

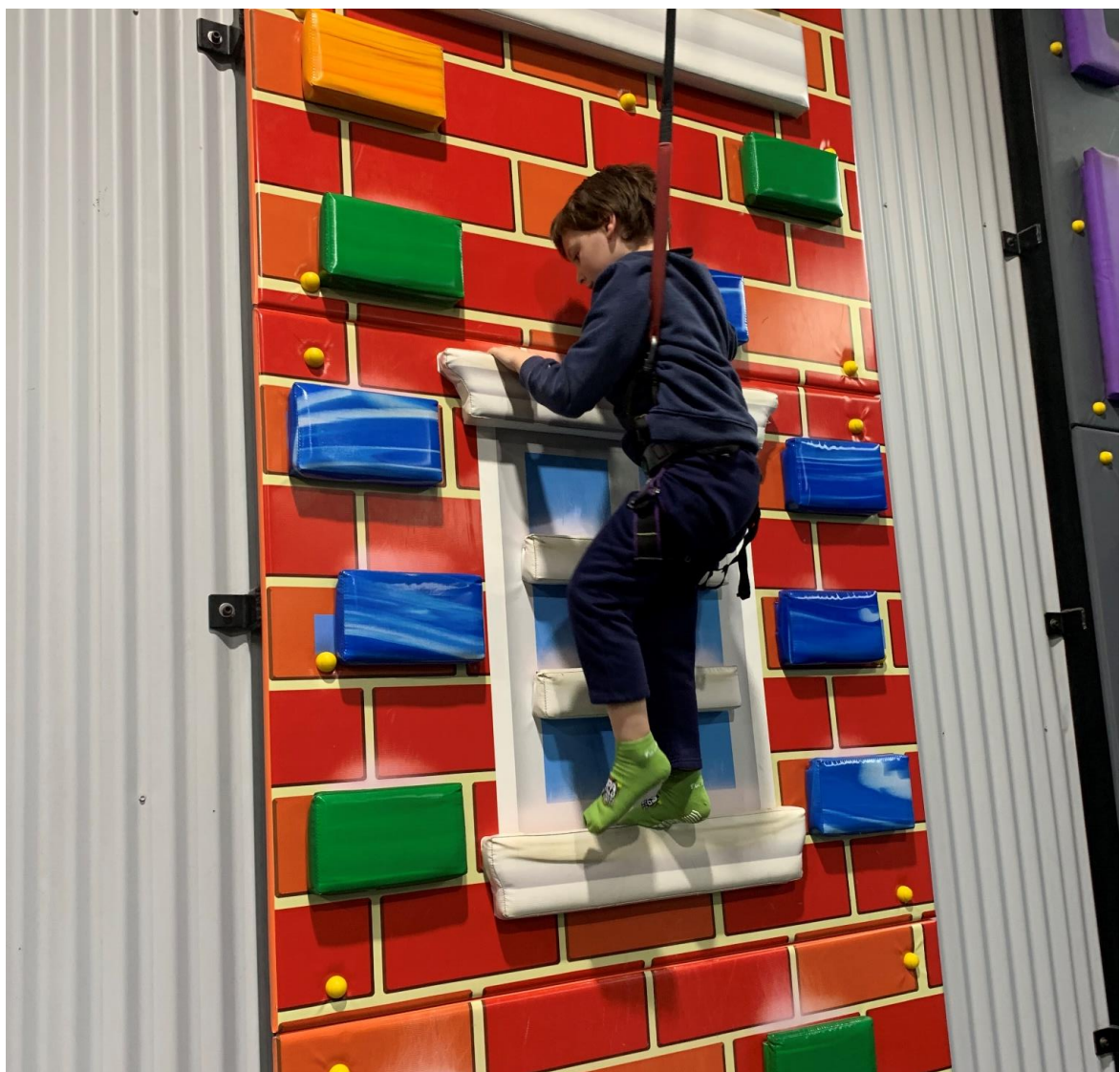
2019

Aspect Riverina School Annual Report



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Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional custodians of the many lands and cultures of the places in which we live and work.

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is the country's largest service provider for people on the autism spectrum. Our specialised, evidence informed schools program is one of the largest in the world, with additional services that include information and advice, diagnostic assessments, behaviour support, parent and family support, and adult programs. We share evidence-informed autism practice and applied research nationwide.

