



Aspect Hunter School

2018 Annual Report



Annual Report

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Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is Australia's largest autism-specific service provider, with one of the biggest autism-specific school programs in the world. A not-for-profit organisation, we work in partnership with people of all ages on the autism spectrum, and their families to deliver evidence-informed solutions that are person centred family focused and customer driven.

Aspect's Purpose

a different brilliant®

understanding, engaging & celebrating the strengths, interests & aspirations of people on the autism spectrum

Our Vision

The best opportunities for people on the autism spectrum

Our Mission

We work with people of all ages on the autism spectrum, delivering evidence-informed solutions that are person-centred, family-focused & customer-driven.

Our Values

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

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is the country's largest not-for-profit autism specific service provider. Aspect builds confidence and capacity with people on the autism spectrum, their families and communities by providing information, education and other services. Aspect schools provide specialised evidence-informed programs for students aged 4 -18 years on the autism spectrum, who require an autism specific program. The primary focus of the schools is to equip students with the skills to become as independent as possible and enable them to transition to less specialised settings.



Aspect Hunter School caters for 139 students across the Hunter, Lake Macquarie and Port Macquarie areas. Our students range in age from 4 to 16 years at present. The school comprises an administrative base at Thornton which has primary school aged students and a range of satellite classes located at Tarro, Waratah West, Abermain, Cardiff and Port Macquarie. Approximately one quarter of our students transition to a less specialised setting each year. A detailed overview of our Comprehensive Approach, Mission, Vision and Values can be found on our website www.autismspectrum.org.au



Message from the principal

The 2018 school year has been positive for Aspect Hunter School. There were many achievements and I would like to acknowledge our wonderful students, their families and our dedicated and passionate educators for their commitment to teaching and learning and our school.

One of which was embedding the Autism Initiatives' (UK) Five Point Star which is at the centre of the Aspect Comprehensive Approach, as a tool to understand each student and develop respectful and positive relationships. It focuses on five areas; thinking, communication, expectation, motivation and sensory and demonstrates our strong expertise in autism, how we understand each student and what we need to do to support them to achieve their goals.

In 2018, we introduced new whole school programs; library, canteen, assembly, whole school music and sport. We aim to provide a range of experiences and support our students to develop skills to support successful inclusion in the next educational setting and within their local communities. This has led to increased opportunities for parental engagement in their child's school life.

Each year we engage in professional learning focused on compliance, autism and education. This along with our new K-10 scope and sequences has enhanced quality teaching and learning.

In 2018 Aspect Hunter School increased its enrolments by nine students and will continue to build enrolments in 2019 with the establishment of the first autism-specific high school in the Hunter/Newcastle region for students on the autism spectrum.

Thank you to our school community for the ongoing commitment to and support of our school which has led to tremendous growth and development over the past twelve months.



Lara Cheney
Principal

Message from the P&F

The school held many events in 2018 to raise the profile of the school, awareness of autism in the community and funds to support school priorities. The annual school Walkathon was held in April at the Newcastle Foreshore to celebrate World Autism Awareness Day. It was a wonderful event.

It was agreed in 2018 that the school would embark on a project to establish the first autism-specific high school in the Newcastle/Hunter region. In August a lunch was held to launch this initiative which was attended by our generous community supporters. A paver campaign

focused on 'paving a way to a brighter future for students on the autism spectrum' and raised more than \$20,000 towards this project. A Derby race day in November raised a further \$30,000. In November 2018 a development application was submitted to council to build new high school facilities. This project will commence in 2019.

The Aspect Hunter School benefits from strong community support and looks forward to the development of new facilities in 2019 to offer more opportunities for students on the autism spectrum.

Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

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, behaviours 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

The formal Record of School Achievement credential was awarded by NESA to three students.

Higher School Certificate

Aspect Hunter School is not registered or accredited for the HSC. The reporting of HSC results is not applicable.



