



# Aspect Macarthur 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

# Message from the principal

**Aspect Macarthur School provides autism specific educational services to close to 106 students aged between 4 and 17 years. Our specialised setting and school spans from the Macarthur region with an administrative base site at Cobbitty to satellite sites in Campbelltown, Minto, Holsworthy, West Hoxton and all the way to the Northern Rivers region with sites in Coffs Harbour and Alstonville.**

2018 was a year of considerable growth and change across a range of areas for Aspect Macarthur School. The school continued to focus on a person centred service delivery and an individualised approach to supporting and celebrating students.

In 2018, the most significant shift for the school was a change in leadership, including a change in the leadership framework to come into play in 2019. To prepare for this new framework the school established a positive working relationship with our partner school, Aspect Western Sydney School. Both schools worked closely together during Term 4 and forged a strong and collaborative working partnership.

During this period, Aspect Macarthur continued its commitment to the Aspect Comprehensive Approach

(ACA) and continued to be guided by a school wide business plan. The main priority areas identified in 2018 were improving person centred and family focused practice, increasing and improving parent engagement and strengthening individualised student processes such as the individual planning process.

Throughout the year, a school wide improvement plan focused on K-10 curriculum, teaching and learning based on the ACA approach and staff development. Key focus areas were teacher accreditation policy and procedures, wellbeing and student achievement including successful transition.

Towards the end of the year, harnessing the valuable input and involvement of the school therapists became an area of focus. The leadership team worked closely with the therapists to refine the processes and procedures related to student support and services including the referral process. The learning support team created new documentation and planned effective new ways to support staff, students and families. This multidisciplinary approach to education continues to be both a strength and a source of pride for the school

2018 was a time of great change but our individualised, person centred, student focused approach to all we do and say continued to guide and inform all decisions and future directions.

*Lee Casascelli*

Executive Principal



# Message from the P&F

**In 2018, parents and friends continued to support school initiatives and played an active part in many areas across the school including fund raising.**

We started the year off by participating at the Camden Show. Our students entered the various competitions including artworks with a number of them winning prestigious local awards. Our presence at the show increased our profile in the community and generated interest and support for the work we do.

Our very own Emily Fry's artwork was chosen as one of the winners of the Coles community bags design competition. Ryan Friel and Cameron Baharlooei won in the Coles Christmas community bag competition at the end of the year. Money raised from the sales of these bags was considerable and contributed towards many important upgrades and improvements to our school site.

Our Coffs harbour school hosted their first Bunnings BBQ which was a resounding success. Again supported by the generous parents and friends in this community. Money raised went directly to resources for the school.

Our annual community "Walk for Autism" was a highlight as always and this was largely due to the involvement of parents and families. Community involvement was encouraging and many parents offered their services and supports leading up to and on the day.

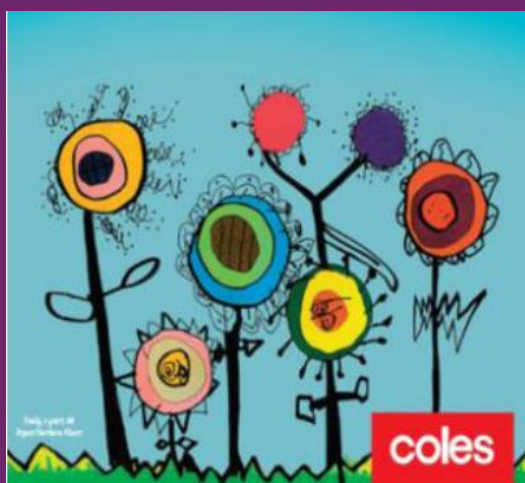


Parents at the Macarthur school describe the staff as supportive and encouraging, the school as safe and welcoming and our approach as collaborative and positive.