Aspect schools provide specialised evidence-informed programs for children aged 4 to 17 on the autism spectrum, who require an autism specific program.

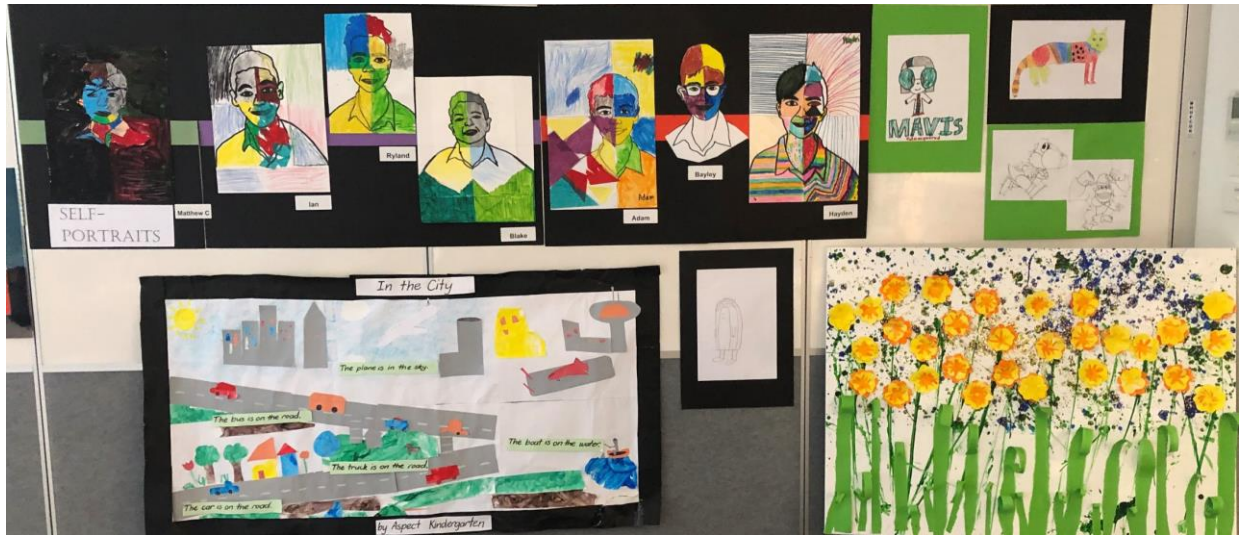
The primary focus of the schools is to equip students with the skills to become as independent as possible and enable them to transition into more inclusive settings. This is achieved through the application of the Aspect Comprehensive Approach. At the centre of the approach is the Autism Initiatives' (UK) Five Point Star to support autism-specific person-centred planning and respectful and positive relationships between the educator and student. It also focuses on the following elements: Individual Planning; Family & Community Engagement; Learning & Participation; Positive Behaviour Support; Structured Supports; Transition & Inclusion; Specialist Collaboration; and Health & Wellbeing.



Our Purpose

a different brilliant®

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



Message from the principal

Aspect Riverina School is spread across 5 beautiful sites in Albury and Wagga Wagga. The main campus is located at 437 Olive Street, Albury. At this campus we offer NESA approved curriculum from Year 1 through to Year 12 with 56 students attending at the site. Our Kindergarten site is located at 405 Tarakan Avenue in North Albury, where we have four students attending full time. We have three satellite locations, two primary schools and one high school. The satellite classes in St. Patrick's Primary School offer a junior and senior primary room. The junior class (Years 3 and 4) has seven students attending and the senior class (Years 5 and 6) also have seven students attending. While the satellite classes in Sacred Heart Primary School offers two primary classes. The junior class has seven students attending and the senior class has six students attending. The high school class satellite located at Xavier High School in Fallon Street, North Albury has one class of eleven students from Years 7 to 9.

During 2019 the school saw a structural change in management with the introduction of a Business Manager, an Executive Principal and a Deputy Principal. This restructure saw increased opportunities for continuity across all Aspects schools, strengthening practice and resources for our students. We enjoyed additional opportunities for funding through local, state and federal grants and as such we were able to increase the number of classrooms at our main site as well as improvements in the school's overall aesthetic.

In 2019 we were able to broaden our curriculum offerings to students. We employed an experienced Art teacher who has brought wonderful learning experiences to all students at all sites, compiling and showcasing this new knowledge in a local art show later in 2019. Additionally, the introduction of an experienced Music teacher has provided students with opportunities to sing and learn instruments such as the drum, keyboard, flute, xylophone, and percussion. These lessons have been very popular across the school and this year's concert promises new adventures in the Arts.