Teacher professional learning, accreditation and qualifications

The following professional learning activities were undertaken by staff throughout 2018:

Description of professional learning activity	No. of staff participating
Aspect Comprehensive Approach: includes individual planning, learning and participation, transition and inclusion, structured teaching, positive behaviour support, health and wellbeing, specialist collaboration, family and community engagement.	All
Supporting people on the autism spectrum using the 5 Point Star	All
Aspect Professional Code of Conduct - face to face workshop and online module.	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	All
Child Protection - responsibilities related to child protection based on state/territory legislation, federal legislation and Aspect policy and procedures	All
Obligations in identifying and responding to risk of harm	All
Disability Standards for Education - overview of the Disability Standards for Education (2005) and the legal obligations of all education providers	All
CPR training - skills to provide Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	All
Family Involvement and Support	All
AIS Embedding Excellence	All
Customer Service	All
Sensory vs Behaviour	All
ASD and Mental Health	All
English Syllabus	All
Structured Teaching	All
Staff Induction - new staff participated in the Aspect New Starters Day and onsite school specific induction programs.	14
First Aid - knowledge and skills to help an ill or injured person until emergency help arrives	3

Teacher accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of Teachers
Pre-2004 teachers (accreditation not required in 2017)	0
Conditional	1
Provisional	11
Proficient Teacher	30
Highly Accomplished Teacher(voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Total number of teachers	42

Teacher qualifications

Category	Number of Teachers
Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines, or	42
Teachers having a bachelor degree from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications	0

Workforce composition

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

No staff is identified as of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background.



Student attendance, retention rates and post-school destinations in secondary schools

Student attendance rates

Kinder	90.2%	Year 6	90.5%
Year 1	89.8%	Year 7	94.1%
Year 2	94.4%	Year 8	87.2%
Year 3	90.8%	Year 9	76.2%
Year 4	84.8%	Year 10	83.9%
Year 5	93.2%		

For the whole school student 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.

Retention of Year 10 to Year 12

Aspect Hunter School had an enrolment of only up to Year 10 in 2018. This part of the report is not relevant to the school.



Enrolment policy

Aspect provides autism-specific educational services for eligible school-aged children on the autism spectrum, to prepare them for transition to environments that are not autism specific.

Aspect recognises that children on the autism spectrum have the right to access and equity of services regardless of their gender, race or ethnicity, religion or language.

An application is made for an Aspect school rather than a specific class. Our school's professional staff decide in consultation with the family which class is best suited to the educational needs of the student. Each school is responsible for managing its own application, intake and waiting lists process, which is managed by the school principal.

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

Entry criteria

Aspect schools are funded in part by the Commonwealth and state governments, which have specific criteria for placement. To be eligible for placement in one of Aspect's schools, prospective students must satisfy the following criteria:

Citizenship and visa status - a child must:

- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia or holds an eligible visa (refer to guide to checking citizenship and visa status for enrolment).
- be aged between 4 and 17 years.

Diagnosis - a child must:

- in both NSW and South Australia, have a current diagnosis which is not more than twelve (12) months old as being on the autism spectrum from a specialist medical practitioner, child psychiatrist or clinical psychologist with the necessary training and experience to be able to undertake a diagnostic assessment;
- in South Australia, a second report from a psychologist or speech pathologist that confirms the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder that is not more than two (2) years old; and
- in both NSW and South Australia, have a current standardised cognitive or developmental assessment (e.g. IQ testing, Griffiths, WISC-IV, WPPSI-III, Stanford Binet V) which is not more than two (2) years old.

Registration to school waitlist

Expression of interest in Aspect schools may be made in the following ways:

- direct enquiry to the Aspect school by telephone or email;
- telephone or email to Aspect Customer Service, who will direct the enquiry to the school;
- general enquiry via the Contact Us page on the Aspect website, which will be directed to the school.

The registration form can be obtained from the following processes:

- families who are interested in enrolling their child to an Aspect school are asked to attend a School Information Session. Aspect principals or their delegate are responsible for organising a school information session once per school term, in line with the School Information Session work instruction, for prospective parents or guardians who would like to enrol their child. This information session outlines the Aspect education program and the registration and enrolment process. The school registration form is obtained after attending this session.
- families who are unable to attend a School Information Session can obtain a registration form directly from an Aspect school. A School Enrolment Committee representative will provide them with information about the Aspect education program and the registration and enrolment process, before sending them the registration form.