"I couldn't imagine taking my child to any other school. My experience has been life changing for us all. I am in awe of what you do and so grateful I found Aspect." - parent

*Aspect Macarthur School P&F committee*

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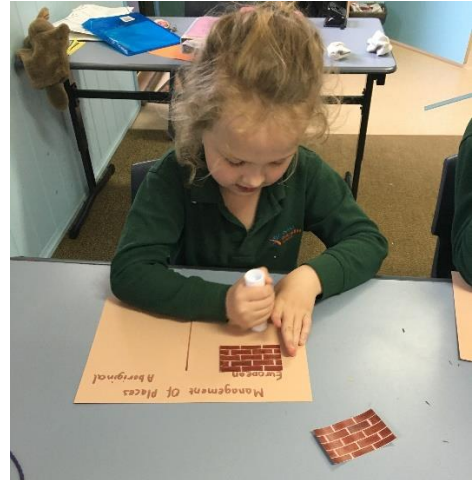


# Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

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](http://www.myschool.edu.au)



# Senior secondary outcomes

## Record of School Achievement

The formal Record of School Achievement credential was awarded by NESA to 4 students.

## Higher School Certificate

Aspect Macarthur School is not registered or accredited for the HSC. The reporting of the 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
Familiarisation NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum Science and Technology K-6 Syllabus	1
Safety Leadership Bundle	1
Positive Partnership - Creating Positive Partnerships	3
Positive Partnership - Developing Support Networks	3
Positive Partnership - Problem Solving Using GROWTH Model	3
Positive Partnership - Understanding Autism: Using the Planning Matrix	3
Language Acquisition through Motor Planning (LAMP)	22
Familiarisation NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum Science and Technology K-6 Syllabus	2
Social Thinking	6
AIS - Enhancing your Child Protection Investigation Skills	1
AIS - Thinking of a Leadership Role?	1
AIS - Middle Leaders Program	2
AIS - Creating Safer Independent Schools	40
Supporting people on the autism spectrum using the 5 Point Star	36
Core Vocabulary	4
Individual Planning	37
Promethean Training	18
Mind Matters	14
Manual Handling	48

## Teacher accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of Teachers
Pre-2004 teachers (accreditation not required in 2017)	6
Conditional	1
Provisional	9
Proficient Teacher	15
Highly Accomplished Teacher(voluntary accreditation)	-
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	-
Total number of teachers	31

## 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	2
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	29

# Workforce composition

Composition of Aspect Macarthur School staff is documented on the My School website  
[www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au)

One 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	91.85%	Year 6	85.93%
Year 1	92.16%	Year 7	81.56%
Year 2	90.98%	Year 8	82.72%
Year 3	93.88%	Year 9	90.21%
Year 4	93.43%	Year 10	87.43%
Year 5	92.56%		

For the whole school student attendance rate, please refer to the school's data on the My School website [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au)

## Retention of Year 10 to Year 12

Aspect Macarthur 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><b>Student welfare</b></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</p> <p>Person centred approach and recognition of value status;</p> <p>Risk management framework;</p> <p>Duty of care and dignity of risk; and</p> <p>Safeguarding the people we support</p> <p>can be accessed by request from the school principal or from Aspect's website</p> <p><a href="https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/aspect">https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/aspect</a></p>
<p><b>Anti-bullying</b></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"> <li>• bullying is about the misuse of power in relationships</li> <li>• bullying is when someone experiences repeated verbal, physical and or social behaviour that causes harm</li> <li>• bullying is mean and can be very hurtful</li> <li>• there are different kinds of bullying</li> <li>• no kind of bullying is ever OK</li> <li>• bullying should always be reported</li> <li>• adults will do all in their power to take it seriously and deal with it</li> </ul>	<p>No changes were made in 2018</p>	<p><a href="http://www.positivepartnerships.com.au/sites/default/files/positive_partnerships_bullying_fact_sheet.pdf">http://www.positivepartnerships.com.au/sites/default/files/positive_partnerships_bullying_fact_sheet.pdf</a></p>
<p><b>Discipline</b></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</p> <p><a href="https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/aspect">https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/aspect</a></p>
<p><b>Complaints and grievances resolution</b></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</p> <p><a href="https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/sites/default/files/Aspect-Feedback-Complaints-Brochure2019.pdf">https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/sites/default/files/Aspect-Feedback-Complaints-Brochure2019.pdf</a></p>

