



Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is the country's largest not-for-profit autism specific service provider.

Aspect builds confidence and capacity with people who have an autism spectrum disorder, their families and communities by providing information, education and other services. Established in 1966, Aspect's specialised evidence-based autism educational program is amongst the largest in the world.

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are lifelong developmental disabilities affecting each person's ability to communicate and to relate to others, in different ways and to varying degrees. Individuals typically have marked impairments in social interaction and communication, have restricted and repetitive behaviours, and may have sensory sensitivities.

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Cover photo: (L to R) Neville Seeto, Declan Seeto, Brooke Seeto, Sarah Crook (Aspect Building Blocks Lead Practitioner – Occupational Therapy), Joel Muir, Mel Muir, Nathan Oei and Jessica Oei.

The artworks reproduced on the cover and throughout the report are taken from the 2009 art exhibition, Painting the Spectrum.

### Report from

#### **BOARD CHAIR AND CEO**

2009 was a remarkable year for Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect). It reached more people with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) than ever before (8,053 compared with 6,067 in 2008); grew the number of funded places for people with an ASD to 1,840 compared with 1,412 in 2008; held the most successful event in Aspect's history: the Autism Asia Pacific Conference 2009 (APAC 09); undertook its largest capital program; established new regional centres in Melbourne, Canberra and Albury Wodonga; and increased awareness about ASD through the largest number of media stories ever – 460. This spectacular growth in Aspect was significantly assisted by the Helping Children With Autism package funded by the Australian Government and the capital investment by the Australian Government in schools through its Building the Education Revolution (BER) funding.

#### APAC 09

Held at Darling Harbour, Sydney on 20 - 22 August, APAC 09 was co-hosted with the Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders with Aspect taking lead responsibility for the event. It was attended by over 1600 people from over 24 different countries.

The rich conference program included 5 international plenary keynote speakers and 21 symposium keynote

There was an incredible atmosphere that extended throughout the three days, with people genuinely embracing the theme of 'Connecting Today — Inspiring Tomorrow'.



ADRIAN FORD

As a result of careful planning that had been undertaken over a number of years, Aspect was well prepared to capitalise on the stimulus funding for primary schools provided by the Australian Government in early 2009.



KEITH PERKIN BOARD CHAIR

speakers from Australia and the Asia Pacific. The Conference 'call for papers' process generated 371 submissions from researchers, parents/carers, academics, service providers, allied health professionals and people with an ASD. Of these, 120 papers were accepted by the international review panel for presentation across 7 concurrent streams, along with over 100 posters.

There was an incredible atmosphere that extended throughout the three days, with people genuinely embracing the theme of 'Connecting Today — Inspiring Tomorrow'. Considering the diversity of attendees, the feedback was that all sectors represented had their needs met. Parents enthusiastically became involved in parent network gatherings, people with ASD were involved in the conference and were able to use the Retreat Room as their space. Practitioners of all disciplines were stimulated by the range of papers presented. Many delegates reported that APAC generated new thoughts and ideas. Adjectives such as "positive", "stimulating", "enthusiastic" and "invigorating" reverberated around the conference.

The conference provided a platform to bring together representatives from across the Asia Pacific to work with the Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders to create a regular dialogue with a view to coming together again at APAC 2011. The

#### Thank you to our supporters

ASPECT LEGACIES • Estate of Eileen Frances Dear den • Estate of Wilhelmina Hughes • Estate of Ra ymond John Purnell • Estate of Helen May Atkins ASPECT BENEFACTORS • 2CH Massey Park Social Golf Club • Accident & Health • George Andrews (Aspect Life Member) • ANZ Nor thern Region • ASX Thomson Reuters Charitable F oundation • Baxter Charitable F oundation • Arthur W Byrne (Aspect Life Member) • Canterbury Bulldogs Leagues Club • Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL Club Ltd • Chris & Jeanagh Condon • De Bor toli Wines • Dee Why RSL • John Doyle • David Epper (Aspect Life Member) • Estate of Kathleen Breen • Fairbridge Foundation • Golden Stave Foundation • Kenneth & Peter Gibbs Foundation • Liangrove Foundation Pty Ltd • Macquarie Links Charity Challenge • Kathleen Pigram (Aspect Life e Member) • Ramm Botanicals Pty Ltd • Rotar y Club of Wetherill Park • Paul Simshauser • St George Foundation • The Bluesand Foundation • Vinta Group Pty Ltd • Andrea Werner (Aspect Life Member) • Peter Werner (Aspect Life Governor) • Woodend Foundation • ASPECT FELLOWS • 35th District of Quota International District • AW Tyree Foundation • Stephen Abbott • ADC Communications (Australia) Pty Limited • Albert Investments Pty Ltd • Chris Alexander • Allianz Australia Insurance Ltd • AMP Foundation • Stephen Anderson • Andrew Taylor Management • PhillipAndrews • AON • Aon Charitable Foundation • Simone EArnott • Father T Arrivoli • Anne Athanasi • Patricia Auster • Australian Irish Association Inc. • Avon • AXE Group • Maxine Bair d • Bair d Real Estate • Ballina Fair Cinemas • P eter Banks • Barista Basics • Patricia Bel • Bellachara • David Bennett AC QC • Peter Berner • Peter Black • Boom Logistics • Botary RSL Sub-Branch Club • Donna Boughton



conference concluded with a communiqué developed by this new regional group: Autism Asia Pacific.

# The Australian Government's Helping Children With Autism Package (HCWA)

The ongoing implementation of HCWA continued to make a major impact on the services provided by Aspect. Aspect Building Blocks® (early intervention service), Positive Partnerships (providing workshops for parents/carers and professional development for teachers and other school staff) and AutismPro® (online service) all grew during 2009. As well, Aspect consolidated the service provided by the NSW Autism Advisors who were in contact with over 2000 families in 2009.

#### Aspect's Schools

For the first time Aspect had more than 600 students enrolled in its schools. Staff continued to provide this highly regarded intensive educational program as well as further develop its theoretical and practical basis, outlined in the Aspect Comprehensive Educational Approach (ACEA).

As a result of careful planning that had been undertaken over a number of years, Aspect was well prepared to capitalise on the stimulus funding for primary schools provided by the Australian Government in early 2009. The complete re-building of the Aspect Central Coast School was completed in late 2009 – a project that had been underway from the year before. The extensive re-development of the Aspect Vern Barnett School was completed recently as was major re-development of the Aspect South East Sydney School at its Peakhurst site and the Aspect Western Sydney School at its Wetherill Park site. Based on the detailed planning that had been done in 2009, these latter four building projects were all able to begin in late 2009. The result has been a major improvement to the school environments because the design work took account of the particular needs of students with an ASD.

#### Regional Programs

Aspect significantly extended its regional reach. In early 2009 Aspect began its early intervention service

in the Cook, Canberra. Aspect also secured a site at Moonee Ponds, Melbourne and commenced services as Aspect Victoria early in 2010 in order to offer early intervention services to the western and northern suburbs of Melbourne.

Aspect was also successful in securing a site in Albury in the late part of 2009 and a range of services commenced in 2010, most particularly school services. There are now 50 students enrolled at the Riverina Unit at Albury and its satellite classes. Aspect secured a site in Camden to meet the growing educational need for students with an ASD in south-west Sydney. There are now 20 students at the unit. Further classes for students with an ASD will be developed during this year and next.

#### 2009 Staff Survey

Every two years Aspect conducts a survey of its staff utilising the Voice Project from Macquarie University, and our results are benchmarked against more than 2000 other organisations who complete a similar survey. We received our best results ever with an employee engagement score of 85% and continuing outstanding results in teamwork, staff motivation and staff understanding of the purpose and tasks of the organisation. In other words, the survey independently confirmed how highly motivated staff are to work at Aspect.

#### 2009 Parent/Carer Survey

Using the same methodology, Aspect conducted its biennial parent/carer survey through the Voice Project. Again Aspect received very high satisfaction scores from parents and carers about the services it provided. 83% of respondents were satisfied with the service they were receiving. The greatest asset of Aspect in family and carers' eyes was the skill and courtesy of Aspect staff and their communication with parents and carers. There were conflicting views about the financial contributions parents are required to make for Aspect services but these matters will be carefully monitored and examined over the coming year.

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#### Research

Three long term research projects have been completed including major Australian research on early intervention. Aspect was also successful in being the industry partner for a new major research project on communication issues for children with an ASD that received funding from the Australian Research Council.

#### Relationship Fundraising

The annual Golf Day was yet again hugely successful, as was our 7th annual Comedy Night. The Sydney Running Festival also provided Aspect with incredible support, with runners sponsored to raise money for us. We also participated in our first national fundraising strategy, Drawtism. In all, the gross fundraising contribution of \$1.3m helped ensure that such programs as the Autism Information Line and Aspect's research program continued to support the ASD community. Aspect honors and thanks each donor for their contribution.

#### Communications

It was also a year in which Aspect launched a new website and a TV commercial which has featured heavily on the ABC as well as a radio advertisement which aired throughout Autism Month. Aspect received more positive media coverage to help raise awareness about autism and our organisation than ever before.

#### Financial Overview

In a year when there was so much growth and unexpected opportunity, the year was not without its challenges financially. Aspect's statutory accounts reported a positive result of \$1,222,642 which included a contribution from the investment portfolio of \$283,441. Excluding the investment portfolio contribution, the statutory surplus for the year was \$939,201 (compared with a surplus of \$397,539: 2008). As required under accounting standards, the statutory surplus included capital grant income of some \$2.4 million which was due to the Commonwealth's BER funding. If this capital income is excluded, the result for Aspect was an operating loss of over \$1.4 million for the year. Funding from Aspect's reserves was required to meet this operating loss and to also cover timing issues related to the capital works program. Significantly, the net assets of the organisation increased by 22 percent to \$6.8 million in 2009 (\$5.6 million: 2008). A large contributor to this increase was the significant capital works program which increased the value of property, plant & equipment by some 48 percent to \$9.38 million. A summary of Aspect's key performance indicators can be found at the end of this report.

#### Strategic Planning

During 2009 Aspect implemented a new process for developing its three year strategic plan. The process ensures that Aspect reviews its current three year strategic plan every year and then rolls it out one more year so that there is always a three-year planning horizon. As a result of reviewing the *STRATEGIC PLAN* 2009 – 2011 with the Board, Executive, management and staff, the following key actions were identified for the new *STRATEGIC PLAN* 2010 – 2012:

- · Continue to grow services;
- Consolidate services in Victoria, the ACT, Albury Wodonga and on the Far North Coast of NSW;
- Design and develop services for adults with Asperger's or high functioning autism;
- Participate in national and international research projects to measure the impact of early intervention, education and behaviour support programs;
- Publish guidelines for the ACEA;
- Develop a strategy for working with Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities;
- Make links with ASD services in the Asia Pacific region, and
- Continue to refine infrastructure to support these developments.

#### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Aspect Patron, John Doyle for his continued generous support and persistence in assisting us in raising awareness about autism spectrum disorders. His profile enables Aspect to capitalise on many media opportunities.

The generous support from the



**JOHN DOYLE** 

NSW and Australian governments is acknowledged in detail in the report, but we would personally want to thank both levels of government for their continued support in recognising the growing needs of people with an ASD and their families by increasing services.

We acknowledge the dedication and support of the Board who all give of their time freely, providing governance and a clear direction. This extends to the various Board committees and all of their members.

Since the last Annual General Meeting, Jonathan Harris and David Down have resigned from the Board. We acknowledge the contributions both these men have



made to Aspect. We particularly acknowledge Jonathan's contributions to the revision of Aspect's constitution in 2005 and its new name "Autism Spectrum Australia". Jonathan had been a member of the Board since 1996 and saw the organisation through a major period of change and development. We welcome two outstanding new Board members, Jenny Young and Julie Hamblin who were recently appointed by the Board to fill these casual vacancies and now are up for election at this AGM.