A non-refundable processing fee is required for each application submitted.

Application to more than one Aspect School

When a family wants to place their child on the waitlist of more than one Aspect school, they first apply to their preferred Aspect school and indicate which other Aspect schools they will consider enrolment. The preferred Aspect school is responsible for processing the application, inform the other Aspect school/s to place the student on their school's active waitlist and share the application documents.

Aspect School Enrolment Committee

School principals are responsible for convening the Aspect School Enrolment Committee (comprised of school principal, psychologist and selected school coordinators) which meets once per school term, following the information session, to review registrations received. This committee determines if a child is eligible for placement in an Aspect school.



Eligible/Not Eligible for service

Citizenship and age criteria

If the citizenship or age criteria is not met, a school representative will inform the parents or guardians that their child is not eligible for enrolment due to citizenship or age criteria not being met. If the parents or guardians are not satisfied with the result, they can make a complaint to Aspect (refer to Aspect's Complaints Management procedure).

Diagnosis criteria

If the child has been deemed eligible by the Aspect School Enrolment Committee, the principal will inform the parents or guardians that, based on the diagnostic information provided, their child has been deemed eligible for the program (Letter - Confirmation of diagnosis) and their child's name has been placed on the school waitlist.

The principal is responsible for referring the application to the Aspect Eligibility Committee if the diagnosis needs clarification. Parents/Carers will be informed, in writing (Letter - Application sent to full eligibility committee), that their case has been sent to the Committee for review.

If further information is required by the Committee, the principal is responsible for writing to the parents requesting updated information (Letter - Request for updated Psychological reports).

Aspect Eligibility Committee

The National Director, Aspect Education is responsible for:

- convening the Aspect Eligibility Committee once per school term to review any registrations that require clarification, and
- reporting to Aspect principals the results of the Aspect Eligibility Committee, so that they can inform the parents of the outcomes.

The principal will inform the parents or guardians (Letter - Confirmation of diagnosis) that based on the diagnostic information provided their child has been deemed eligible

for the program or not and, if confirmed, the child's name is placed on the schools waitlist.

Vacancy Management

If a vacancy arises, students on the waitlist who can potentially fill the vacancy will be considered. The principal or delegate interviews families whose child might fill the vacancy regarding accommodations/ adjustments for their child following the interview pro forma.

If a student being considered for enrolment is not an Australian citizen, the principal or their delegate must check that the visa is still valid and eligible for enrolment.

Following completion of the interview, the principal, or their delegate will complete the Risk Management Plan pro forma, to assist with decision making.

Following the interview process, the school will inform the family if a child has been offered a placement (Letter - Enrolment Contract/Acceptance of Offer) or (Letter - Placement to Satellite Class) or will be retained on the school's waitlist.

Principals are responsible for forwarding parents the relevant enrolment package and liaising with them throughout the process.

Enrolment Package

When a family is offered a placement, in addition to the enrolment contract, they will be sent documents based on the enrolment acceptance checklist.

A family can decline an enrolment offer and inform Aspect school if they want to be placed in the school's active waitlist.

To secure enrolment, the family must pay a non-refundable enrolment fee as published in the Aspect School fees schedule (NSW or SA).

When a family informs the Aspect school of their decision to withdraw their child from enrolment before commencing, they must also inform the Aspect school if they wish to be placed in the school's active waitlist.

Aspect provides autism-specific educational services for eligible school-aged children on the autism spectrum, to prepare them for transition to environments that are not autism specific.



Other school policies

Summary of policy	Changes in 2018	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> <p>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</p> <p>Risk management framework - identifies risks and defines criteria for the assessment of consequence of those risks</p> <p>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</p> <p>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>	<p>No changes were made in 2018</p>	<p>The full text of Aspect policies Person centred approach and recognition of value status; Risk management framework; Duty of care and dignity of risk; and Safeguarding the people we support can be accessed by request from the school principal or from Aspect's website 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 2018</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>No changes were made in 2018</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 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 2018</p>	<p>The full text of the Complaints Management Process can be accessed by request from the School Principal or from Aspect's website https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/sites/default/files/Aspect-Feedback-Complaints-Brochure2019.pdf</p>