2019 also saw the continued delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh program which pushed many of our students into learning new skills, work experience and personal fitness.

Overall, 2019 was also a year for academic development. We invested time and funds into developing teacher knowledge and expertise in English, Maths and Technology. Literacy and Numeracy testing continued to be a focus as we developed a database to track students' growth across the years.

The year ended with 83% of our Year 12 students entering paid work or enrolling in further TAFE courses.

Jane Carrington

Deputy Principal



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 Board of Studies 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

The school administers Literacy testing across the school each year to help inform practice and monitor progress. We assess, sight words, phonemes, graphemes, spelling, reading accuracy, reading comprehension, spelling, and verbal working memory.

We also assess numeracy skills across the school using PAT-M testing to establish strengths and weakness across the mathematical strands. This assists with programming, curriculum development and staff training.

Senior secondary outcomes

Record of School Achievement

The formal Record of School Achievement credential was awarded by NESA to 6 students.

Higher School Certificate

In 2019, 6 students completed Year 12. Students studied 2 Units each of English, History/Geography, PDHPE, Mathematics, Technology (Food) and Creative Arts. Additionally students completed the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award and each student participated in work experience.

16% of these students continued to enrol at TAFE. 67% have secured paid employment, with a further 17% moving to other destinations.

Teacher professional learning, accreditation and qualifications

The following professional learning activities were undertaken by staff throughout 2019:

| Description of professional learning activity | No. of staff participating |
|--|----------------------------|
| Child Protection - responsibilities related to child protection based on state/territory legislation, federal legislation and Aspect policy and procedures | All |
| Disability Standards for Education - overview of the Disability Standards for Education (2005) and the legal obligations of all education providers | 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 |
| CPR training - skills to provide Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) | All |
| First Aid - knowledge and skills to help an ill or injured person until emergency help arrives | All |
| Staff Induction - new staff participated in the Aspect New Starters Day and onsite school specific induction programs. | 3 |
| Aspect Professional Code of Conduct - face to face workshop and online module. | All |
| Supporting people on the autism spectrum using the 5 Point Star (adapted from Autism Initiatives UK) person-centred framework | All |
| Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA) - Positive Behaviour Support | All |
| ACA - Individualised Planning | All |
| ACA - Differentiation and structured teaching | All |
| iMaths Training for staff | 7 |

Teacher accreditation

| Level of accreditation | Number of Teachers |
|--|--------------------|
| Conditional | 1 |
| Provisional | 5 |
| Proficient Teacher | 22 |
| Highly Accomplished Teacher(voluntary accreditation) | 0 |
| Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation) | 0 |
| Total number of teachers | 28 |

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 | 28 |
| 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 | - |

