2021 Annual Report
Aspect Riverina School

autism spectrum AUSTRALIA

Inside the report

About Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)	3
Message from the Principal	5
Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing	6
Senior secondary outcomes	6
Professional learning, accreditation & qualifications	7
Workforce composition	8
Student attendance, retention rates and post-school destinations in secondary schools	9
Enrolment policy	10
Other school policies	12
School determined improvement areas	13
Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility	13
Parent, student and teacher satisfaction	14
Financial information	15

Child safe statement

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is a child safe organisation committed to protecting the rights and interests of children and vulnerable people by providing them with a safe environment. This commitment extends to ensuring a culturally safe and inclusive environment that recognises and respects an individual's heritage, relationships and cultural practices.

Acknowledgment of Country

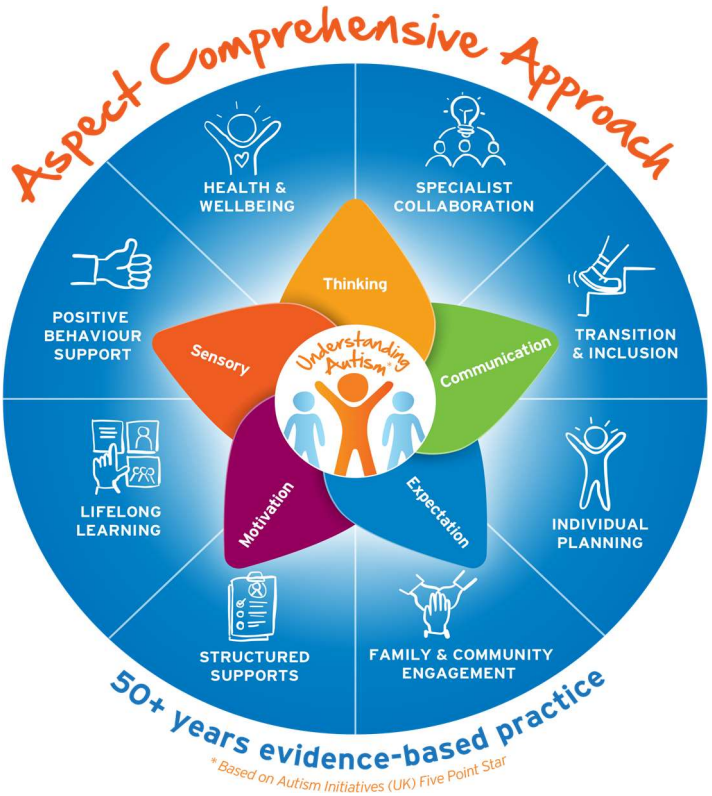
Aspect acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the many lands on which we work, live and learn. We pay our respect to their elders, past present and emerging.

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is the country's largest service provider for people on the autism spectrum. Our specialised, evidence informed school 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 offers one of the best quality autism-specific education programs in Australia. We have over 50 years of experience and provide dynamic autism-specific support in purpose-built classrooms. We utilise the strengths and interests of students as a gateway to learning through quality, tailored programs that focus on the individual learning needs of each child.

Aspect schools provide specialised evidence-informed programs for children aged 4 to 17 on the autism spectrum.

The primary focus of our schools is to equip students with skills to become as independent as possible and 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 includes Individual Planning; Family & Community Engagement; Learning & Participation; Positive Behaviour Support; Structured Supports; Transition & Inclusion; Specialist Collaboration; and Heath & Wellbeing.



Aspect's Strategic Plan

autism spectrum AUSTRALIA

Our purpose

Understanding, engaging & celebrating the strengths, interests and aspirations of people on the autism spectrum – *a different brilliant*®

Our vision

The best opportunities for people on the autism spectrum.