School determined priority areas for improvement

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Teaching and learning	Aspect Hunter School will improve the quality of teaching and learning in 2018.	Aspect Hunter School introduced a new performance and support process for teachers which include a focus on the essential requirements of the Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA).
		Aspect Hunter School completed the ACA self-review process in term 3 and identified three priority areas for 2019.
Family support	Aspect Hunter School will receive an NPS of at least 85%.	Aspect Hunter School received an NPS of 88%. Aspect Hunter School reviewed NPS scores and comments at leadership team meetings to improve service delivery. Complaints will be responded to.
	Aspect Hunter School will improve teacher engagement in professional learning and development.	Aspect Hunter School created an annual professional learning and development program with content focused on compliance, autism and education.
Staff development		Aspect Hunter School identified leadership courses for coordinators to attend. The Deputy Principal participated in the Aspect Lead Program.
	Aspect Hunter School will continuously embed in our culture and practice the principles of safeguarding the people we support.	Aspect Hunter School provided information and professional learning on the Safeguarding the people we support policy, principles and practices.
		Induction processes reviewed and improved in line with the safeguarding policy to provide important information on commencement of employment
		Face to face and online child protection professional learning delivered in 2018.
WHS compliance	Aspect Hunter School will establish a new WHS committee.	Aspect Hunter School WHS committee established with involvement in Aspect WHS committee.
Continuous improvement	Provide further opportunities for paid employment, volunteering, work experience and consultancies for people on the spectrum.	Aspect Hunter School engaged 3 people on the autism spectrum in paid and voluntary opportunities.
	Aspect Hunter School will introduce new whole school programs at main school site to provide new and varied opportunities for students and improve customer experience.	New whole school programs developed; library, canteen, assembly, sport & music.
Student achievement	Aspect Hunter School will improve the quality of the teaching and learning program.	Aspect Hunter School provided level 1 Five Point Start training to all staff in term 1.
		Aspect Hunter School developed a new K-10 Scope & Sequence for full implementation in 2019.
	Aspect Hunter School will develop a plan to establish high school classes at the Thornton site in 2019.	Plan complete and facilities and classes to commence early 2019.



Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

The school wants all students to recognise that they are valued and integral parts of the school community, with parents and staff providing the care and support that engender self-esteem, mutual respect and responsibility. There is much scope to develop talents and to learn through experiences. The school works with staff, students and parents to understand autism and the individual student's strengths, interests and aspirations.

We work with our students so they can self-advocate, understand what they need to be successful and be able to communicate this with others.

In 2019 the school will establish a Student Representative Council to introduce more formally a strong student voice in school planning.



Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

Every student at Aspect Hunter School has an Individual Plan (IP). The IP is developed in collaboration with the parents and student where a student's strengths, interests, goals and aspirations are expressed by both parents and the student and are incorporated into the plan. The school, student and parents work together to achieve the goals set in the IP.

Families were given formal and informal opportunities to provide their feedback to the school. One of the ways is through a customer satisfaction survey. The survey is