Finally thank you to all staff for their commitment and dedication because it is they who make Aspect's high service standards and continuing growth possible. Their collective knowledge, skill and experience is fundamental to the success of the organisation. Also thank you to the members of the Executive and the Management Network for their leadership and incredibly hard work throughout an amazing year that was 2009.

Adrian Ford
Chief Executive Officer

Keith Perkin Board Chair



### **Aspect's Score Card for 2009**

#### Meeting our Key Performance Indicators

Key Stakeholder	Key Performance Indicator	YTD Result	Annual Target	
People with an ASD/families	Number of funded places in Aspect for people with an ASD	1,840	1,565	
	Number of service locations	58	57	
	Number of families participating in family-focused programs	1,049	850	
	Number of people with an ASD in contact with Aspect	8,053	6,400	
	Number of students with an ASD who transition from Aspect			
	to more mainstream environments	119	100	
	Number of concluded research, continuous improvement and			
	evaluation projects of services	14	15	
Staff	% of employee turnover	15%	13%	
	Number the lost time injury frequency rate for the past 12 months	17.62	25	
	% satisfaction with learning & development courses	100%	87%	
Governments	\$m received from governments	\$38.65	\$36.23	
	Number of meetings with governments as funders/policy makers	53	60	
Donors	Net \$m received from fundraising	\$0.68	\$1.24	
	Number of donors	1,786	1,720	
	Fundraising expenditure as a % of gross fundraising income	53%	39%	
	Number of media stories involving Aspect and/or its services	460	150	
Partners	Number of service partners be they government or non government	133	135	
	Number of meetings with service partners – government or			
	non government	453	520	
Board	\$m total income	\$45.34	\$43.12	
	\$m capital budget	\$3.58	\$3.29	
	Number of partnerships with organisations in other states/territories	25	21	
	Number of service locations in other states and territories	2	2	
	\$m surplus/(deficit)	\$0.94	\$0.46	
	\$m in investment portfolio	\$4.08	\$4.5	



#### TREASURER'S REPORT

#### Overview

The past year was an eventful period for Aspect with a significant expansion of services together with the largest capital works program in our history. Aspect's role in hosting the very successful APAC 09 conference and the extensive number of workshops delivered by Positive Partnerships (with Aspect as lead agency) were also major initiatives.

This increase in the organisation's scale of operations was reflected in significantly larger and more complex financial drivers, with turnover of over \$45 million in the year to December 2009.

The statutory account's Statement of Comprehensive Income disclosed a result of \$1,222,642 which included a positive contribution from the investment portfolio of \$283,441. Excluding the investment portfolio contribution, the statutory surplus for the year to December was \$939,201 against a surplus of \$397,539 in 2008 on a like-for-like basis.

The 2009 result included capital grant income of some \$2.4 million. If this capital income was excluded, the result for Aspect was an operating loss of over \$1.4 million for the year. Funding from Aspect's reserves was required to meet this operating loss and to also cover timing issues related to capital works expenditure.

The value of property, plant & equipment increased by some 48 percent over the prior year to \$9.3 million reflecting the welcomed improvement and expansion to Aspect's school buildings that resulted from our major works program.

#### Income

Total income for the year increased by 39 percent to \$45.3 million compared to 2008. Government funding continued to be the major source of income for

This increase in the organisation's scale of operations was reflected in significantly larger and more complex financial drivers, with turnover of over \$45 million in the year to December 2009.



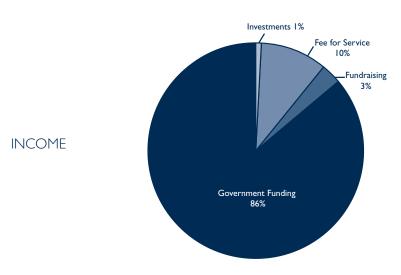
**ROBERT BROWN**HONORARY TREASURER

Aspect representing 86 percent of total income, up slightly from 83 percent in 2008.

The increase in income was mainly due to a 46 percent increase in government funding to over \$39.0 million up from \$26.7 million in the prior year. This was largely due to the expansion of the Building Blocks and School programs. In addition, the Federal Government's Building the Education Revolution (BER) initiative provided \$2.4 million in capital funding (which was categorised in the statutory accounts as income as required by relevant accounting standards).

Total fees for services provided \$4.4 million which accounted for 10 percent of all income received.

Gross fundraising income declined in absolute terms year on year, and also as a proportion of total income. Fundraising is critical to Aspect as it provides support for programs that are either not funded or fully funded by government. Unfortunately, fundraising's gross contribution declined to \$1.3 million in 2009 (\$1.7 million in 2008). This represented 3 percent of income (5 percent in 2008) and was largely due to a lack of success with applications to trusts and foundations, which in turn were impacted by investment market falls and the level of economic uncertainty that prevailed for much of the year.





#### **Expenses**

Expenses increased by 38 percent over the prior year to \$44.4 million in 2009.

By function, Education & Research accounted for half of total expenditure, some 50 percent compared to 62 percent in 2008. Central Office administrative costs remained stable at 12 percent of total expenditure as in 2008.

By expense type, salary costs were \$31 million and almost 70 percent of total expenditure. The large increase over the prior year was due to staffing increases associated with the Building Blocks early intervention program along with the ongoing expansion of Aspect's schools program.

In regard to other expenses, consultants represented the highest non-salary expense as it increased by \$3.2 million to \$4.0 million predominantly due to Positive Partnerships. Travel costs, which represented our second highest non-salary expense, increased by 61 percent to \$2.0 million (34 percent increase in 2008) again mainly due to Positive Partnerships along with Aspect's strategic focus on building capacity in geographic areas that are currently under-serviced.

#### Investments and capital management

Aspect's investment portfolio was greatly impacted by the Global Financial Crisis in the first quarter but improved in line with market conditions during the remainder of the year. The total investment portfolio was valued at \$4.08 million as at 31 December 2009 (an increase of \$333,000 compared to 31 December 2008), and this was after a \$650,000 withdrawal from the reserve to support working capital needs.

The portfolio was monitored closely throughout the year, and maintained in line with long-term strategic objectives. Management of the portfolio was supported by advice from Aspect's investment advisors, Centric Wealth.

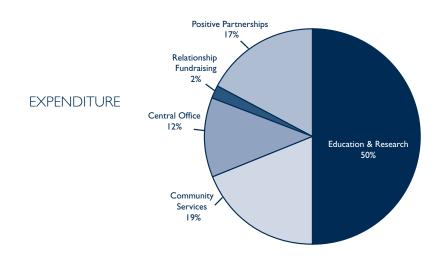
Due to liquidity issues in December 2009, term deposits and cash totalling \$650,000 was redeemed from the investment portfolio. In addition, a loan for \$1.6 million was obtained for the Aspect Vern Barnett School redevelopment project to allow additional stages of this project to commence earlier than originally planned. The investment portfolio was used as security for this loan.

Net assets of the organisation increased by 22 percent to \$6.8 million in 2009 from \$5.6 million in 2008. A major contributor to this increase was the major capital works program increasing property, plant & equipment by some 48 percent to \$9.38 million.

#### Cashflow

Aspect sets operating budgets that closely align to expected income. This means that the organisation has a very small buffer in terms of both profit and cashflow. This margin was especially finely balanced in the context of the greatly increased turnover achieved in 2009.

The recent capital grants by government allowed significant improvements to be undertaken which otherwise would not have been possible – including much needed upgrades and expansion to our existing schools. In addition, new facilities and services were commenced in Melbourne, Albury and Canberra.





Unfortunately, these initiatives also created timing pressure on cashflow, in part because the BER funding required that money be spent on construction prior to receiving payment, and also due to the mismatch of when funding is received with major costs such as staff costs.

The capital funding timing issues, together with below budget performance in some operations, meant that Aspect needed to manage its cash position very closely during the year. The organisation also put in place the additional liquidity measures mentioned above.

A further factor influencing liquidity management was the increasing level of service funding that is now in the hands of clients rather than the prior approach of "block funding" service providers directly. Although Aspect welcomes this more consumer driven model, it does create additional challenges in ensuring that resource levels are matched to demand, and that costs are matched to income.

As Aspect's 2010 Budget has a planned operating surplus of just \$303,000 against turnover of over \$47 million, and with reserve funds proportionally lower, cashflow forecasting and monitoring has become a priority for the organisation.

#### Governance

Aspect developed improved management reporting and financial analysis capability over the course of 2009, and this is continuing in the new financial year. Specific enhancements and focus have included:

- greater internal controls on salary appointments;
- improvements on cashflow forecasting and monitoring;
- closer review of administrative cost management and budgeting processes.

Regular reporting and review at Executive, Committee and Board level, together with a structured engagement process with independent audit, and appropriate investment advice, all continue to support a robust financial governance framework.



#### Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks go to my colleagues on the Board, particularly those on the Finance & Audit Committee, for their support and focus on the financial operation of Aspect.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the Finance Team within Aspect. The size and complexity of the capital works program, along with the substantial increase in operations, placed significant demands on the organisation as a whole and the Finance Team in particular throughout 2009.

Robert Brown Honorary Treasurer



#### **REVIEW OF SERVICES**

During 2009 there was a restructure of the Aspect Executive designed to emphasise the areas where Aspect is seen to make a difference and improve quality and efficiency. The major headings listed in this report reflect the updated structure.

## **Aspect Education & Research**

2009 was characterised by the continued expansion of the school program throughout metropolitan and regional NSW and by the further development and refinement of the Aspect Comprehensive Educational Approach. The network of six schools and 73 satellite classes catered for 612 school-age students across the autism spectrum. Planning commenced for the establishment of a further three new schools in the Riverina, South West Sydney and North Coast regions.

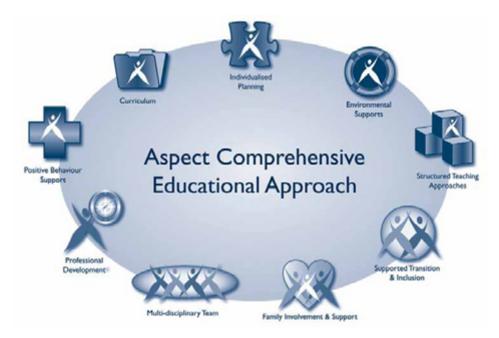
A total of 119 students transitioned to more inclusive educational settings. The Aspect school program continues to receive growing national and international interest in relation to its autism-specific model and its successful comprehensive approach to the education and transition of students with an autism spectrum disorder.

#### **Aspect Comprehensive Educational** Approach (ACEA)

This approach has now been operating in Aspect schools for over four years. In 2009 we developed a multi-site research project to investigate how the ACEA is being implemented in schools and classrooms. A team from each school took responsibility for data gathering and, supplemented with the latest research evidence, the information will be prepared as a manual for new and existing staff in order to standardise the implementation of the ACEA in Aspect schools.

The establishment of model classes in Aspect schools is a key strategy to further develop the ACEA. To date, six model classes have been created: four following the Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped CHildren (TEACCH) approach and two following the Pivotal Response Training (PRT) approach.

An external evaluation of the TEACCH model classes at the Aspect Vern Barnett and Aspect Central Coast Schools was carried out by the University of Canberra. The positive findings have been used to underpin



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learning and development for all staff and have been included in the ACEA manual.

Two intensive educational/behavioural PRT model classes were established at the Aspect Western Sydney and Aspect South Coast Schools. The teachers and teacher aides all underwent training by distance learning from the Koegal Institute in the USA. These classes will be the subject of an external evaluation by the University of Canberra in 2010.

#### **School Program**

2009 saw the establishment of six new satellite classes. A new high school satellite class was opened at Xavier High School, Albury, extending the range of classes in Albury from early childhood to high school. Other new satellite classes were formed by the conversion of single satellite classes to double classes. New buildings were leased during 2009 at Warilla North and Albury which allowed for the expansion of classes at administrative base school sites. A new site was also leased in the Macarthur region of Sydney for the creation of a new school administrative base which will become a new Aspect school in 2011.