Strategic Plan 2021 – 2023

Work in partnership with people on the autism spectrum

- Implement our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
- Work in Partnership with People on the Autism Spectrum Charter
- Employ Autistic people across a range of roles

Extend Aspect's reach and enhance people capabilities

- Well trained staff with enhanced critical skills
- Customer-centric culture
- Strong and trusted brand identity

Deliver best practice, evidence informed services

- Research activities prioritised to focus on the Aspect Comprehensive Approach
- Continuous improvements to our autism-specific education
- A diverse and inclusive workforce

Investment in physical and digital infrastructure

- Capital Works Program for Aspect schools
- Innovative facilities co-designed with Autistic people
- Digital platforms that facilitate collaboration and communication

Our strategic support

Our people who are highly trained and value diversity and inclusion

Our systems and processes which are built to enable smarter work practices and foster collaboration

Our supporters who help to create a world where no one on the autism spectrum is left behind

By 2023

6% **of roles at Aspect held by Autistic people**

7,000 **active participants and students receiving autism-specific education and supports**

1,600 **employees who are proud to be working for Aspect**

Message from the Principal

In presenting the 2021 annual report I would like to acknowledge the Wiradjuri people who are the traditional custodians of the lands on which our campuses are located.

Aspect Riverina School has enjoyed a productive time over the last 12 months despite the challenges COVID has presented. Students and families have shown their resilience once again this year, managing the dance between online and face to face learning, cross border lockdowns as well as ongoing adjustments to policies and procedures. I have always thought that children and parents who live with autism have a higher capacity to manage change and adversity, this was certainly proven true in 2021.

We offer a K-12 Life Skills program across five sites at Riverina. This includes our Wagga satellite which is based at Sacred Heart Primary School and supports 15 students, our Aspect Kindergarten site which is based in North Albury and supports 6 students, our High School Satellite class which is based at Xavier College and supports 10 students, our two Primary satellite classes based inside St Patrick's school in Albury which supports 12 students and our Main site campus in Albury which now supports 63 students.

This year we have seen significant facility improvement take place at Main site, with the addition of six additional classrooms and the refurbishment of five existing classrooms. We will see the greening of this space over the next six months as well as the establishment of a library and multi-purpose room.

All teaching and learning at Aspect follows the ACA (Aspect Comprehensive Approach) which focuses on providing a positive learning environment which is highly structured, predictable and academically challenging. This approach builds confidence and aims to prepare students for life beyond school.

The school is dedicated to building student wellbeing through achievement and skill development. A strong focus on improving literacy skills has seen all teachers complete extensive literacy training through MULTILIT (Macquarie University) and Data Driven Practice (ACER) which has culminated into a whole school approach to explicit, data informed synthetic phonics instruction which is practiced daily between 9am and 11am.

Our curriculum provides continuous opportunities for our students to connect and participate in the community, leading eventually to further studies at TAFE with our TVET courses in Years 11 and 12. Additional Work Experience, although hindered over the last couple of years due to COVID continues to be a priority for the school.

This year we will see four students graduate with the HSC Life Skills certificate and a TAFE certificate in their chosen field.

We are a small school of 106 students and fifty-eight hard working and dedicated staff, we are very proud of our collective achievements and the contribution we are making to our community.

Jane Carrington

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 Education Standards Authority (NESA) 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 and Numeracy testing across the school each year to help inform practice and monitor progress. This year has seen the school partner with ACER (Australian Council for Educational Research) to establish a data base for each student which identifies their areas of strengths in literacy, numeracy and spelling; efficiently informing teacher practice. This has been a very significant shift for our teachers and students and clearly communicates whole school and individual improvement and growth across time.

Senior secondary outcomes

Record of School Achievement

Aspect Riverina School did not have any students that required the award of a Record of School Achievement.

Higher School Certificate

In 2021 one student graduated from Year 12 (100%). The College offered six Stage 6 Life Skills NESA-Developed courses, one TVET course and five school-developed courses.

