



autism
spectrum
AUSTRALIA

Aspect Treetop 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.

Our Vision The best opportunities for people on the autism spectrum.

Our Mission We develop person-centred solutions which are flexible, responsive and evidence-informed, with people of all ages on the autism spectrum.

Our Values We are passionate about people, about being positive and about what's possible.

Message from the Principal

Aspect Treetop School is in its second year of operation. With an initial enrolment of 23 students when it opened in July 2016, enrolment increased to 45 students in 2017 after the completion of the school refurbishment in January. The campus in Ashford houses the school administration and 8 classes. Treetop caters to students from Reception to High School, with current students' age ranging from 5 to 15 years old.

Our educational approach is the Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACAE). A detailed overview of the ACAE, together with a statement of Aspect's Mission, Vision and Values can be found on our website www.autismspectrum.org.au. The

Positive Behaviour Support approach is used to support our students to regulate their behaviour. We focus on their strengths and special interests to motivate learning and celebrate the diversity and talents of our students.

School highlights for 2017 include the Walk for Autism Walkathon in April and the celebration of the Aspect Treetop School's First Birthday in July.

Rowena Perritt
Executive Principal



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

Two students sat for the NAPLAN. For results, please refer to My School website www.myschool.edu.au

Professional learning and teaching standards

Teacher accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of Teachers
Pre-2004 teachers (accreditation not required in 2017)	0
Conditional	0
Provisional	9
Proficient Teacher	5
Highly Accomplished Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Total number of teachers	14

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 (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines.

Professional learning

Description of professional learning activity	No. of staff participating
Staff Induction - Aspect New Starters Day - includes practical information on processes and procedures that a new staff will need to know in their workplace and professional knowledge or the pedagogical and evidence informed practices and strategies that are embedded within the Aspect Comprehensive Approach for Education (ACAE).	12
Introduction to Autism (Positive Partnerships)	6
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	2
Aspect Comprehensive Approach for Education	22
Aspect Professional Code of Conduct	17
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	26
Foundations of Positive Behaviour Support online course - an introduction to the theory and concepts of positive behaviour support and its application to working with students with an autism spectrum disorder in the school setting	19
Child Protection - responsibilities related to child protection based on state/territory legislation, federal legislation and Aspect policy and procedures	22

Description of professional learning activity	No. of staff participating
Disability Standards for Education - overview of the Disability Standards for Education (2005) and the legal obligations of all education providers	22
Non Violent Crisis Intervention	11
Manual Handling Training	21
Creating Structured Learning Opportunities based on the methods of TEACCH	18
RiskMan	22
Asthma	23
Creating Structured Learning Opportunities	18
Anaphylaxis	23
First Aid - knowledge and skills to help an ill or injured person until emergency help arrives	1
CPR training - skills to provide Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	1

Composition of teaching staff

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

No staff are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background.

Student attendance

Student attendance rates

Year level	Attendance rate %
Reception	86.6%
Year 1	89.6%
Year 2	86.0%
Year 3	86.5%
Year 4	90.0%
Year 5	90.0%
Year 6	86.5%
Year 7	NA
Year 8	NA
Year 9	92.5%
Year 10	NA

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 Treetop 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, 8 students transitioned from our school. 4 students transitioned to mainstream schools, 1 to support classes and 1 to special school settings & 2 home schooled.

Enrolment

Aspect Treetop School had an average enrolment of 45 students, 10 girls and 35 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

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)

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 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

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

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>
<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>

Summary of policy	Changes in 2017	Access to full text
<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	Aspect Comprehensive Approach for Education (ACAE)	Staff training and development across the elements of the ACAE. Autism specific supports audited across school.
	Implementation of the Australian National Curriculum.	Continue implementation and familiarisation of the National Curriculum.
	Implement Zones of Regulation the school.	Class programs have appropriate content to reflect the Zones of Regulation with support from the Learning Support Team.
Family Support	Share Treetop students 'a different brilliant' within school community.	Information shared in Newsletters.
	Parent Engagement	Communication via Skoolbag, communication books and parent information sessions.
	Parent participation in NPS survey.	Staff informed of survey results and involved in changes for improvement.
Staff Development	Consistently promote Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) as a whole school approach and implement recommendations from the review.	Professional development on PBS provided for all staff. PBS reviewed weekly at staff meetings.

WHS Compliance	<p>Audit across school completed by safety representative and Aspect WHS manager.</p> <p>Mandatory training to be completed: manual handling etc. (online).</p>	<p>Site was audited by WHS representative and report was generated.</p> <p>All staff completed mandatory training.</p>
Continuous improvement	<p>ACAE</p> <p>Have consistent & appropriate environmental supports displayed & used in all classes/spaces at Treetop.</p>	<p>ACAE training provided for all staff.</p> <p>Ongoing training around autism specific areas of learning was accessed by staff.</p> <p>Checklists have been utilised to ensure supports are in place.</p>
Student achievement	<p>Transition students to more inclusive settings.</p>	<p>Support students to transition by providing 1:1 supported visits to new settings, meetings with receiving school, where necessary school wide training. All students are tracked for success for 12 months after transition from Aspect.</p>
Extend services to reach more students with autism spectrum disorder	<p>Continue to discuss the possibility of satellite classes with other organisations.</p> <p>Promote our service through local Expo's.</p>	<p>Lutheran Education SA approached Aspect for initial discussions around satellite class program with Deputy National Director of Education.</p> <p>Continue meetings with DECD, CESA & Independent Sector to establish satellite program in Adelaide.</p> <p>Partnered with Anglicare to promote Aspect Treetop School at the SA Disability Expo.</p>