All six established schools were successful in gaining funding totalling \$5.4m from the Australian Government's 'Building the Education Revolution' (BER) program. The BER provides funding to upgrade facilities through two programs: National School Pride (for equipment and minor upgrades) and Primary Schools for the 21st Century (for major building works). Building work commenced at all schools and is planned for completion in 2010.

#### **School Highlights:**

#### Aspect Central Coast School

- At the end of the 2009 school year, there were 87 students enrolled across seven sites including the administrative base school site.
- As a result of the trial of two TEACCH model classes.

- in 2008, these classes were continued in 2009, facilitating increased independence for students.
- The final stages of the school building project including the office refurbishment were nearing completion.
- The success of the school's 2008 Mini Olympics led to the introduction of an annual school athletics carnival. In 2009 the inaugural carnival was held at Adcock Park, Gosford. All students and 90% of families attended this event.

#### Aspect Hunter School

- At the end of the 2009 school year, there were 75 students enrolled across six sites. Following the successful transitions of many students in term 4 and the expansion of the school this year, Hunter school has 34 new enrolments for Term I 2010.
- The first regional satellite class opened at St Joseph's Port Macquarie with nine students.
- Training was provided to parents and professionals in the Lake Macquarie region with funding from Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) through the Strengthening Families Program at Newcastle University.

#### Aspect Western Sydney School

- At the end of the 2009 school year, there were 112 students enrolled across 10 sites including the administrative base school site.
- The School implemented a PRT model class and an external evaluation will follow in 2010.
- Planning was undertaken for the development of an additional site to be operational by the beginning of the 2010 school year. This site will be located within the Macarthur area, South Western Sydney.
- The annual Walkathon was held as a part of Autism Month and raised over \$4,000.

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- Robert Shield Douglas Sillar Simon & Schuster Betty Slack SLE Holdings Rober t Smith Jennifer Smith Joan M Smith



- An inaugural school concert night was attended by over 400 staff, students, families and community members.
- Community partnerships and family donations of over \$35,000 were spent on resources, including electronic whiteboard installations, IT equipment and classroom furniture. Some of these funds were also directed towards the school's new building project.
- BER funding was used for a new covered outdoor learning centre and storage area. Other BER funding, which commenced at the end of 2009, will result in the redevelopment of several areas across the school.
- The school was also selected for a Community Building Partnerships grant which will provide upgraded playground facilities.

#### **Aspect South Coast School**

- At the end of the 2009 school year, there were 107 students across ten sites including three administrative base sites.
- The 2nd annual Artists with Autism show, the school's Charity Dinner and the annual Albury Ball were successful fundraising events.
- The new Albury Olive St administrative base school site commenced operations in Term 3 with two classes, increasing to four classes in 2010.
- The new Albury Xavier High School Satellite class opened in Term 1 2009.
- The new Warilla North site was opened at the beginning of 2009 with four new classes.
- BER funding was used to renovate the toilets and construct a secure fence at the new Warilla North School site. BER funding will also be used to replace the existing demountables and build a new multipurpose room.
- A PRT model class was established at Corrimal administrative base school site.

 Smartboards were installed in Wagga Sacred Heart Satellite, Xavier High School and Albury St Joseph's classrooms.

#### Aspect South East Sydney School

- At the end of the 2009 school year, there were 122 students spread across 10 sites. In 2009, one student sat the School Certificate and is now attending a mainstream high school for years 11 and 12.
- Five additional Smartboards were installed into our satellite and base units ensuring that all 10 sites now have access to at least one Smartboard.
- The school's first major fundraising activity, a trivia night, was attended by 304 people and raised \$30,000 for the school to spend on resources for the classrooms.
- BER funding was used to upgraded the electrical system in preparation for air-conditioning to be installed in classrooms and offices. BER funding will also be used to renovate classrooms and the administrative offices at the Peakhurst site.

#### Aspect Vern Barnett School

- At the send of the 2009 school year, there were 109 students enrolled across seven sites including the administrative base school site.
- The Sacred Heart satellite increased in size to a double class in 2009.
- Three students completed the School Certificate. Six students sat the National Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests for the first time.
- Two TEACCH classes continued in 2009 following the joint research project with Canberra University in 2008. Professional development was provided to all schools on the TEACCH model.
- A major upgrade of school facilities commenced as a result of BER and Block Grant Authority (BGA) grants.

- Mr E Smith Mrs J P Smith Smithfield RSL Sub-Branch Club Ltd Soldiers Point Bowling Club Co-Operative Ltd Barbara Spode Tony Squires St John's Park Bowling Club David Starte Mike & Kathy Stein Stephen & Sarah Day Stephen Tilley Gordon & Heather Stewart Rod Stiles •William Stoermer Strathearn Insurance Biokers Allan Sturgess Sunnybrand Chickens G R Sutton Vanessa Swilks Sydney Water Corporation Mrs M RTaylor Hayley Teasdale The Combined Anglican Church Mens Walking Group of Wollongong The Danks Trust The Raymond E Purves Foundation The Welfare Fund Three Flips Limited Anne Tidex John Tobin Toll Group Peter & Karen Tozer Trinity Grammar School Tudor Capital Foundation Allen Tulich Alyce Tulich Tuscany Wine Estate Twin Towns Services Club Ulladulla Guest House SimoneVan den Berg Carrie Vernon Judith Vipond Fiona Waldren Jane Wall Richard Wall Greg Wallace Walter Campbell Memorial Trust Warringah Mall Community Club Ir ene Watkins Watson Wyatt Australia West Engadine Pharmacy Wests Ashfield Anne Whatmore Susan Whisker Rod White
- Emma Whitty Michael Willis Wings Away Inc NSW Wollongong RSL Bowling Club Limited John Woodman Woolworths Limited
- Douglas Wylie Karla Zolshan OAM



#### **Aspect Educational Outreach**

Aspect Educational Outreach provides a diverse range of consultancies and programs on group social skills, peer education and diagnosis disclosure. It also provides school in-service professional development and customised training for parents and professionals.

Educational Outreach was restructured to develop the service in the regional areas served by Aspect schools. The regional and metropolitan teams generated significant new work in 2009. Three new agreements were signed for work to be delivered in Catholic schools in the Western and Southern regions of NSW. Educational Outreach provided initial consultations to 227 clients in 2009.

#### Peer Support Network - Aspect Social Clubs

The Peer Support Networks program funded by ADHC enabled the creation of a number of social clubs for children and adolescents across the greater metropolitan Sydney area. Clubs have been established at Aspect's Kirrawee unit, Aspect Western Sydney School, Aspect Vern Barnet School and in Maroubra, for 8 - I I year olds. A teenage club has been established that moves around Sydney. In order for them to belong to a club a special lunchtime club has been established in a special school. Negotiations with ADHC resulted in the spread of the network and funding to cover the regional Aspect schools. Each school will set up a social club in 2010.

#### **Aspect Research**

Four research projects were completed in 2009:

- 'Where are they now?' a preliminary study to evaluate the long-term outcomes for students with an ASD graduating from the Satellite Class program
- Comparative analysis of early intervention programs for children with an ASD' compares the Aspect Building Blocks early intervention centre-based and home-based Early Play Program, funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC). This is the largest research project Aspect has ever undertaken and was done in partnership with the University of Sydney. The analysis showed the two treatment conditions compared in this study are similarly cost effective. The research then provides support for a flexible range of programs as provided by Aspect Building Blocks
- 'A controlled outcome study of a TEACCH intervention for children with autism' – an evaluation of the newTEACCH classes established in two

- Aspect schools in 2008. The study was undertaken with support from the University of Canberra
- 'Supporting students with ASDs enrolled in senior high school' undertaken by Aspect in conjunction with the Catholic Schools Office, Broken Bay, examines the scholastic achievement and social participation of senior high school students with an ASD who also present with mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. The study identified factors affecting progress and to discuss effective intervention strategies and resulted in an information guide for staff in high schools.

These projects were all reported at the first Aspect Research Forum in December 2009 held at the Aspect Central Office. The one-day forum culminated in the launch of two new publications in the Aspect Research Insights series based on the satellite class and early intervention research reports. More information about these reports and copies of Research Insights can be found at www.autismspectrum.org.au/research.

#### Social Skills Training Program (SST)

Aspect has been successful in achieving a second ARC Industry Linkage grant for a new project in partnership with the Brain and Mind Research Institute based at Sydney University.

The research will explore the impact of a social skills training program in primary and secondary classes of Aspect.

# **Aspect Community Services**

Aspect Community Services was established in April 2009 as one of the central elements of the 2009 organisational restructure. The change brought programs for young children and families, behaviour support, adult and service development into one portfolio and allowed Aspect to provide a more integrated approach to service provision to the autism community. The total people and program resources available across Aspect's community services are able to achieve a more consistent approach in dealings with the State and Commonwealth government agencies funding Aspect's community services.

During 2009, Aspect Community Services operated from 23 service locations, including new locations in Victoria and the ACT.

#### **Autism Information Line (AIL)**

AlL is a vital information resource for people in the autism community, including people with an ASD, families and carers, and service professionals.



#### Highlights

- 4513 family members and service providers contacted this service during 2009. Once again there was a significant increase in family members calling during 2009 (3,202) compared with 2008 (2,517). Most of the increase was accounted for by parents or carers of school age children calling because of coping difficulties at school, including risk of suspension from school, and emotional distress resulting from bullying by peers.
- AlL developed and now distributes new information packages for families ranging from Early Intervention Service Navigation packs to a School Age Navigation pack which is a guide for locating services in NSW.

#### **Aspect Building Foundations**

The DVD and accompanying manual is designed to assist families and service providers supporting a recently diagnosed child. Launched in 2007, the resource has been translated into seven community languages with funding provided by ADHC. The resource continues to be popular with both families and service providers particularly across the eastern states of Australia.

#### **Aspect Someone To Turn To**

This is a parent-to-parent support program through which trained parents who have a child with autism volunteer to support other parents and carers.



Brian Pearson (pictured left), Aspect Someone To Turn To volunteer, with another father of a child with an ASD diagnosis, Greg Buxton, at the recent Aspect Fathers and Grandfathers Evening.

#### Highlights

- During 2009, 85 trained volunteers supported 105 families.
- More than 400 parents and carers attended our Pampering for Carers day and our special day for fathers.
- More than 50 families attended a special sponsored evening, *Dreamnight @ Taronga* on 3 December 2009.

#### AutismPro®

AutismPro is a web-based early intervention program. In 2009, 216 families purchased AutismPro licences, compared with 74 licences in 2008.

#### Highlight

 The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) included AutismPro as a service under the Helping Children with Autism package, enabling eligible families with very young children with autism to purchase an AutismPro licence along with support.

#### **Aspect Diagnostic Assessment Service**

Aspect's Diagnostic Assessment Service completed 247 diagnostic assessments during 2009 with approximately 75% of these receiving a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder. The most common diagnostic outcomes were Autistic Disorder, followed by Atypical Autism and then Asperger's Disorder.

#### Highlight

 The Regional Diagnostic Assessment Service was refunded by the NSW Government. This will allow 100 diagnostic assessments for families in regional NSW who may otherwise have difficulty accessing such services.

#### **Aspect Building Blocks**

During 2009, 744 individual children received an Aspect Building Blocks early intervention place, a place in a Building Links workshop, or received an initial consultation.

#### Highlights

- By the end of 2009, Aspect Building Blocks had provided early intervention places for 484 clients compared with 159 early intervention clients during 2008. This extraordinary growth resulted from families choosing to use the service with their Australian Government's Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) funding. The growth included families living in areas where Aspect has recently commenced service provision such as Canberra.
- Aspect Building Blocks increased the range and type of services offered in addition to centre and homebased services previously available. Hanen's More than Words parent training, and new occupational and speech therapy services became available in 2009.

