA	PRIORITIES	ACHIEVEMENTS
Teaching and Learning	Ensure Safe and Supportive environments	NESA registration and accreditation compliance across all areas for maximum term, 5 years. Streamlined reporting procedure for Positive Behaviour Support.
	Increase differentiation within class programs	Professional Development for all staff
Family Support	Increase family engagement To increase support to families through the increased opportunity to engage in the school environment	Therapists providing information sessions at Coffee Mornings Continue with Family events every term and introduced family movie night which was very successful
	Enhance staff wellbeing	Staff Professional Development focus on wellbeing and resilience
Staff Development	Feedback to Parents Enhance autism pedagogy	Training on Having Difficult Conversations for all staff Executive staff participated in APAC 2017
	WHS Compliance	Riskman - training & implementation Audits across all sites Executive staff participated in Riskman training WHS standing item on communication and staff meetings
Continuous improvement	Peer audit of school's performance against the revised ACA. Develop improvement plan on identified priorities.	School's performance against revised ACA completed and action plan developed around priority areas as identified in peer review.
	All staff participate in Voice survey and annual focus groups reflecting on practice.	Reviewed Voice survey results and developed themes in action plan for 2018
Student achievement	Continue to develop work experience programs for Years 9-10	Work experience opportunities through Toolijooa Environmental Group
	Provide opportunities for students to enter external competitions Increase Community Participation	Winning student entries in art, writing and swimming competitions Increase in internal and external community participation opportunities: Paws and Tales reading program, Healthy Harold, Sustainability incursion and swimming programs.
Extend services to reach more students with autism spectrum disorder	Support of new site at Coffs Harbour	Coffs Harbour site supported to fully functioning
	Professional development opportunities in the South West corridor Grow community awareness of autism and our school	Professional Development program delivered to staff in other schools Member of Chambers of Commerce and events: Camden Show and Camden Play day.

School determined priorities for 2018

AREA	PRIORITIES
Teaching and Learning	Implementation of new Individual Plan for students Embed 5 point star into practice
Family Support	Increased training and support
Staff Development	Increased autism pedagogy
WHS Compliance	RiskMan embedded in reporting practice
Continuous Improvement	Implementing actions from peer ACA review
Student Achievement	Review of positive behaviour support strategies through the 5 point star lens
Extend services to reach more students with autism spectrum disorder	Exploration of satellite sites in Coffs Harbour



Respect and Responsibility

Aspect Macarthur School wants all students to recognise that they are valued and an integral part of the school community, with parents and staff providing care and support that engender self-esteem, mutual respect and responsibility. There is much scope to develop talents through each student's Individual Plan and to learn through experiences.

The structure of the school's satellite program provides opportunities for students to participate in classes and cultural activities with host school students, which allow them to get to know each other. The satellite program has assisted in promoting respect for the individual and the rights of others.

Aspect Values have been reviewed with Aspect Board of Directors and Management Team in collaboration with our Stakeholders. Aspect's value of "We are passionate about people, about being positive and about what's possible" mirrors the nine recommended values (National Framework for Values in Education).

Aspect has a commitment to ensuring all team members know and embrace our core values to ensure they are reflected in interactions and relationships with stakeholders. Aspect recognises that in order to achieve this it is important to share information with staff and the community so that Aspect is known not only for the work that we do but also for the values we uphold.

Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

At the beginning of the year students are encouraged to complete a student profile outlining what their strengths are and what they would like to achieve during the year. Some of the comments students made on what they would like to change about school include: I would like to add an extra minute to outside time and have some goal posts at school. When commenting on what they like their comments focused on staff listening to them, playing games with them and being nice.

Every 2 years staff complete a staff voice survey which measures the quality of current work practices that affect employee engagement; a summary of the results show:

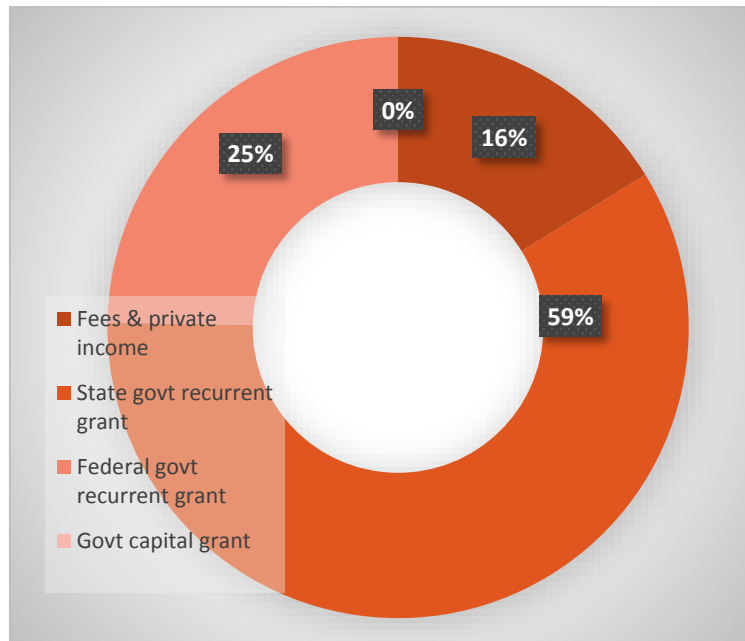
- Staff passion and engagement were recorded at 88% with an increase of 4% from the previous results
- 79% of staff feel that our organisational performance towards delivering programs is improving.
- 98% of staff believe in Aspect's mission and value statements.
- 98% of staff love the work they do.

Comments from families and external providers focus on the positive, dedicated and caring approach taken by all staff in the care and education of our students. A letter received recently started with 'To my darling Aspect Angels'.

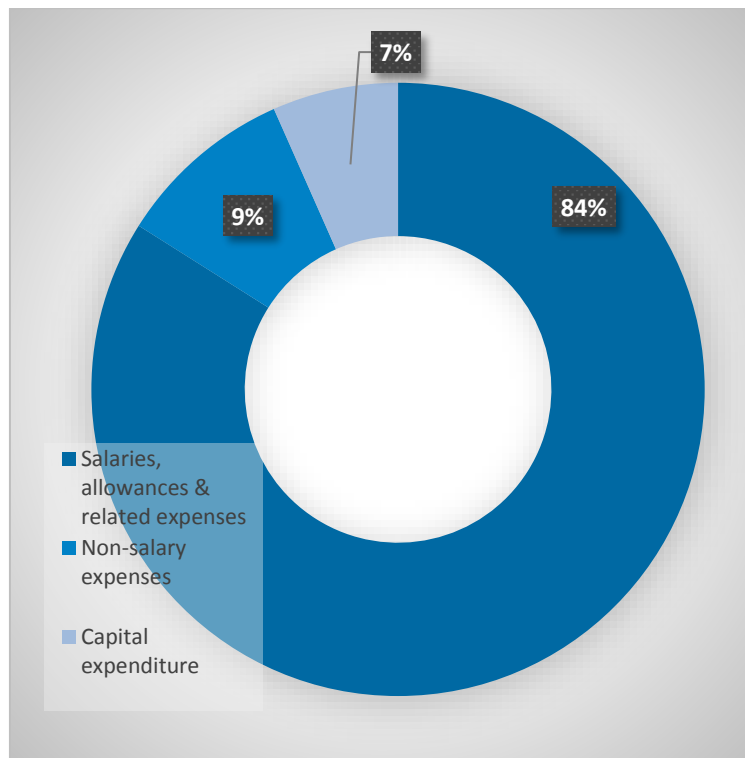


Financial Information

Recurrent/capital income 2017



Recurrent/capital expenditure 2017





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