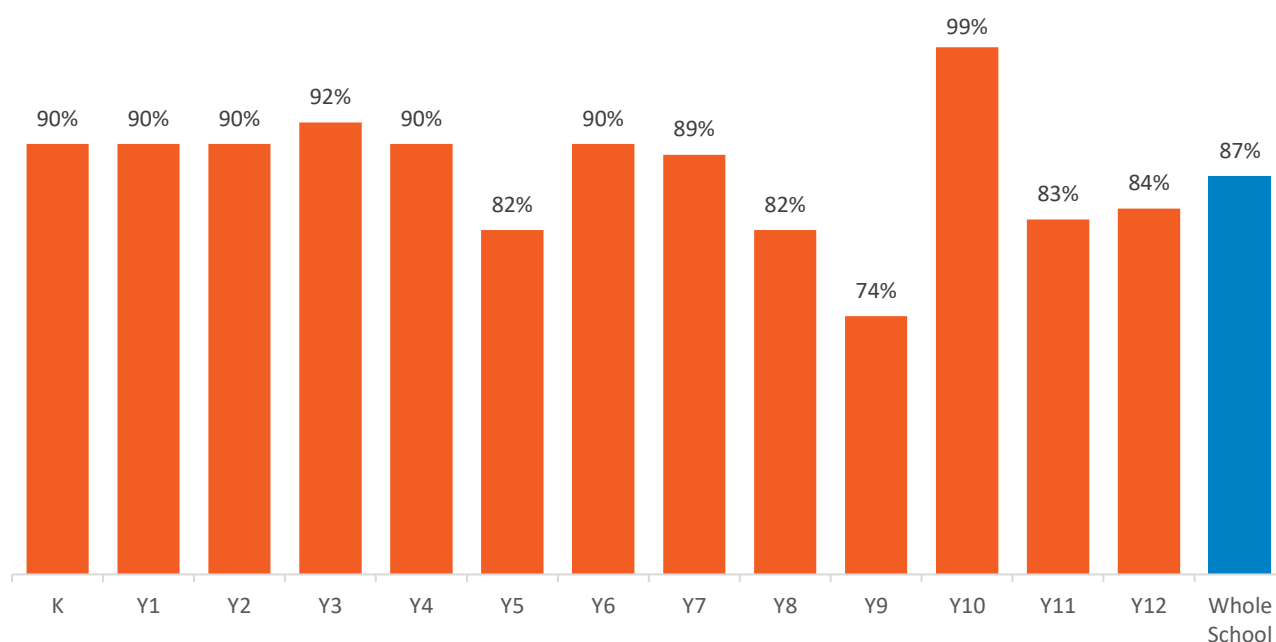
Workforce composition

Composition of Aspect Riverina 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



Management of non-attendance

Aspect Education has developed a work instruction to ensure compliance of the Aspect schools with school attendance requirements for compulsory school-aged students as outlined by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) or the South Australia Education Board.

Unexplained absence will be followed up by the class teacher with the parent/guardian. Repeated unexplained absence or absence of concern may need to be reported to Family and Community Services.

Where unsatisfactory attendance is identified, a student attendance improvement plan is formulated in collaboration with the student and their parent/guardian. The plan is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

Retention of Year 10 to Year 12

One hundred percent of the 2017 Year 10 cohort completed Year 12 in 2019. The retention rates over the past two years have been strong. Most students who left school at the end of Year 12 following the completion of their school education continued with work experience they had commenced while at school. 66% of the Year 10 cohort from 2017 are now working in paid employment and 16% are engaged in unpaid work and 16% have continued at TAFE.



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.



Other school policies

Aspect completed a review of all its policies in 2019 to update the references in the External Framework section. Previously the external framework had only referred to the Disability Standards for Education. With this review the relevant NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and South Australia Education Board standards are referenced.

The content of the policies/procedure itself have not changed significantly with the exception of the Safeguarding the people we support policy which was reworked. Following reviews by the Aspect Safeguarding Committee the 19 elements that underpinned the Aspect Culture of Safety and Wellbeing were reviewed and replaced with the 10 principles to align with the Australian Human Rights Commission's National Child Safe Organisation Principles. These 10 principles now guide the Aspect Culture of Safety and Wellbeing and the policy was updated to reflect this change.

| Summary of policy | Changes in 2019 | 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. It is essential that each individual's dignity of risk is respected and supported in their decision making processes. Aspect facilitates each student's meaningful choice and control to maximise their independence; and minimises the risk to the individual or others wherever possible.</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>Nil significant changes were made in 2019 with exception of the Safeguarding the people we support policy which was reworked to align with the Australian Human Rights Commission's National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.</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 Safeguarding the people we support 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 2019 | 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 2019</p> | <p>https://www.positivepartnerships.com.au/resources/practical-tools-information-sheets/bullying</p> <p>https://www.positivepartnerships.com.au/uploads/bullying_flyer-may_2018.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 (PBS) 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>Nil significant changes were made in 2019</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>Updated in line with Education and NDIS Standards.</p> <p>Easy English resources and pictorial tool to support communication of feedback and complaints were developed.</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>https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/feedback-and-complaints</p> <p>The Feedback and Complaints brochure can be downloaded from our website</p> <p>https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/uploads/documents/Governance/Aspect-Feedback-and-Complaints-Brochure-Oct-2019.pdf</p> |