#### **Aspect Recipe for Success**

Recipe for Success is a positive behaviour support workshop for families funded by NSW Health and supported 178 parents in 2009.



#### Highlights

- Recipe for Success offered its first program in Arabic.
  The program was translated with the support of
  members of the Arabic speaking community in
  Bankstown. This program received very positive
  feedback with the request to extend the service more
  broadly across Arabic communities during 2010.
- A CD was developed for workshop participants enabling them to readily access workshop resources for ongoing reference and use, thereby supporting in a sustainable and ongoing way parent skill development.

#### **Aspect Adolescent Support**

Adolescent Support worked in an intensive way with 28 families during 2009. This is a four year ADHC funded pilot project in Sydney's Metro North Region.

#### Highlight

 A broker role was established to assist families to locate whatever services may be needed from across their communities. This role allowed clinicians to focus on delivering behaviour support training to families and their network of service providers, while ensuring that a variety of other family needs for specific resources are met.

#### **Aspect Behaviour Intervention Service**

This service supported 33 children and five adults during 2009, typically with eight to 10 family-based interventions.

#### Highlight

 A pilot program provided small group workshops for families to benefit from sharing experiences and strategies. One of the goals was for families to build family-to-family support networks as well as their knowledge of community resources.

#### **Aspect Victoria**

For some years, Aspect had planned to become a service provider in Victoria and in August 2009 Aspect located a suitable base from which to deliver Building Blocks early intervention services across the north western Melbourne suburbs.

#### Highlights

 In the second half of the year Aspect recruited a manager for our Victorian services, started recruiting therapy staff and began fit-out of the Moonee Ponds premises.  Victorian Aspect Building Blocks services will commence in January 2010 with home-based early intervention, speech pathology, occupational therapy and AutismPro.

#### **Aspect Far North Coast Centre**

The Far North Coast Centre provided an Aspect Building Blocks centre-based early intervention program for 30 children and their families, in partnership with service providers in Lismore, Casino, Ballina, Byron Bay and Tweed.

The centre also provided information and support to more than 1,000 members of the community.

#### Highlights

- Aspect implemented the ADHC-funded Extending Early Childhood Intervention Initiative program which has three components: education and training regarding early indicators of autism; screening from 12 months of age to identify children at risk for a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder; immediate access to early intervention and ongoing support.
- Over 100 children were screened during 2009 with 30 accessing the early intervention component of the service.

#### **Autism Advisor Program**

Aspect is funded by FaHCSIA to deliver the Autism Advisor Program in NSW, as part of the HCWA package. The Autism Advisor Program commenced in October 2008.

The Program provides information and support to families and carers of children up to six years of age. It provides families and carers with better support for their children in the post-diagnosis stage, and assists families and carers to gain access to ASD specific, and other services across NSW.

#### Highlights

- During 2009 the Autism Advisor Program had contact with over 2,300 families.
- Twenty five per cent of appointments were with families who speak a language other than, or in addition to, English at home and 3% of appointments were with Aboriginal clients.
- The Autism Advisor Program had contact with over 500 parent and service networks and conducted a series of information sessions and local visits across the whole of NSW this year.



 Aspect employed a part-time community development worker to focus on promoting the program to Aboriginal and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.

# Aspect Adult Programs Community Participation Programs

Aspect's two community participation programs at Croydon and Bexley/Allawah worked with 40 clients during 2009. Aspect was able to showcase its particular expertise in working with adults with an ASD or other disability.

#### Highlights

- Aspect successfully tendered to be included on a panel of providers for a new ADHC program called Life Choices which can be delivered through our community participation projects. The inclusion on the panel enables Aspect to deliver this program in several new areas of Sydney.
- Aspect's approach to person-centred planning was strengthened and new individual plans were completed for all clients. Staff developed and implemented fresh approaches to programming and planning for adult clients.
- The community participation projects were showcased on a number of occasions, including: the Art Show held in Autism Month; an exhibition of artwork at the Drummoyne Art Show; a feature program on ABC's Stateline; and a photography exhibition by Robbie Green.
- A morning tea attended by over 40 people was held in November at the Strathfield Library to celebrate Aspect's work with adult clients.
- New premises were found in Canterbury for the Croydon Community Participation Program which will relocate there in 2010.

#### **Adult Social Group**

The Adult Social Club now has 55 active participants and approximately 30 people attended each of the regular social club activities.

#### Highlights

- Participation in the Social Group increased during the year by up to 15 people.
- Social Group members actively suggest and agree on group activities and planning and communication of the arrangements are facilitated by the group coordinator:

# **Positive Partnerships**





Autism Spectrum Australa University of Canberra Autism SA Department of Education and Training, Western Australia

Positive Partnerships is a national program of workshops and information sessions targeting two different groups: those for parents and carers; and professional development workshops for teachers and school staff.

Positive Partnerships is funded by the Department of Education, Training and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) as part of the Australian Government's Helping Children with Autism initiative (HCWA).

Aspect is the lead agency of the Australian Autism Education and Training Consortium (AAETC) which won the contract to deliver Positive Partnerships. Other members of the consortium are the University of Canberra, Autism SA and the Department of Education and Training, WA.

Work commenced on the implementation of the Positive Partnerships project in May 2008 and, as at the end of the first two years of the funding period, all key deliverables were achieved.

'Having the information has given me the confidence to go and say to the school that this is what we're entitled to and so that needs to be met. I know now what to ask for. It's been very positive because we've had meetings with the special needs teacher and the regional contact to set up goals for the year.' — parent/carer

The AAETC has been successful in acquiring an extension of the contract until February 2012, with the total funding of Positive Partnerships being \$22.8 million.

During 2009, a major national media campaign was conducted to inform those parents and carers not already linked into the autism networks of the workshops coming to their local areas. This resulted in excellent attendance rates.

Key achievements to date:

- 35 four-day professional development workshops completed for teachers and other school staff nationally.
- 1,269 teachers and school leaders, along with 215 regional/diocesan consultants have participated in the workshops.



- 34 professional networks have been established following these workshops, supported by 167 key local professionals.
- 82 workshops and information sessions (2 days) for 2,697 parents/carers have been conducted nationally.
- Nine interactive online learning modules have been developed.
- Over 10,000 people registered for the Positive Partnerships online learning platform, nationally and internationally.
- A total of 22,704 "completions /in progress" have been recorded for the online learning modules.
- 79 people, drawn from each state and territory, are involved in the delivery of the professional development and parent/carer workshops. These workshop presenters come from the education sector, autism organisations and other government and non-government organisations.
- Aspect has established partnerships through formal agreements with 30 government and nongovernment organisations nationally (20 government organisations and education groups, 10 nongovernment organisations).

'Since the course I have a greater understanding for what the parent is dealing with and I make a greater effort to work together and have greatly increased my communication between home and school — with diary notes and have developed a daily behaviour note which goes home with the child each day to let the parent know how they have behaved each day.' — teacher

The evaluation of the professional development component indicates that changing the attitudes, knowledge and skills of a core body of teachers and school staff through Positive Partnerships has led to improvements for students, their families, individual staff and school communities.

Participant evaluation data from the parent/carer workshops and information sessions indicates a statistically significant increase in the knowledge of educational environments, parenting, and partnerships.

Parents valued the advice on their rights, how to advocate effectively, ask questions, bring issues to the teachers' attention, maximise outcomes from support and individual planning meetings, strategies for dealing with bullying, buddy systems, goal setting, communication, and time out card systems. Parents reported that this information made them feel better



prepared and boosted their confidence to become advocates for their children. They also appreciated the information supplied in the workshops on specific resources (websites, funding), support services (respite) and networking opportunities.

Critical to the success of Positive Partnerships has been developing and maintaining a partnership with DEEWR through Aspect. The breadth of this national program has also required Aspect to develop strong relationships with its consortium partners, state and territory autism organisations, state and territory education sectors, and government and nongovernment organisations.

# Conference Presentations by Aspect Staff at the Asia Pacific Autism Conference 2009

DrTrevor Clark – Developing a Comprehensive Approach to Educating Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder:The Aspect Comprehensive Educational Approach

Dr Trevor Clark — Educational Strategies for the Application of Savant and Splinter Skills of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Dr Debra Costley – National Curriculum: Equal Opportunity or Denial of Individual Differences

Dr Elaine Keane – Towards independence: Supporting students with ASDs in senior high school

Dr Elaine Keane – Facilitating inclusion: A parent survey of the long-term outcomes of Autism Spectrum Australia's (Aspect's) satellite class graduates

Jane Cotter – In our Own Words: Through interview





and discussion three young people with Asperger's Disorder share their perspectives

Meghan Williams – An independent outcome study of a TEACCH based intervention for students with autism

Brendan Chippendale and Jo Tisdall – Success for Boys; Literacy, Mentoring and ICT to motivate and engage boys with ASD

Tina Angus and Craig Smith – Increasing student goal attainment through the use of interactive whiteboard technology

Elizabeth Gadek and Catherine Thomson – Effective support strategies for students with an autism spectrum disorder transitioning to new educational settings

Joanne Tisdell – Success for Boys – Literacy: Reading for Enjoyment

Marina Bailey – Dane's story: Parents and professionals working together to achieve positive outcomes

Anita Freeman – The sibling carer experience and the role of sibling support programs

Steve Davies and Jodi Woodward – Building positive behaviour support capacity in carers of children with autism and challenging behaviour

Dr Tom Tutton – Adolescents with high support needs

Rachel Kerslake and Dr Jacqueline Roberts – Early intervention for children with autism and their families. A randomised control study of child and parent outcomes of home and centre-based programs

Rachel Kerslake – Building Blocks: creative options for service delivery for children aged 0-6 years with ASD (poster)

## **People**

Aspect People provides internal services to strengthen the capacity of Aspect services to respond to the needs of the children and adults with an autism spectrum disorder, their families and carers.

Aspect People includes human resources management, learning and development, policy development and corporate risk management.

#### Highlights:

- Between 2008 and 2009, the average monthly number of equivalent full-time staff employed by Aspect grew from 371 to 415, an increase of 12 percent.
- The need for additional staff to meet Aspect's service growth was a continuing recruitment challenge throughout the year. Despite a highly competitive labour market, Aspect's Human Resources Management team was able to keep pace with the need for high calibre staff.
- Once again, Aspect was able to manage the retention of staff and keep staff turnover well within industry norms.
- Building on new injury prevention practices and OHS performance measures introduced in 2008, Aspect experienced a 35% improvement in lost time injury frequency rates between 2008 and 2009.
   This improvement resulted in fewer lost days and increased control over workers compensation costs.
- During 2009, Aspect developed and commenced implementing its first learning and development strategy. A key feature of this strategy is a strong blend of learning approaches, including face to face and online learning modes. To support the strategy, Aspect has developed a new learning portal.
- Aspect established staff scholarships to enable more than 100 staff to attend APAC 09. Staff attending APAC were encouraged to share their conference learning with colleagues.
- Aspect's Staff Policy Committee continued to meet each month. This Committee is responsible for reviewing and updating policies and identifying policy gaps. Amendments and new policies are then submitted to the Board's Finance & Audit Committee for approval. The Finance & Audit Committee approved 30 amended and new policies during the year.
- Aspect's Corporate Risk Management Committee met each quarter through the year. The Committee's work includes identifying corporate risks, and



establishing and reviewing risk control measures to address identified risks. The Committee reports on its activities to the Board each quarter and provides the Board with a summary of extreme and high corporate risks and risk control measures.

### **Staff Long Service Awards**

The following employees reached long service milestones as at 31 March 2010.

#### 20 Years

Elizabeth Hingston Aspect Western Sydney School

15 Years

Janette Norris Aspect Western Sydney School

10 Years

Stuart Davis Aspect South Coast School
Bronwyn Jones Aspect South Coast School
Lorraine Patoulios Aspect Western Sydney School
Jane Reeves Aspect Hunter School

#### **Volunteers**

Aspect recognises that volunteers are an integral part of the organisation and values their contribution. Volunteers allow Aspect to extend and enrich the delivery of services.