# School determined priority areas for improvement

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Teaching and learning	Implementation of new Individual Plan for students.	Increased focus on student strengths and interests. Embedding of strengths and interests into all individual plans.
	Embed Autism Initiatives' (UK) Five Point Star into practice	Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA) review conducted. Environmental audits conducted across all classes. Visual supports introduced reflecting student strengths and interests.
Family support	Increased training and support.	Offered regular training sessions to parents through the fortnightly parent coffee meetings.
Staff development	Increased autism pedagogy.	Staff completed online training.
WHS compliance	Embed RiskMan in reporting practice.	Conducted regular spot audits across all sites. Followed through with all necessary changes, upgrades and or training.
	RiskMan training and implementation.	All staff trained in RiskMan. Established timelines for reviewing and closing incidents
Continuous improvement	Implementing actions from peer ACA review.	Identified key areas - family engagement, Five Point Star, PBS and IP.
	Embed Five Point Star approach across all elements of the ACA.	All staff participated in Five Point Star training. Staff visited partner school in Term 4 to establish relationships and explore and examine school wide approaches and processes.
	School wide professional learning.	Participated in whole school training around wellbeing, trauma and behaviour.
	Build partnership with Aspect Western Sydney School to expand knowledge, skills and experiences of school staff.	Cross school visits planned for 2019. Cross team planning, sharing of resources, programs and activities.  Cross school leadership team planning and professional development.
Student achievement	Review of positive behaviour support strategies through the Five Point Star lens.	PBS green level supports in place across all sites.
Extend services to reach more students with autism spectrum disorder	Exploration of satellite sites in Coffs Harbour.	Meetings held with parents and key stakeholders.



# Initiatives promoting 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 promotes self-esteem, mutual respect and responsibility.

The structure of the school's satellite program provides opportunities for students to participate in classes and cultural activities with host school students, particularly during Harmony week, National Reconciliation week, NAIDOC week and Anzac Day. Our host schools also support several Aspect initiatives such as Autism Awareness day and our annual walkathon. These days are celebrated as a mark of respect and support for our students, staff and families.

Aspect's Purpose of "understanding, engaging & celebrating the strengths, interests & aspirations of people on the autism spectrum" and Aspect's Value of "we are passionate about people, about being positive and about what's possible" mirror the nine recommended values of the 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.

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



# Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

During 2018, Aspect Macarthur School surveyed families using the Net Promoter Score survey. The school scored a NPS of 33% satisfaction. Areas for improvement in 2019 include more formal opportunities to connect with and plan with parents such as the establishment of a Macarthur School P&F association.

"Aspect Macarthur School is a welcoming and warm environment where my child really is accepted the way he is."

Throughout 2018, families, students and the school staff had various formal and informal opportunities to gauge their satisfaction with the school.