School determined priorities for 2018

AREA	PRIORITIES
Teaching and Learning	<p>Curriculum continuums to be created across all subject areas.</p> <p>All subject areas implemented as per the Australian National Curriculum.</p> <p>Training around Aspect Comprehensive Approach and 5 point star approach.</p>
Family Support	<p>Implementation of Parents & Friends group and 'Coffee Mornings' with a focus on sharing information about autism specific supports for families.</p>
Staff Development	<p>Adhere to mandatory training requirements whilst ensuring staff are abreast of best practice across autism intervention.</p>
WHS Compliance	<p>Ensure audits are completed.</p>
Continuous Improvement	<p>Embed Aspect Comprehensive Approach and 5 point Star.</p>
Student Achievement	<p>Transition students to more inclusive settings.</p>
Extend services to reach more students with autism spectrum disorder	<p>Continue to develop relationships with other sectors in order to set up satellite classes.</p>

Respect and Responsibility

Aspect Treetop 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

Autism Spectrum Australia conducts a voice survey for each business unit in the organisation every two years. Treetop School Staff were encouraged to participate in this survey. Over 80% of staff completed the survey and as result an action plan was put in place addressing specific areas for further improvement. Overall, job satisfaction and employment retention rates were above average compared to results in the not for profit sector.

A family and carer survey is sent out twice a year. The surveys returned Net Promoter Scores of 71% and 75% for

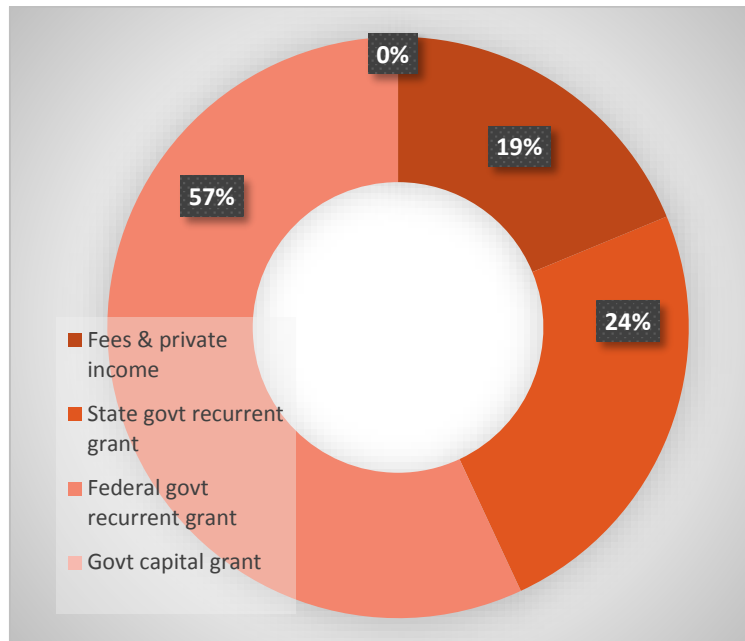
the first and second semester. Comments made from families are both complimentary and possible areas for improvement.

As part of the Individual Planning process students have the opportunity to input feedback and participate in the discussions. This is an important component for our upper primary school students whom we are supporting to be as independent as possible in advocating for their needs and wants.

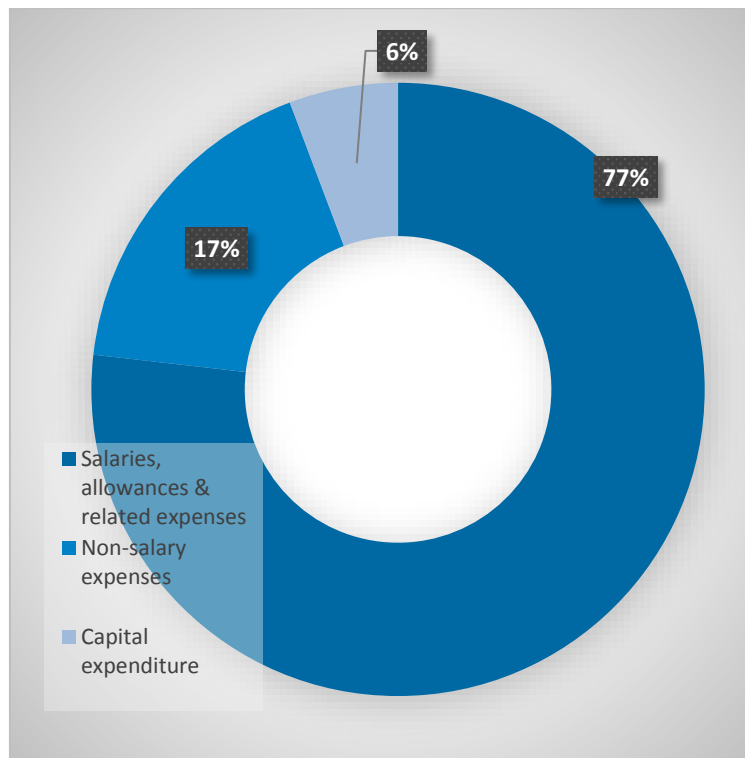


Financial Information

Recurrent/capital income 2017



Recurrent/capital expenditure 2017





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