Aspect provides volunteers with work that is safe, significant, fulfilling and appreciated. Volunteers work as members of a team and are treated with dignity and respect. They are recruited, screened and placed according to organisational needs. The duties and responsibilities of volunteers are set out in position descriptions (for regular volunteers) and in a list of duties (for occasional volunteers). Aspect does not use volunteers in lieu of paid staff.

The annual Autism Recognition Awards include an award category for volunteers.

During 2009, Aspect undertook a major review of its volunteering program. This review revealed the importance volunteers currently play in the organisation and how volunteers might be used in future. The review also identified improvements Aspect can make to better support volunteers.

In 2009, there were 140 volunteers regularly working in different Aspect services, with the majority placed in Aspect Community Services.

#### **Communications**

Aspect strives for clear and open communication with stakeholders. This is achieved through many mediums, including forums, events, publications and our website.

The following are communications highlights from 2009:

#### Website

A new website went online in May. Redesigned to reflect the community Aspect services, strong icons and colour-based links were incorporated for ease of navigation by those requiring visual assistance. The website includes a calendar of events, program details and a world news service providing information about what is happening around autism. Through the site, users are able to make direct contact with individual services throughout the organisation.

#### **Autism Recognition Awards**

Inaugurated in 2007, these awards epitomise Aspect's focus on abilities, not disabilities. The awards recognise what people have overcome to achieve and they recognise those who have assisted others to make significant achievements. Beyond the impact on those few award recipients, Aspect believes that the message sent to the broader autism community – that their efforts are valued – is an important one. The award ceremony is a prestigious, high-profile event which is held alongside the adults with autism annual art exhibition, 'Painting the Spectrum', during Autism Month. Details of the award winners are published in 'aspects' and on the website.

Winners in 2009 were: Individual Achievement — Mitchell Kilduff; Parent/Carer — Lâm Thi Duyên; Professional Achievement — Robyn Townsend; Exemplary Service — Beth Scott; Patronage Award — Kids for Life; David Foster Award for Volunteer Service — Mandy Gordon; Business Partnership Award — Arconline.



Mitchell Kilduff (right) receiving his Aspect award for Individual Achievement from Director Aspect Children, Young People & Families, Anthony Warren.



#### Asia Pacific Autism Conference (APAC 09)

APAC 09 was held at Darling Harbour in Sydney during August. Apart from facilitating delegate communications, the conference provided a focus on autism for the media. Aspect conducted a major PR campaign around APAC, raising awareness of autism in the public domain. Including syndications, there were over 350 articles generated in all types of media around APAC.

#### **Publications**

Two issues of our feature publication 'aspects' were produced in 2009, including one which was distributed to all delegates at APAC. A number of issues of the staff newsletter, *In the Picture*, were republished in a version for external use. A selection of our brochures were updated and redesigned.

#### **Advertising**

Aspect completed work on a TV commercial in 2009. This professional high quality ad has been widely distributed online, including a period on the 2DAY FM website as part of a radio advertising campaign during Autism Month. The TV ad also received widespread free airplay nationally on ABCTV. The ad was designed to raise awareness about autism spectrum disorders.

## **Aspect Finance, Property & IT**

In 2009, Aspect experienced the greatest increase in turnover (39%) for the past 10 years and the largest building program in its history. The main drivers were the new federal funding for early intervention (HWCA) and school infrastructure (BER). This resulted in considerable demand on "back office" functions.

#### **Finance**

#### Highlights

- Aspect's auditors concluded an unqualified audit report for the end of year financials.
- A bank review resulted in Aspect changing from St George Bank to Westpac in January 2010.
- A new budget process that focuses on service contribution to the bottom line and administrative costs was implemented.

#### **Property**

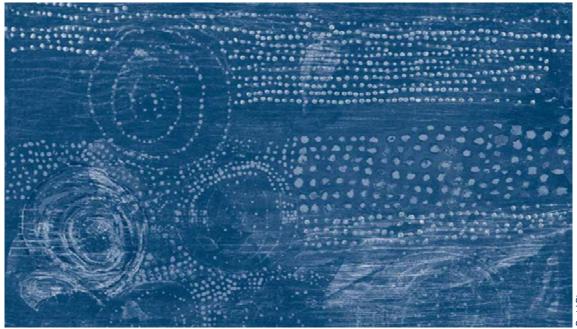
#### Highlights

- The final stage of Aspect Central Coast school was completed in January 2010. Construction of BER funded projects commenced at Aspect's Vern Barnett, Western Sydney, South East Sydney and South Coast schools with completion by May 2010.
- Established service locations in Melbourne, Canberra, Albury and Camden.
- Further space for Positive Partnerships and Autism Advisor programs was leased and fitted out at Frenchs Forest in November 2009.

# Information Technology

#### Highlights

Aspect completed its rollout of the Terminal Services
 Online system giving Aspect staff access in satellite
 locations throughout Department of Education &
 Training (DET) Schools and Catholic Education
 Office (CEO) Schools. The cooperation of DET
 and CEO has made it possible to cover over 70
 classes in NSW.



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Daniel Di

#### **Staff on External Committees**

The following staff were involved in external committees as at 31 December 2009 as part of Aspect's commitment to the ASD and disability community.

Adrian Ford, CEO – Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders (Chairperson); Expert Committee on Children and Young People with a Disability and their Families (Chairperson) for Ageing Disability and Home Care (ADHC); member of NSW State Committee National Disability Services (NDS NSW)

Dr Trevor Clark, Executive Director, Aspect Education & Research – National Independent Special Schools Association (NISSA)

Anthony Warren, Director, Aspect Children, Young People & Families – NDS NSW Sub-Committee on Children, Young People and Their Families; National NDS Committee on Children, Young People and Their Families

Allison Yee-Brogan, Director Community Service

Development – NSW Strategic Carer Action Network

 $\label{lija} \textbf{Simpson, Manager, Autism Advisor Program} - \text{NSW} \\ \text{and ACT Stakeholder Reference Group for Playconnect} \\$ 

Dr Debra Costley, Director, Education Development & Research – Australasian Evaluation Society & International Reviewer for ARC Discovery Grants

Elizabeth Gadek, Director, Schools – NISSA (Chair)

Pam Lea, Principal Aspect Vern Barnett School - NISSA

Giovanni Gulli, Principal, Aspect Western Sydney School — NISSA (Secretary)

Janet Millhouse, Principal, Aspect Central Coast School – NISSA; Early Childhood Intervention Coordination Program (ECICP)

Liz Murray, Principal, Aspect Hunter School – NISSA; Newcastle University Advisory Committee Special Education Faculty; Hunter Joint Training Consortium Initiative

Mark Durie, Coordinator, Aspect Hunter School – Hunter Joint Training Consortium Initiative

Katrina Kemp, Coordinator, Aspect Hunter School – ECICP (Hunter); Intervention Service Coordination Agency (Hunter); First Chance Advisory Committee, Strengthening Families for Stronger Communities.

Rowena Perritt, Principal, Aspect South East Sydney School — NISSA

Jodi Rodgers, Manager, Aspect Far North Coast Centre – ECICP, Far North Coast; Interagency Meetings, Far North Coast



Bruce Rowles, Principal, Aspect South Coast School – NISSA

**Dr Tom Tutton, Manager Aspect Behaviour Support** – ADHC Restrictive Practice Panel, Metropolitan North Region

Angela Stewart, Aspect Someone To Turn To,
Co-ordinator Culturally & Linguistic Diverse (CALD)

– Strategic Carer Action Network; CALD Advisory Group

Pauline Hunter-Knight, Coordinator, Someone To Turn To – Macarthur Disability Services Network, Carers Coalition Northside

Lee Casuscelli, Positive Partnerships — Macarthur Disabilities Services Advisory Volunteer Team; Macarthur Support Group (Committee Leader); Macarthur Fund Raising Committee for Autism; Learning Disabilities Coalition Member; Women in Leadership Committee — Catholic Education; Committee for the Inclusion and Integration of all students. Macarthur

**Lara Cheney, Positive Partnerships** – Hunter Joint Partnerships Initiative University of Newcastle Special Education Advisory Board

Kathryn Fordyce, Positive Partnerships – Speech Pathology Autism Special Interest Group, Qld; Speech Pathology Australian ASD Discussion Board (Moderator)

Bronwyn Thoroughgood, Positive Partnerships – Hunter Joint Partnerships Initiative (Convenor); AASE Hunter Branch (President); University of Newcastle Special Education Advisory Board; Families Supporting Families (Coordinator)



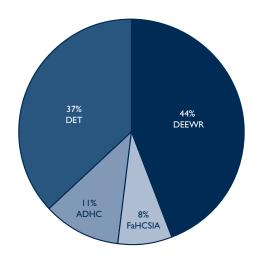
# **Government Funding**

Aspect relies on governments for the major proportion of its funding. Without this, we could not sustain the comprehensive and essential services on which the autism community relies.

Below is the list of government departments and the funding received in 2009. Aspect thanks these departments for their continuing confidence and support of our work.



	\$M
Australian Government Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)	
Positive Partnerships	8.18
Capital Projects	2.40
Recurring School Funding	6.57
Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services &	
Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)	2.96
NSW Department of Ageing & Disability & Home Care (ADHC)	4.22
NSW Department of Education & Training (DET)	14.56
NSW Department of Health (NSW HEALTH)	0.16
Total	39.05M





## Relationship Fundraising in 2009

On behalf of all of us who have the privilege of working at Aspect but more importantly, on behalf of the many thousands of people who benefit from the services that we provide, thank you to all our supporters for enabling us to provide the breadth and depth of services to help people with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families. Without your help, fewer people in the autism community would be able to gain our help.

2009 was a difficult year, with the impact of the global financial crisis affecting both families who access our services and our supporters.

Despite the significant economic downturn, Aspect still received fantastic community support. However, overall the income we received from supporters was impacted by the financial crisis, dropping from \$1.7 million in 2008 to \$1.3 million in 2009. The net amount raised by fundraising was \$677,277

#### Highlights

- The number of people supporting us by making a donation grew by 10%.
- 360 individuals and groups fundraised for us in 2009.
   They trekked in Peru, organised games of Pictionary, ran for Aspect in the Sydney Running Festival, took on a fundraising challenge and planned events.
- Twenty four registered clubs supported us with Community Development Support Expenditure (CDSE) funding.
- David Epper and his team ran yet another successful Golf Day.
- Peter and Andrea Werner were once again instrumental in ensuring that Comedy Night was not only successful in raising funds but also very effective in raising awareness of our work.

- The Parents and Friends groups provided tremendous support to all of our schools.
- We received major gifts from Sydney Water, Dr Paul Simshauser, Man Investments, Ramm Botanicals,
   3 Flips Foundation, ReportSmart and Redback Consulting.
- During 2009 we were privileged to receive support from 25 trusts and foundations.
- We were indebted to the people whose bequests we realised in 2009 for their generous foresight and for the ongoing difference that they have made to people with autism.
- We welcomed new members to our Acacia Circle; a special group of valued supporters who have confirmed their intention to include a bequest to Aspect in their wills.

We have been able to thank by name many of these supporters in this report. However, we are truly grateful to each and every person who gave to us during 2009 and we thank them all for so generously supporting our projects and services.

#### The year ahead

During 2010 our focus will be on continuing to ensure that we meet the needs of our existing supporters. We will also be undertaking a major program to attract new donors and we will build on the success of community fundraising in 2009. We will be encouraging more people to donate online and we will be exploring opportunities that arise now that Aspect has a service in Victoria.

There is no doubt that 2010 will be an exciting year. We look forward to working with our existing supporters and welcoming new supporters into the Aspect family.