School determined priority areas for improvement

| Area | Priorities | Achievements |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Teaching and learning | Implement MULTILIT (Literacy) across the school for all students. | Improvement data demonstrates significant gains in most students across Years 1 to 12. |
| | Focus on students engagement across the school | Focusing on the 5 Point Star as an engagement tool for teachers to understand their students. |
| | Duke of Edinburgh Training for Teachers | Work Experience for all senior students. Volunteer work for many students. |
| Family engagement | To encourage and welcome families into our school and classrooms. | Open classrooms, daily feedback and consultation with parents increased in 2019. |
| | | Implementation of SeeSaw for daily contact between parents and teachers. |
| | | Social opportunities. |
| | | Art show for families. School concert for families. |
| Staff development | Improve knowledge of literacy acquisition, programming and structured teaching. | Improved programming for all subject areas, significant decline in behavioural issues and students on behaviour support plan. |
| | Ongoing staff training on Positive Behaviour Support and 5 Point Star. | Trainings held. |
| Facilities and resources | Improve refurbishment of the Wagga site and the main campus in Albury. | New portables, with new furnishings purchased through fundraising in Wagga. Refurbishment of entrance to the main campus and increased maintenance of the site. |
| | Expansion of classrooms | Two new classrooms secured and ready for 2020 school year. |
| | Additional safety measures | Erection of new fences at main campus. |
| | Compliance of playgrounds | New playgrounds established at two sites. |
| Student achievement | Increase offering of HSC Life Skills and options for TAFE courses and work experience. | 100% of senior students experienced a TAFE course for 30 hours in 2019. 100% of senior students participated in work experience in 2019. |
| | Improve academic focus of all units of work. Increase Literacy and Numeracy teaching and learning. | Students in Stages 1, 2, 3 participated in MULTILIT instructions at least three times weekly. All students participated in iMaths for the whole year of 2019. |



Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

Aspect Riverina 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.

Aspect Riverina supports and promotes respectful behaviour and understanding of others through our regular community access activities, work experience and supporting other community groups. Our students have experience working with a diverse group of people including the elderly and young children. We are consistently supporting our students to give to their local community and take part in community events.

The structure of the school's satellite and main site program provides opportunities for students to participate in classes and cultural activities with host school students, particularly during Harmony week, National Reconciliation week and NAIDOC week. 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.



Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

Aspect Riverina enjoys a strong relationship with parents, students and staff. Our parents consistently inform us of the strong relationship they have with their child's teacher and teacher aides. They respond positively to daily feedback through the Seesaw App, communication diaries, weekly newsletters and parent gatherings. Aspect Riverina always shares a number of social gatherings with our families including Mother's Day, Father's Day, new parent morning teas, concerts, assemblies and parent feedback sessions.

Teachers and parents meet face to face at least once every term. In Term One and Term Three parents meet to discuss Individual Plans for students. These plans are revisited in Term Three with an additional face to face meeting. Each term parents are invited to attend an Information afternoon held by the teachers and coordinators to ensure parents are informed of the learning planned for the term ahead.

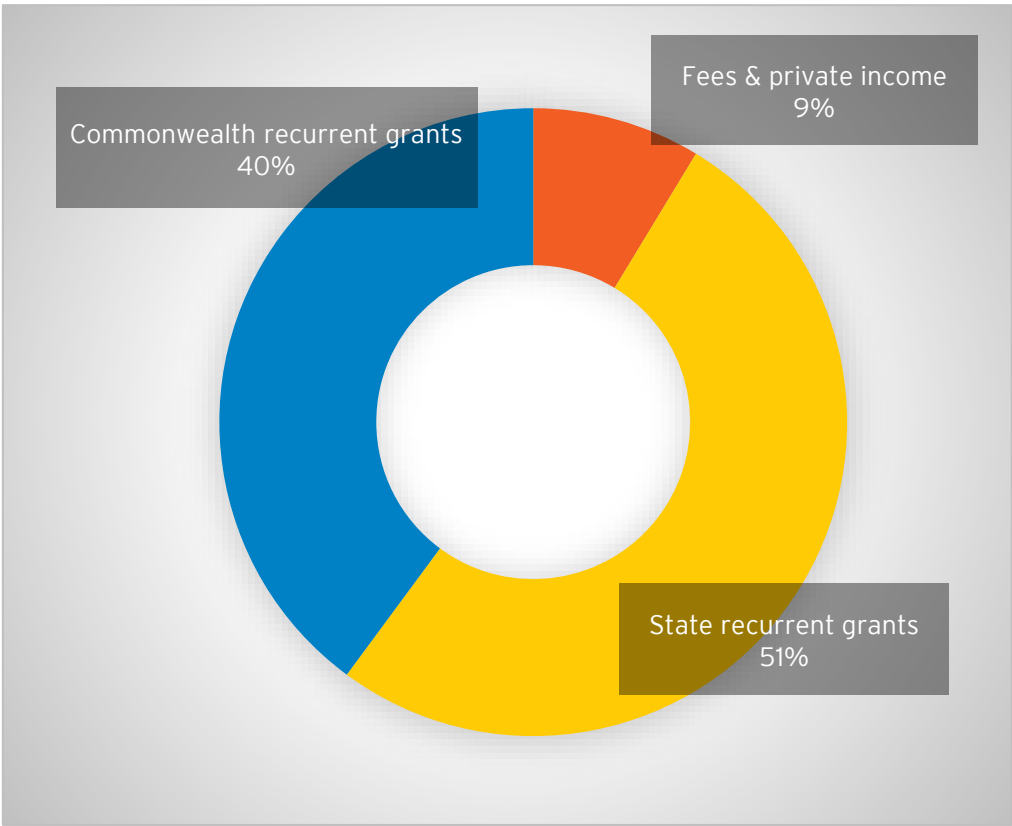
In 2019 we held a number of open classrooms for parents, the feedback from teachers and parents was generally overwhelmingly positive, with one parent stating '...I had no idea how much he learnt every day...and he is so happy' and a teacher reporting two mums shedding tears of joy as they joined in a singing lesson with their child.