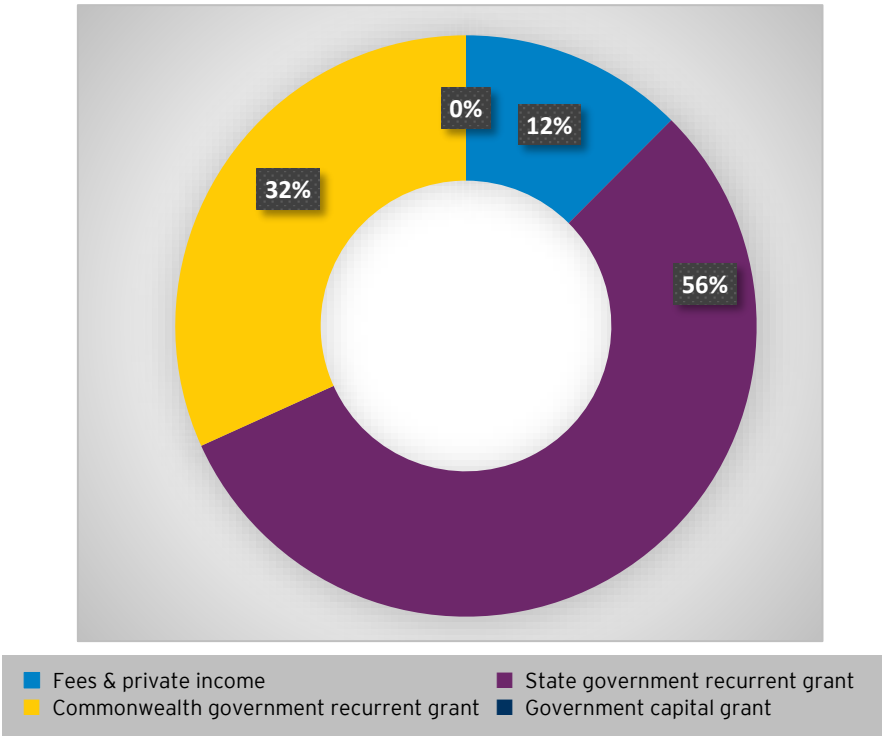
sent to Aspect Hunter School families asking them if they would recommend Aspect and what feedback or suggestions that they may have. 88% of the respondents to the 2018 surveys indicated they would recommend Aspect.

Aspect holds a biennial Employee Engagement Survey. To note in the 2017 survey is the high result in Passion and Engagement category which is 8% higher than is typical for other non-profit organisations. This means that Aspect's staff love what they do.

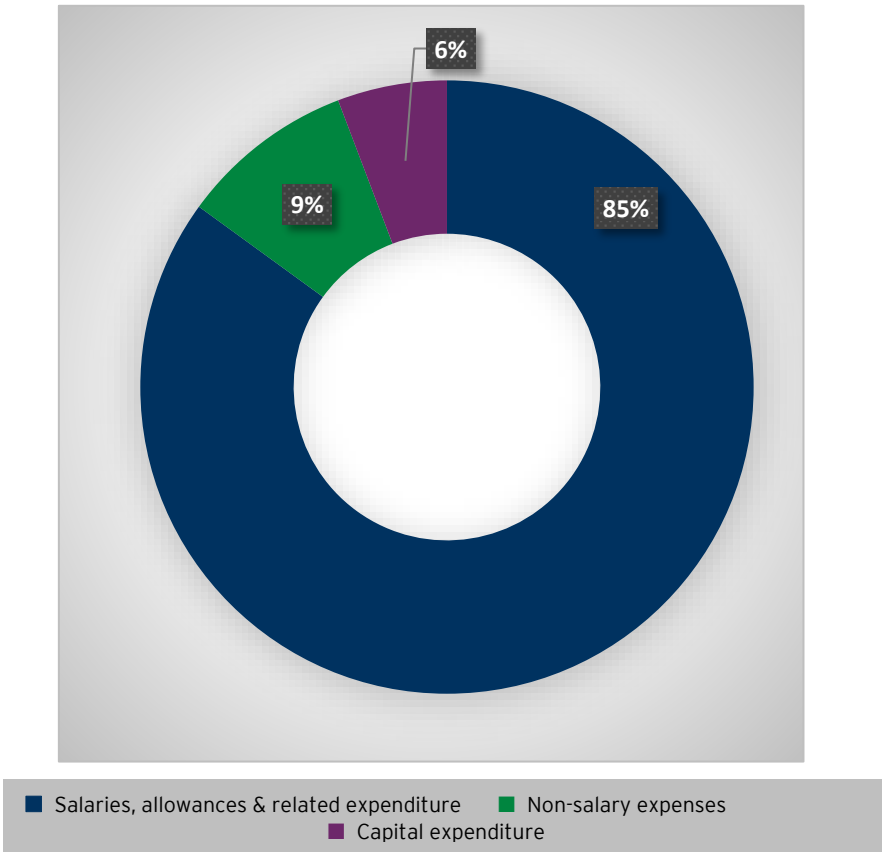


Financial information

Recurrent/capital income



Recurrent/capital expenditure





a different brilliant®

understanding, engaging & celebrating the
strengths, interests & aspirations
of people on the autism spectrum

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