Jonathan





Aspect is a corporate member of the Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders (www.autismaus.com.au). It is a company limited by guarantee with eight corporate members representing all major autism organisations across Australia. Its operations are entirely funded by the eight corporate members.

#### Helping Children with Autism

2009 was the second year of implementation of the Australian Government's \$190m Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) package. This important package of services for children and their families has changed the landscape of service provision in Australia. The HCWA package provides a number of key interventions but its main focus is on extending early intervention services.

The information and funding gateway for early intervention services offered under the HCWA package is done through the Autism Advisor Program. Each corporate member of the Advisory Board continued the important role of providing the Autism Advisor Program in its respective state or territory.

#### Financial Report

For the financial year 2008 – 2009, the Advisory Board generated a surplus of \$7,838 (2008: \$2,739) and had accumulated funds on its balance sheet of \$24,444 (2008: \$16,606). It was a strong financial result for the Board. The Board particularly appreciated the work and commitment of its Treasurer, Jon Martin, for managing the Board's finances, and the work of its auditors, Bentleys MRI, who undertook the audit on a pro bono basis.

#### Autism Month 2009

Autism Month, which is sponsored by the Advisory Board, was held in May 2009 with a range of activities held across Australia. These activities were organised by the Board's corporate members. They included a number of Recognition Award ceremonies to celebrate the confidence and capacity of the members of the autism community around Australia.

#### Conferences

The Advisory Board co-sponsors the biennial national autism conference with one of its corporate members. In 2009 it was Aspect's turn to take on this important task and the first Asia Pacific Autism Conference (APAC 09) was held in Sydney from 20 – 22 August. With the theme *Connecting Today – Inspiring Tomorrow*, 1600 participants attended this highly successful three day conference which was opened by the Hon. Bill Shorten, Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children. It was the first biennial conference to have a regional focus. Of the 160 overseas attendees, the vast majority came from South

East Asia and New Zealand.

The five plenary keynote speakers were Dr Eric Fombonne (Canada), Professor Francesca Happé and Professor Patricia Howlin (UK), Thorkil Sonne (Denmark) and Assoc. Professor Tony Attwood (Australia). There were 21 keynote symposia speakers and special guests were Judy Brewer and John Doyle.

Company@ from South Australia performed an original theatre piece highlighting issues faced by people with an ASD. All members of the company were from the autism community.

A major outcome was the formation of the Autism Asia Pacific Network including representatives from Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, Vietnam and Australia. The network will be facilitated by the Advisory Board. The network aims to:

- help build capacity of ASD communities and leadership across the Asia Pacific
- · exchange ideas and learning
- gain a better understanding of the issues facing ASD communities across the region and the cultural factors that impact on them.

It was decided that the Autism Association of Western Australia would co-sponsor the next biennial conference with the Advisory Board. Known as APAC II, it will be held in Perth 8 – 10 September 2011 and will continue the regional focus established by APAC09.

#### **ASD** Register

Following an announcement by the Hon. Bill Shorten at the opening of APAC 09 regarding a national ASD register, the Advisory Board was invited by the Australian Government to develop a proposal for such a register. This was submitted to the government on 30 September 2009. The proposal was developed in close collaboration with a number of experts in the fields of health/disability registers and epidemiologists specialising in ASD, and the Board is currently awaiting the government's decision.

An ASD Register has been called for by the ASD community for over 20 years and was a key requirement of the Advisory Board's National Call for Action written in 2007.

#### Autism Month 2010

Autism Month as from 2010 will move from May to April so that it will coincide with the UN World Autism Day on 2 April.

#### Change in Office Bearers

In early 2010, Adrian Ford stepped down as Chairperson of the Advisory Board after a period of three years. The new Chairperson is Jon Martin, CEO of Autism SA. Penny Beeston, CEO of Autism Queensland continued on as Deputy Chairperson and Secretary, and Adrian Ford became the Board's Treasurer:



# Corporate Governance INTRODUCTION

The Board of the Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) applies a sound governance framework to the conduct of the Board. This framework is applied throughout Aspect, reflecting the belief that any shortcomings in governance could jeopardise Aspect's reputation and its ability to fulfil its obligations to people with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families, carers or guardians.

Aspect is accountable to a wide range of stakeholders with whom it interacts. These are people with an ASD and their families, carers or guardians, governments, donors and supporters, the Aspect staff and the Board itself.

This statement sets out the principles, policies and procedures the Board adopts to ensure the long-term health and prosperity of Aspect. It provides an overall governance framework and identifies the respective roles and responsibilities of the Board and management in setting the strategy and direction of Aspect and in managing and controlling the organisation.

#### Vision, Mission & Values

Aspect is committed to conducting its work with the highest standards of personal and corporate integrity.

Aspect's vision (or aspiration) is: **Overcome the isolation of autism**.

Aspect's mission (or what it does) is **Autism Spectrum**Australia (Aspect) builds confidence and capacity with
people who have an autism spectrum disorder, their

families and communities by providing information, education and other services.

Aspect's values are:

Aim high

Understand & communicate clearly

Take personal responsibility

Inspire & innovate

Show empathy

Make a difference

#### **THE BOARD**

#### Role of the Board

The Board of Directors exercises the powers vested in it by the Corporations Act 2001, and Aspect's Constitution and Regulations.

The Board is directly responsible to Aspect's members for the long-term health and prosperity of Aspect. The policies and practices outlined in Aspect's Corporate Governance Statement provide the framework which enables the Board's principal role to be achieved whilst ensuring that Aspect's activities are conducted ethically and in accordance with the law.

The Board charts the direction of Aspect and monitors management's performance on behalf of Aspect's members and other stakeholders mentioned in the introduction. It accomplishes this by:

- ensuring a skilled, effective and diverse Board with appropriate operating standards and procedures;
- appointing, supporting, delegating to, evaluating and remunerating the Chief Executive Officer and providing for a management succession plan;
- setting the vision, and agreeing the strategic direction and objectives of Aspect with management;
- ensuring resources are available to achieve its goals by developing with management and approving Aspect's Strategic Plan, from which is developed its annual Action Plan and budget, and by regular monitoring of performance using the Corporate Score Card against these plans and the operating and capital budgets;
- advising, approving and monitoring management's activities and performance to ensure the Strategic Plan is being met;
- ensuring a risk management framework is in place to identify and manage those risks that threaten the reputation, earnings, assets and the basic capacity of Aspect;
- approving appropriate policies, guidelines and procedures and ensuring there is a compliance process in place to monitor adherence;
- ensuring the integrity of internal controls for financial and management information systems;
- maintaining adequate personal liability insurance for current and past Directors, and
- ensuring Aspect's activities are conducted ethically and transparently.

The authorities retained by the Board are:

- the appointment, evaluation and remuneration of the Chief Executive Officer:
- material transactions not in the ordinary course of business;



- the approval of the Strategic Plan and the operating and capital budgets;
- the approval of changes to the vision, mission and values;
- · Aspect's regulations;
- approval of the statutory accounts including the Directors' report;
- insurance policy renewals for Directors and Officers insurance, and
- ensuring appropriate performance of, and undertaking ongoing due diligence with, the external auditors.

Aspect's activities are regulated by the Corporations Act 2001 and other State and Commonwealth laws as applicable, including the NSW Charitable Fundraising Act 1991.

### **Role of Management**

The Board delegates responsibility for day-to-day management of Aspect's activities to the Chief Executive Officer. Primarily the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementing the Strategic Plan approved by the Board.

The Chief Executive Officer is appointed by the Board. Contractual, remuneration and other matters related to the Chief Executive Officer's appointment are reviewed by the Nominations & Remuneration Committee. The Board Chair is the Board's principal formal contact with the Chief Executive Officer, however the Chief Executive Officer has unrestricted access to all Board Members and vice versa. The Chief Executive Officer leads the Executive.

The Executive comprises:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Executive Director, Community Services & People
- Executive Director, Education & Research
- Director, Children, Young People & Families
- · Director, Community Service Development
- Director, Education Development & Research
- Director, Finance, Property & IT
- Director, Positive Partnerships
- Director, Relationship Fundraising & Communications
- Director, Schools

#### Role of the Board Chair

The Board elects annually the Board Chair and the other office bearers of Aspect as set out in the Constitution.

The key internal roles of the Board Chair are to:

- · lead and facilitate the Board;
- ensure the Board is focused on achieving the vision, mission and strategic goals of Aspect;
- ensure that no one has excessive influence;
- maintain a professional working relationship and be the Board's formal point of contact with the Chief Executive Officer;
- set the agenda for each Board meeting, in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer;
- ensure the Board carries out appropriate assessments of Board performance, and
- ensure meetings are conducted effectively and that the minutes are signed as a true and correct record.

The main external roles of the Board Chair are to:

- represent the Board and Aspect, as appropriate, to its various stakeholders:
- act as a spokesperson, where appropriate, in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer, and
- chair its legally required annual and other general meetings.

#### **Role of Individual Directors**

The role of individual Directors under general law and Corporations Law include to:

- · act in good faith;
- exercise powers for proper purpose;
- · retain their discretion in voting at meetings;
- avoid conflicts of interest:
- act honestly;
- act with the degree of care and diligence that a reasonable person in a like position in a corporation would exercise in the corporation's circumstances;
- not misuse information or their position, and
- not trade while insolvent.

Other roles include to:

 make reasonable inquiries to ensure that Aspect is operating efficiently, effectively and legally towards achieving its goals, and



• undertake diligent analysis of all proposals placed before the Board.

#### **Confidentiality**

A Director shall keep confidential all confidential information; and not disclose it to any person, except as required by law; with the prior written consent of Aspect; or to Aspect's agents, employees or advisers in the performance of the Director's responsibilities and duties.

No Director shall use any confidential information for the benefit of any person except Aspect.

If any confidential information is lawfully within the public domain then to the extent that the confidential information is public, a Director's obligations shall cease in respect of that confidential information.

If there is uncertainty as to whether any information is confidential information; or any confidential information is lawfully within the public domain, then that information is deemed to be confidential information and is not within the public domain, unless the Director is advised by the Board in writing to the contrary.

A Director shall maintain proper and secure custody of all confidential information; and use his or her best endeavours to prevent the use or disclosure of the confidential information by third parties.

A Director shall immediately deliver to Aspect all confidential information that is physically capable of delivery when the person's term as a Director ceases; and at any time at the request of a person authorised by the Board. Instead of delivering confidential information, the Board may direct the Director to destroy confidential information and certify in writing to Aspect that the confidential information has been destroyed. The Board may direct that confidential information contained in computer software or data be destroyed by erasing it from the magnetic media on which it is stored so that the information cannot be recovered or reconstructed.

A former Director is able to have access to viewing a Board record if circumstance arose where he/she was required to comment on a past Board event, for example, in a legal matter:

A Director must not make any copy or summary of any confidential information, except if required to do so in the course of his or her duties as a Director. If a Director is required to make a copy or summary of confidential information in the course of the Director's duties and functions as a Director, the copy or summary belongs to Aspect.

A Director shall comply with these obligations regarding confidentiality at all times during and after that person's term as a Director.

#### **Conflicts of Interests**

The common law fiduciary duty of Directors is to act honestly and in the best interests of Aspect. This also overlaps with the Corporations Law that includes requirements that Directors not misuse position or information to gain an unfair advantage, act honestly and disclose conflicts of interest.

Potential conflicts of interest may include:

- a contract with Aspect;
- using confidential information for personal gain, and
- profiting from an opportunity that rightfully belongs to Aspect.

To manage conflicts of interests for Directors, the following guidelines are to be adhered to:

- Declare existing or potential conflicts to the Company Secretary.
- When a conflict of interest arises immediately advise the Board Chair in the boardroom.
- Directors who have a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the matter for discussion may, with the consent of the Chair, be present while the vote is taken.
- No financial or other benefit can be given to a related party of the Director unless approved by the Board.
- The Company Secretary shall ensure that a register of Interests is maintained.