Professional learning, accreditation & qualifications

The following professional learning activities were undertaken by staff throughout 2021:

Description of professional learning activity	No. of staff participating
Child Protection - responsibilities related to child protection based on legislation, and Aspect policy and procedures	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
Five From Five "The Science of Reading"	All
ACER "Data Driven Practice" & ACER "OARS DATA DASHBOARD"	All
MULTILIT – "INITIALIT"	10
MULTILIT – "MACLIT"	8
AIS – 'Navigating Difficult Conversations'	4
The Accidental Councillor	2
3 Things to Do if You're New to Working from Home	3
A Crazy Solution for Your Remote Communication Problems	2
A Motivators Tool Kit 2.0	1
A New Way to Train Employees 1.0	3
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Inclusion and Cultural Safety 2.0 (AU)	2
ACA Hack – Individual Planning: introduction, quality of life, running an IP meeting (4 courses)	1
ACA Structured Supports & Professional Collaboration in Health Care & Family Engagement (literature review)	6
Achieving Outcomes at a Distance for Leaders & Bud to Boss	1
Acknowledging and recording feedback and complaints	7
An introduction to Autism (Positive Partnerships)	2
An introduction to the Aspect Comprehensive Approach	1
An introduction to the Positive Behaviour Support Template (Positive Partnerships)	1
An introduction to Visual Supports (Positive Partnerships)	1
Hand Hygiene 4.0	11
Code of Conduct & Living the Code of Conduct (2021)	29
Management of Actual or Potential Aggression (MAPA) Blended Program	9
Organisational Induction Program	2
Safely and Effectively Administer Medication	11
Supporting people on the autism spectrum using the 5-point star (online program)	1
Supporting People to Stay Infection Free	1
Teachers & Teacher's Assistants - Dynamic teams that support students on the spectrum (Positive Partnerships)	1
Workplace Bullying Prevention for staff	2
Workplace Inspections 4.0 (AU)	1

Teacher accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of Teachers
Conditional	0
Provisional	3
Proficient Teacher	30
Highly Accomplished Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Total number of teachers	33

Teacher qualifications

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.

Workforce composition

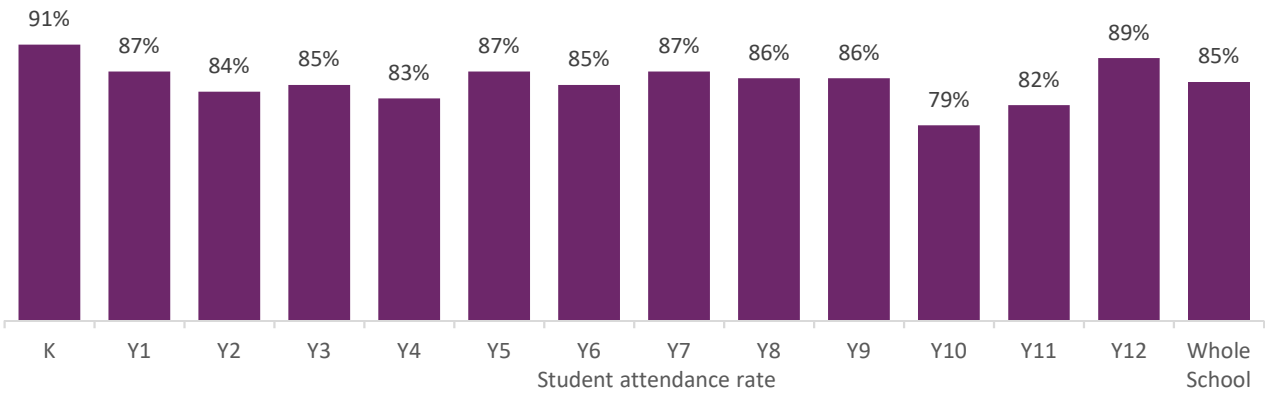
Composition of Aspect Riverina School staff is documented on the My School website www.myschool.edu.au