Our 2019 Employee Engagement Survey demonstrated a strong sense of satisfaction by teachers at Aspect Riverina School. Teachers were very positive about their work and their colleagues.

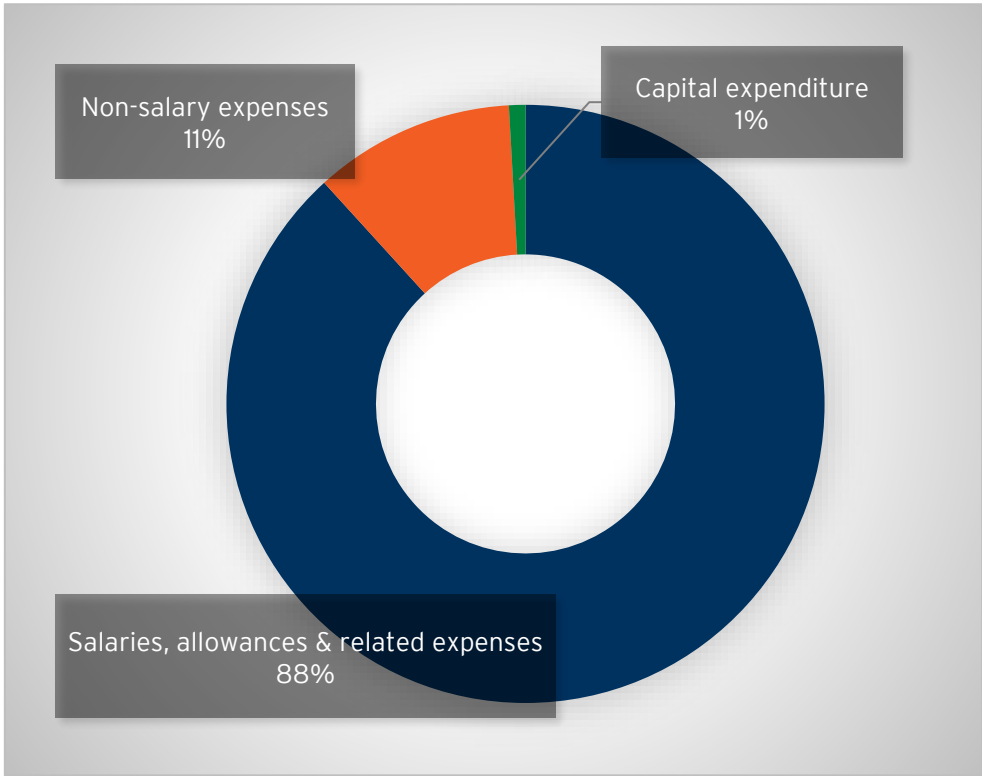
Students at Aspect Riverina consistently demonstrate a high degree of satisfaction with their school experience. They engage in our learning programs and demonstrate success through reaching goals. Last year our senior students travelled to Tasmania to visit the museum in Hobart. A number of students had not travelled on a plane prior to the trip or ever stayed away from home in a youth hostel. The students' reflective journals expressed their enjoyment and engagement in the learning experience.

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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