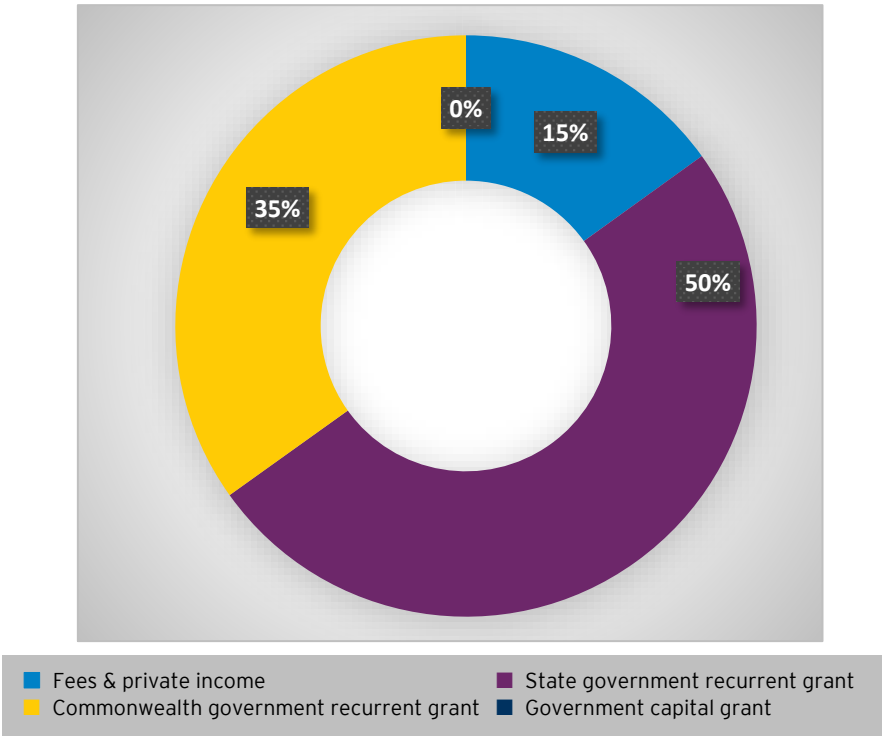
Amongst the opportunities include:

- Parent-teacher meet and greet sessions;
- Student Individual Planning meetings;
- Curriculum Report meetings;
- Parent Coffee Mornings
- Organised family activities such as the Walkathon and all fund raising initiatives
- Home school diaries;
- Staff meetings and staff development days
- We Matter program

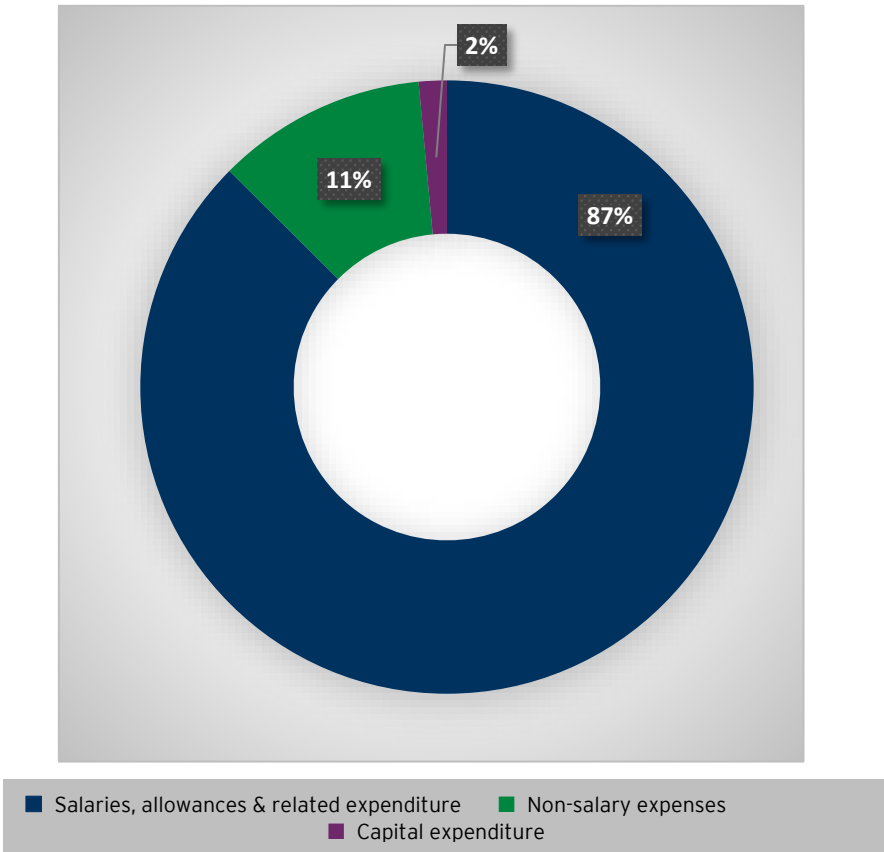


# Financial information

## 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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