Further to ensure their independence and absence of conflicts of interest, Directors may not be current employees of Aspect, or employed by Aspect within the last two years.

#### **Board Composition and Size**

Under Aspect's Constitution there can be up to ten Member-elected Directors for a term of three years. Also the Board can appoint up to two Boardappointed Directors.

At least one third of Member-elected Directors must retire from office at the Annual General Meeting each year; however, such retiring Directors are eligible for re-election. This is subject to Clause 13.1(d) of the Constitution which states that no Member-elected Director will have his/her term automatically expire more than once in every three years.



The term of Board-appointed Directors is for twelve months but the Board may re-appoint a Boardappointed Director for further twelve month terms.

Directors appointed to fill casual vacancies must submit to election at the next general meeting.

The attributes that Directors should bring to the Board include sound business judgement and a performance focus, empathy for people with an ASD and their families, broad strategic thinking, a collegiate and team playing approach, a philosophical commitment to the objectives of Aspect, a willingness and capability to devote the required time to the Board's affairs, and undoubted reputation and integrity.

# Nominations and Appointment of New Directors

No person except a Member-elected Director whose tenure has expired or a person recommended by the Board for election, is eligible for election to the office of Member-elected Director at any meeting unless:

- the prospective eligible candidate for the position of Member-elected Director, or
- any member intending to nominate a prospective eligible candidate for the position of Memberelected Director;

has at least 28 clear days before the General Meeting sent to the Secretary a notice in writing duly signed by two other members signifying the nominee's candidature for the office or the intention of such eligible candidate to nominate for the office of Member-elected Director. Notice of each and every candidature must be forwarded to all Members not less than 21 days prior to the meeting at which an election is to take place.

The Company Secretary advises members annually on the process they need to follow if they wish to nominate for the position of Member-elected Director.

Members wishing to nominate for the Board are encouraged to contact the Board Chair first so that a meeting can be arranged between the nominee, the Board Chair and at least one other Director to discuss the role and consider its rights and responsibilities. Not only is the Board looking for new Directors from time to time it is also wanting to ensure that new Directors will be prepared to become part of an effective team governing the organisation.

The Board aims to achieve a mix of qualifications, skills and experience, by taking into account the existing diversity of experience in the current Board and the strategic direction and progress of Aspect.

New Directors are required to undertake an induction of the Board and Aspect, its issues, current concerns, staff and financial position. This induction process may include meetings with Aspect's Executive, and may include Australian Institute of Company Directors training on board responsibilities and obligations, or other such training considered appropriate.

The current composition of the Board and Board Committees, together with background details on each Director, is set out in Aspect's annual report and on Aspect's web site.

#### **Directors' Indemnity and Insurance Cover**

Aspect's Constitution provides an indemnity to present and past Directors. As with other insurable risks, Aspect has insured Directors and officers against liabilities incurred by such a person in connection with the performance by that person of his or her position with Aspect except for a liability arising out of conduct involving wilful breach of duty or contravention of the Corporations Law.

#### Meetings of the Board and their Conduct

The Board meets eight times each year. The Board decides on an annual schedule of major items that are considered over the eight meetings along with regular items to monitor the organisation.

Meeting agendas are determined by the Board Chair in consultation with the CEO to ensure adequate coverage of strategic, financial and operating matters throughout the year. Details of meetings and attendances are set out in Aspect's annual report.

#### **Meeting Procedures**

To ensure Board meetings are constructive, the Board has adopted the following procedures:

- proper and timely notice of meetings is provided to all Directors with an outline of the proposed business;
- Board papers, that include clear resolutions on all papers for decision, are provided at least five days in advance;
- the majority of the Board's time is spent on strategic issues rather than the day-to-day responsibilities of management;
- an action schedule is maintained to ensure that all outstanding items or progress on implementation of approvals are dealt with;
- · a quorum is maintained throughout the meeting;
- complete focus is maintained on the issue during debate;



- debate occurs because it is essential to ensure the right decisions;
- open questions are posed to encourage debate;
- Board meetings are chaired and facilitated by the Board Chair;
- within 5 working days, the minutes are produced and circulated to Directors;
- minutes are recorded in such a way that resolutions can actioned and monitored;
- the Board Chair and CEO should not circumvent the process of the Board meeting, and
- the minutes of each Board meeting are approved by the Board as true and correct record of the meeting at the next Board meeting

#### **Board Decision Making**

The Board when making a decision may need to take into account a number of factors including:

- their duties and responsibilities as Directors;
- · strategic fit;
- · ethical fit;
- · financial considerations;
- · strategic and operational risks;
- resource availability (internal/external and alternative use of resources);
- · political impacts;
- · key drivers and sensitivities;
- the inclusion of third party information on key assumptions;
- synergy effect for the business as a whole;
- community and stakeholder's perception of the decision;
- contingency plans in place to deal with unexpected developments, and
- monitoring and accountability mechanisms (if approved) incorporating key milestones and anticipated benefits.

The objective of the evaluation process is to ensure an appropriate balance of risk and return is achieved in the context of the operation of Aspect and what it stands for:

Although formal meeting practices can assist the efficient conduct of a meeting, such practices on the

Aspect Board are not used to stifle discussion or push for a particular outcome which is obviously not accepted generally. In general voting or calling for motions is not a practice encouraged in the Aspect Board as such practices can risk factionalising the Board.

In the circumstance where there is not a consensus commitment to an outcome or where there is the situation where voting is required and/or directors want to record an abstention, the Board Chair clarifies what information is required to help the undecided directors and allow time for further discussion and consultation in order to reach a consensus decision. Once a consensus decision is reached Directors are expected to honour the decision both in and outside the Board.

#### Representation of Aspect

The Board expects the Chief Executive Officer to speak for Aspect and to manage communications with members, other stakeholders and the community generally. Directors other than the Board Chair and the Chief Executive Officer do not comment publicly on Aspect issues, unless specifically delegated.

The Board Chair and the Chief Executive Officer would normally confer with each other before making a significant public comment. Copies of all significant press releases are forwarded to Directors on the day of release.

Directors are expected to keep the Board Chair and the Chief Executive Officer informed of any significant feedback about Aspect they receive from their networks.

#### Media

Aspect's media policy aims to maximise opportunities for coverage of activities and achievements and to minimise adverse publicity and any misleading information.

On significant media issues for Aspect, the Chief Executive Officer is the primary spokesperson. The Chief Executive Officer may from time to time authorise other members of the Executive and subject specialists to act as spokespersons on particular issues.

The Board Chair or Board delegate in consultation with the CEO will issue statements to the media when appropriate.

#### The Review of Board Performance

The Board undertakes a review of its performance from time to time to ensure that the expectations of



all Directors are aligned, to confirm areas of successful performance and to identify those areas requiring further improvement as part of Aspect's commitment to continuous improvement throughout the organisation.

The review of Board performance includes:

- Directors' understanding of Aspect's goals and policies, the governance statement and conflicts of interest;
- · performance in relation to ethics, integrity and probity;
- · compliance with legislation;
- Board communication and communication between the Board and Senior Management, and
- Board composition, committee structure, workload and procedures to ensure effective decision making.

A range of methods are available to the Board for such performance review. They can include:

- asking Directors to anonymously write comments on agreed parameters and send to a third party for correlation and presentation to the Board Chair and then to the whole Board for discussion;
- asking Directors to personally review their performance against agreed parameters and then having a Board discussion or an individual meeting with the Board Chair;
- the Board Chair having an individual discussion with each Director on agreed areas, and
- retaining an external facilitator to undertake a review process.

#### **BOARD COMMITTEES**

The Board has established a number of Standing Committees to assist in the execution of the Board's responsibilities. These Committees are a recognition that some areas of Aspect's activities require more concentrated effort and specialist skills and are an efficient use of Board resources. They do not abrogate any Director from his/her responsibilities and Committees are obliged to properly inform the full Board of their activities.

Each Board Committee is chaired by a Board Director. There is at least one other Board Director on each Committee. Committee membership must be approved by the Board. Board Directors and external individuals invited by the Board on to the Committee are members of the Committee and have the right to

vote on the Committee, while members of staff are only in attendance, provide advice to the Committee and do not have the right to vote on any matter. Committee meetings follow the same meeting procedures set out for the Board in the Constitution, for example a quorum is 50% of membership.

At present the Board has four Standing Committees.

They are:

- · Finance & Audit Committee,
- Client Services Committee.
- · Research Committee, and
- Nominations & Remuneration Committee.

From time to time the Board may also establish ad hoc committees to assist with specific issues or projects. Individual Committee charters are regularly reviewed by the Board. The terms of reference for each Standing Committee are set out in Aspect's Regulations which are available on Aspect's website. Standing Committee meetings and attendances by Directors are set out in Aspect's annual report.

#### **REMUNERATION**

No Directors receive remuneration from Aspect. Out of pocket expenses relating to their director activities may be reimbursed by Aspect. The Chief Executive Officer's remuneration is governed by a contract of employment.

Aspect's Corporate Governance Statement was approved by the Board on 30 August 2006.

It was updated on 30 April 2007, 21 August 2007, 10 September 2008 and 30 April 2009 to include any administrative or Board-approved changes.

It was most recently updated on 17 May 2010.



#### **Board Committees**

Aspect's Board has four Standing Committees which overview the organisation. Each Board Committee is chaired by a Board Director and the Committee membership is approved by the Board.

The Board thanks the members of the committees for their contribution and commitment to this important task.

The Membership of Aspect's Committees as at 30 April 2010 were:

#### Finance & Audit Committee

Rob Brown (Chair)
David Foster
Malcolm McEwen
Keith Perkin

#### Client Services Committee

Robert Pesavento (Chair) Jenny Young

Independents
Lisa Beavan
Associate Professor David Evans
Gerry Gray
Ana Robinson

#### Research Committee

Dr David Starte (Chair) Malcolm McEwen

Independents

Dr Mark Carter

Professor Stewart Einfeld

Associate Professor David Evans

Dr Chris Kilham

Professor Trevor Parmenter

Associate Professor Jacqui Roberts

Dr Natalie Silove

Dr Katrina Williams

#### Nominations & Remuneration Committee

Peter Werner (Chair) Malcolm McEwen Keith Perkin





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# Images from the Asia Pacific Autism Conference 2009 (APAC 09)

The following photographs are of the keynote speakers and dignitaries who attended APAC 09.



Dr Eric Fombonne (Canada), Judy Brewer and The Hon Bill Shorten MP (Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services)



Australian Idol finalist Thanh Bui and the children from St Lucy's school singing 'Through My Eyes' (a song released especially for APAC 09) at the opening ceremony



John Doyle (Aspect Patron), The Hon. Paul Lynch, MP (Minister for Disability Services) and Adrian Ford (Aspect CEO)



Thorkil Sonne (Denmark)



Professor Francesca Happé (UK)



Adjunct Associate Professor Tony Attwood



Professor Patricia Howlin (UK)



# Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)

(A company limited by guarantee)
ABN 12 000 637 267

Concise Financial Report for the year ended 31 December 2009



# Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) (A company limited by guarantee) Directors' Report

The Directors present their report together with the financial report of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) for the year ended 31 December 2009 and the auditors' report thereon.

#### **Directors**

The Directors of Aspect in office at any time during, or since the year ended 31 December 2009 are:

**Keith PERKIN**, [Board Chair] B.Bus, CPA, is the CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia Limited. Keith has an extensive commercial background primarily in the fields of management and marketing, having held senior positions in BP, Dymocks and Retravision. Keith joined the Board in 2004, is a member of the Finance & Audit Committee and the Nominations and Remuneration Committee and is a Member-elected Director.

**Robert PESAVENTO** [Deputy Board Chair] is the General Manager, Customer Engineering with SingTel Optus Pty Limited. Robert is the father of a son with an autism spectrum disorder. Robert joined the Board in 1999 and chairs the Client Services Committee. Robert is a Life Member of Aspect and a Member-elected Director.