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

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

Student attendance rates

Kinder	91%	Year 7	87%
Year 1	87%	Year 8	86%
Year 2	84%	Year 9	86%
Year 3	85%	Year 10	79%
Year 4	83%	Year 11	82%
Year 5	87%	Year 12	89%
Year 6	85%	Whole School	85%



Management of non-attendance

Aspect Education has policies and procedures in place to ensure compliance of Aspect schools with school attendance requirements for compulsory school-aged students as outlined by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

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

Fifty percent of the 2019 Year 10 cohort completed Year 12 in 2021 with only two students in that cohort. Based on the information provided to the school when students leave it appears that many of the students who leave the school at the end of Year 10 or during Year 11 do so because of family circumstances or to pursue employment or vocational training. 100% students who left school at the end of Year 12 following the completion of their school education enrolled in 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-111, 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 school's 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.

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

Summary of policy	Changes in 2021	Access to full text
Student welfare The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment to support the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of students through the following policies: 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. 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. 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	Nil	The following policies can be accessed from Aspect's website https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/about-aspect/policies • Person-Centred Approach and Recognition of Valued Status • Risk Management Framework • Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk • Safeguarding the People We Support
Pastoral Care and Bullying Prevention in Aspect Schools The Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA), including the use of the Five Point Star, drives aspect's guiding principles for pastoral care. Aspect is required and seeks to exercise due diligence in all of its duty of care responsibilities towards students, staff and the school community. Leaders of the school endorse activities and plan for the safety and maintenance of good mental and physical health and well-being of the students, staff and parents involved. Schools seek to accommodate and make provision for particular needs of individuals who require special arrangements to secure safety and avoid discomfort or threat to their health and wellbeing. Therefore, bullying or harassment is not tolerated in any form. All members of our community are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment which promotes personal growth and fosters positive self-esteem for all. Aspect Schools aim to maintain a setting in which everyone feels valued and respected and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted and encourages the reporting of complaints and feedback.	Nil	The full text of the Pastoral Care and Bullying Prevention in Aspect Schools procedure can be accessed by request from the school principal. The following related policies can be accessed from Aspect's website https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/about-aspect/policies • Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA) • Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk • Embracing Diversity • Person-Centred Approach and Recognition of Valued Status • Safeguarding the People We Support • Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback
Discipline Aspect adopts a positive behaviour support (PBS) approach when working with children on the autism spectrum ranging from strategies for all students through to more intensive strategies for students who may exhibit more challenging behaviours as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Support policy. Aspect follows a PBS approach but when behaviours occur that put the safety of any stakeholder at risk, the school will be required to implement appropriate procedures to safeguard all stakeholders' safety. All staff have responsibilities in relation to implementing discipline in Aspect Schools.	Nil	The full text of the Discipline in Schools work instruction can be accessed by request from the school principal. The Aspect Positive Behaviour Support policy can be accessed from Aspect's website https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/about-aspect/policies
Complaints and grievances resolution Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) values complaints about the quality of its service and communications to support the continuous improvement of services and management. 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.	Nil	The full text of the Complaints Management Process can be accessed by request from Aspect's website https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/feedback-and-complaints The Feedback and Complaints brochure can be downloaded from our website https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/uploads/documents/Governance/Aspect-Feedback-and-Complaints-Brochure.pdf

School determined improvement areas

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Teaching and learning	To increase student wellbeing through teaching and learning by improving adjustment for individual student needs.	All teachers have been trained in Data Informed Practice in 2021.
Family engagement	Increase parent voice through school focus groups.	Three focus groups were set up in 2021 to improve Students wellbeing and discuss grant expenditure with families. Unfortunately, due to COVID most engagement activities were via ZOOM.
Staff development	Build and strengthen leadership across the school	All leaders completed extensive training through Executive Coaching to support the growth of Highly Effective Teams. The school offered an additional two leadership positions in 2021.
Facilities and Resources	To improve the learning environment for students at the Main site in Albury.	Six additional classrooms have become available and 11 rooms are now fully refurbished. Additional plans for a library and greening of the outdoor areas have been approved for completion in December 2022.
Student achievement	Strengthen Student wellbeing through a strengths-based model of learning	Differentiation of programming in all classrooms has supported students to use their strengths and interests to learn new perspectives of their world. Teachers have been supported through additional training in/ and the purchase of data platforms to embed into practice.
Vocational education	TVET for senior students	Eight of our senior students are enrolled in a variety of courses and attending TVET on a weekly basis.

Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

Aspect Riverina School wants all students to recognise that they are a valued part of the school community, with parents and staff providing care and support that promotes self-esteem, mutual respect and responsibility.

Students have the opportunity to participate in cultural activities such as Harmony Day, 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 School is committed to engaging all our community members in the visions of the school. We regularly ask for feedback and input from staff, students and family members so we can continually improve the service we offer. Below are extracts from our 2021 VOICE survey in 2021 which identify, in the words of others the greatest strengths of Aspect Riverina.

"Aspect provides a specific service for families looking for support with the specific needs of their child and their family. They differentiate themselves from mainstream schools and offer a quality alternative"

"…caring and a strong commitment towards all students at Aspect"

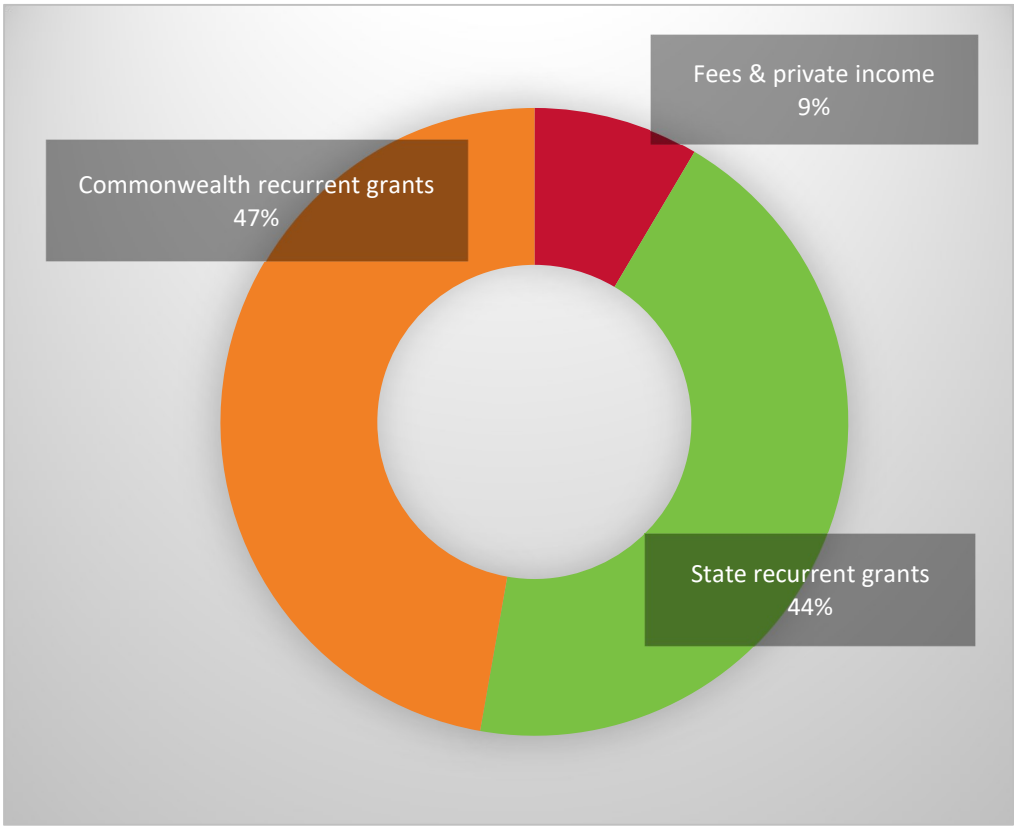
"Highly trained staff with a sound knowledge of how to work positively and effectively with students with an autism spectrum disorder"

"Developing independence for those on the spectrum"

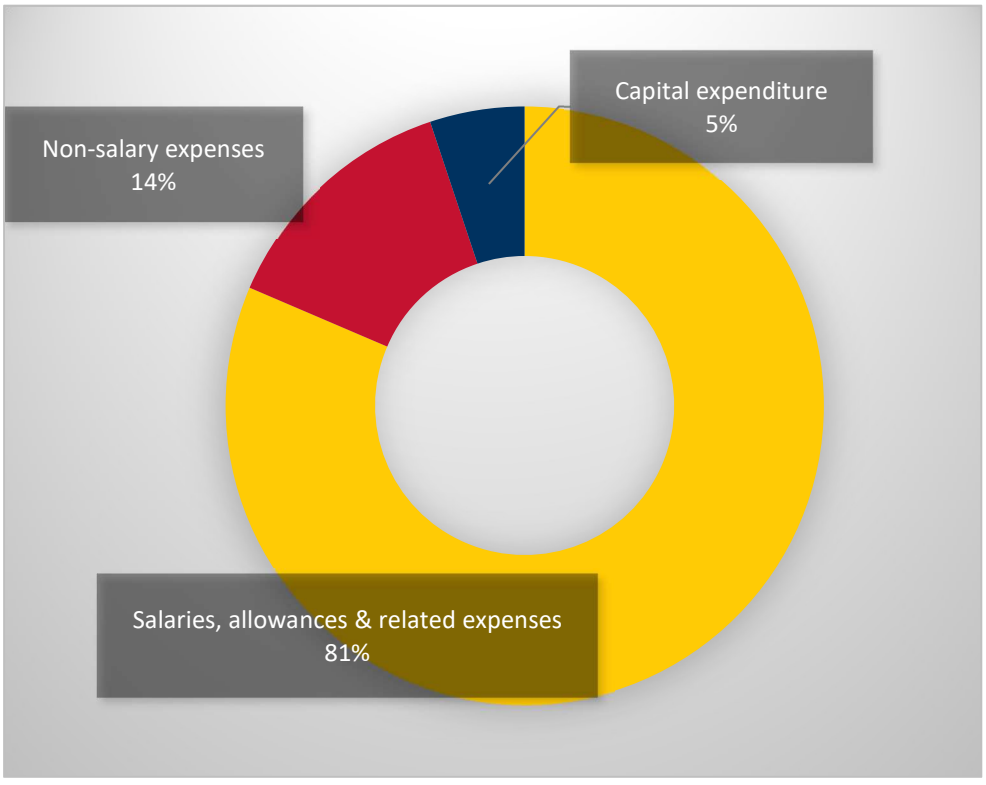
- 83% of staff at Aspect Riverina are engaged and passionate
- 80% of staff at Aspect Riverina are satisfied with the organisation's progress and success in delivering outcomes
- 80% of staff at Aspect Riverina believe in the values of Aspect
- 100% of staff at Aspect Riverina believe in Aspect's purpose: "a different brilliant® – understanding, engaging and celebrating the strengths, interests and aspirations of people on the autism spectrum"

Financial information

Recurrent/capital income



Recurrent/capital expenditure



autism spectrum AUSTRALIA

a different brilliant ®

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

Aspect Riverina School
437 Olive St, Albury, NSW 2640
T +61 2 6057 3777

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)
ABN 12 000 637 267

Building 1, Level 2,
14 Aquatic Drive, Frenchs Forest NSW 2086
PO Box 361 Forestville NSW 2087

T 1800 ASPECT (1800 277 328)
E customerservice@aspect.org.au
W www.autismspectrum.org.au