Robert J. BROWN, [Honorary Treasurer] B.Sc., M.A., Grad. Dip. Applied Finance is Chief Executive Officer of specialist investment administration company Ausmaq, a wholly owned subsidiary of National Australia Bank. Rob is also an active participant within the institutional investment and services sector with director and working group roles in peak industry bodies. Rob has a close affinity with the needs of children with learning difficulties, and Rob's wife, Diane has a long-standing professional interest in special education. Rob joined the Board in June 2008, has chaired the Finance & Audit Committee since March 2009 and is a member of the Client Services Committee. Rob is a Member-elected Director.

Weston RYAN, [former Honorary Treasurer] B.Bus, F.C.A. is a partner in the accounting firm, Einfeld Symonds Vince where he advises on Australian and international tax issues. Weston's interests include professional education. He teaches in Australia, Singapore and Malaysia. His interest in Aspect developed from friends with children who have an autism spectrum disorder. Weston joined the Board in 2003. He was the Treasurer and chair of the Finance & Audit Committee until March 2009. Weston, who was a Member-elected Director, resigned from the Board in May, 2009. Weston is a Life Member of Aspect.

**David DOWN**, B.E. (Chem) Hons is in a senior management role with the rail company, Queensland Rail and is a chemical engineer by profession. He is the father of two children, one of whom has an autism spectrum disorder and joined the Board in 2007. David, who was a Board-appointed Director and a member of the Client Services Committee, resigned from the Board in September, 2009.

**David EPPER,** A.N.Z.I.I.P. (Senior Assoc.) is the Managing Director of Accident and Health International Underwriting Pty Limited. He joined the Board in 2001. He has a son with an autism spectrum disorder. David is a Life Member of Aspect and is a Member-elected Director.

**David FOSTER,** B.E., F.I.E. (Aust), is a retired engineer with management experience with Pacific Power. As the parent of an adult son with an autism spectrum disorder, he is interested in progressive development of plans for growing numbers of adults who have autism spectrum disorders. David joined the Board in 1975 and is a member of the Finance & Audit Committee. He also represents the Board on the Corporate Risk Management Committee. David is a Life Governor of Aspect and is a Member-elected Director.

**Jonathan HARRIS,** LLB; Specialist in Business Law is a Lawyer and Managing Partner of Harris Freidman Hyde Page. As the parent of a son with an autism spectrum disorder, he is interested in estate planning issues for family members with a disability and post school options for people with an ASD. Jonathan who was a Member-elected Director resigned from the Board in March 2010.



# Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) (A company limited by guarantee) Directors' Report

#### **Directors** (continued)

**Malcolm McEWEN**, B.Bus., M.Bus., is an executive search and selection consultant with Carmichael Fisher. He joined the Board in 2004. Malcolm is married with two children, one of whom has an autism spectrum disorder. He is a member of the Finance & Audit Committee, the Nominations & Remuneration Committee and the Research Committee. Malcolm is a Member-elected Director:

**Dr David STARTE,** M.B.B.S., M.R.C.P. (UK), F.R.A.C.P. is the Service Director at the Chatswood Assessment Centre and a Clinical Associate Lecturer in the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, School of Medicine, University of Sydney. He joined the Board in 2004 and his interests include developmental paediatrics, including autism spectrum disorders, ADHD, and audiology including universal newborn screening and auditory processing. David chairs the Research Committee and is a Member-elected Director.

**Peter WERNER**, B.Comm. is an executive search consultant and a Director of Richfield Consulting and Carbon Careers. He has worked in the banking industry. He is the father of three children, one of whom has an autism spectrum disorder. Peter joined the Board in 2001. He chairs the Nominations & Remuneration Committee and was a former Chair of the Board. Peter is a Life Governor of Aspect and is a Member-elected Director.

**Jeanie YOUNG** (known as Jenny), B.Bus, is the Executive Director, Consumer Marketing at Telstra Corporation Limited. Jenny has a son with an autism spectrum disorder. Jenny joined the Board in March 2010 filling a casual vacancy for a Member-elected Director.

Directors have been in office since the start of the financial year to the date of this report unless otherwise stated.

#### Directors' meetings

	Directors' Meetings		Finance & Audit Committee		Client Services Committee		Research Committee		Nominations & Remuneration Committee	
	No. of Meetings attended	No. of Meetings held	No. of Meetings attended	No. of Meetings held att	No. of Meetings ended	No. of Meetings held	No. of Meetings attended	No. of Meetings held	No. of Meetings attended	No. of Meetings held
Mr K Perkin	7	8	7	10	-	_	-	-	I	I
Mr R Pesavento	6	8	-	-	3	3	-	_	-	_
Mr R Brown	4	8	10	10	I	I	-	_	-	_
Mr W Ryan	2	3	3	4	-	_	-	_	-	_
Mr D Down	4	5	-	-	I	I	-	_	-	_
Mr D Epper	4	8	-	-	-	-	-	_	-	_
Mr D Foster	8	8	10	10	-	-	-	_	-	_
Mr J Harris	4	8	-	-	-	-	-	_	-	_
Mr M McEwen	5	8	8	10	-	_	I	1	I	1
Dr D Starte	7	8	_	-	-	_	I	I	-	_
Mr PWerner	7	8	-	_	-	-	-	_	I	I

The number of directors' and committee meetings held during the time the director held office during the year.



# Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) (A company limited by guarantee) Directors' Report (continued)

#### Company secretary

The following person held the position of entity secretary at the end of the financial year:

Name & Qualifications

Appointment date:

Mr Adrian Ford (Fellow Aust. Inst. Co. Directors)

2000

#### Principal activities

The principal activities of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) are to provide a range of services to children, young people and adults with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). These include information services, diagnostic and assessment services, early intervention for young children, schools and educational outreach services for children and young people. Aspect provides community participation programs for adults with an ASD while it provides behaviour support programs for people with an ASD of all ages. A range of support services are provided to families of people with an ASD. The provision of training and consultation to other professionals and parents in ways of working with people with an ASD also continues as does Aspect's research program. Other than the transfer of its accommodation services to another disability service provider in early 2009, there were no significant changes in the nature of its activities during the year.

#### Financial result

The operating result for 2009 was a surplus of \$939,201 (2008: surplus \$397,539).

#### Dividends

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) has no share capital, as it is a company limited by guarantee. This means it is precluded from paying a dividend to its members.

#### Review of operations

The community's awareness of people with an autism spectrum disorder continues to rise. In response Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) continues to extend its services to try and meet this growing need.

Government grants continued to provide the major operational income for Aspect supported by fundraising and a contribution by clients' families for some of the services through a fee for service charge. Income from these three sources increased in 2009 to \$42,389,970 compared with \$31,573,102 in 2008.

Adversely impacted by the global financial crisis, Aspect's investment portfolio made a partial recovery improving from \$3,756,393 to \$4,078,030 during the course of the year. The prospect of increasing its value over the next five years appears sound.

#### State of affairs

In the opinion of the directors, there were no significant changes in the state of affairs of Aspect that occurred during the financial year under review not otherwise disclosed in the report or the financial statements.

#### Environmental regulation

Aspect is not subject to any significant environmental regulation under a law of Commonwealth or of a state or territory. However, the Board believes that Aspect has adequate systems in place for the management of its environmental requirements and is not aware of any breach of those environmental requirements as they apply to Aspect.

#### Events subsequent to balance date

There has not arisen in the interval between the end of the financial year and the date of this report any item, transaction or event of a material and unusual nature likely, in the opinion of the directors of Aspect to affect significantly the operations of Aspect, the results of the operations, or the state of affairs of Aspect, in subsequent financial years.



## Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) (A company limited by guarantee) Directors' Report (continued)

## Likely developments

Likely developments to the operations of Aspect and the expected results of those operations in future financial years have not been included in this report, as the inclusion of such information is likely to result in unreasonable prejudice to Aspect.

## Indemnification and insurance of officers

During the year Aspect took out an insurance policy to indemnify the directors and officers against all liabilities that may arise from their position as directors and officers of Aspect.

The insurance premiums relate to the costs and expenses incurred by the relevant officers in defending proceedings, whether civil or criminal and whatever their outcome and other liabilities that may arise from their position, with the exception of conduct involving a wilful breach of duty or improper use of information or position to gain a personal advantage.

Since the end of the previous year, Aspect has paid insurance premiums of \$2,637 (2008: \$2,250) in respect of all Directors' and Officers' Liability and Legal Expenses insurance contracts. The insurance contracts do not identify premiums paid in respect of the individual directors.

No insurance premiums have been paid or indemnification given in relation to the auditors of Aspect.

## Court proceedings

No person has applied for leave of court to bring proceedings on behalf of the company or intervened in any proceedings to which the company is a party for the purpose of taking responsibility on behalf of the company for all or any part of those proceedings.

The company was not a party to any such proceedings during the year.

## Auditor's Independence Declaration

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration as required under section 307C of the Corporation Act 2001 is set out on page 36, and forms part of this report.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors:

Keith Perkin

Board Chair

Dated this 15th day of April 2010 at Sydney.





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## Auditor's Independence Declaration To the Directors of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)

In accordance with the requirements of section 307C of the Corporations Act 2001, as lead auditor for the audit of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) for the year ended 31 December 2009, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- a no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of the Corporations Act 2001 in relation to the audit; and
- b no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

GRANT THORNTON NSW Chartered Accountants

C F Farley Partner

Sydney, 15 April 2010

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## Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) (A company limited by guarantee) Statement of Comprehensive Income For the year ended 31 December 2009

	Note	2009 \$	2008 \$
Revenue from rendering of services		4,390,847	3,275,075
Federal/State grants and salary subsidies		36,657,814	26,583,618
Government Capital Grants		2,398,000	169,709
Fundraising		1,341,309	1,714,409
Other revenue	-	550,405	764,095
Total revenue	3 .	45,338,375	32,506,906
Employee expenses		(30,899,162)	(25,016,593)
Transportation costs		(2,037,469)	(1,267,985)
Insurance expense		(748,803)	(550,007)
Depreciation and amortisation expenses		(563,366)	(398,184)
Finance costs		(22,444)	(18,951)
Services		(5,744,610)	(1,514,405)
Other expenses from ordinary activities	-	(4,383,320)	(3,343,242)
Surplus for the Year	-	939,201	397,539
Other Comprehensive Income			
Net gain / (loss) on revaluation of available for sale financial instruments	-	283,441	(1,874,613)
Other Comprehensive Income / (Loss) for the Year		283,441	(1,874,613)
Total Comprehensive Income / (Loss) for the Year	-	1,222,642	(1,477,074)

The accompanying notes form part of the concise report.



## Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) (A company limited by guarantee) Statement of Financial Position As at 31 December 2009

	2009 \$	2008
Current assets	•	
Cash and cash equivalents Trade and other receivables Other financial assets Other assets	1,386,329 1,522,982 700,832 650,126	900,223 3,753,020 3,237,160 357,576
Total current assets	4,260,269	8,247,979
Non-current assets Other financial assets Property, plant and equipment Total non-current assets	4,078,030 9,381,337 13,459,367	3,756,393 6,334,098 10,090,491
Total assets	17,719,636	18,338,470
Current liabilities Trade and other payables Short term borrowings Short term provisions	6,285,705 75,024 913,577	10,054,258 36,497 881,928
Total current liabilities	7,274,306	10,972,683
Non-current liabilities Long term borrowings Long term provisions	1,691,010 1,909,204	166,391 1,576,922
Total non-current liabilities	3,600,214	1,743,313
Total liabilities	10,874,520	12,715,996
Net assets	6,845,116	5,622,474
Equity Reserves Accumulated surplus	(1,142,334) 7,987,450	(1,425,775) 7,048,249
Total equity	6,845,116	5,622,474

The accompanying notes form part of the concise report.



## Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) (A company limited by guarantee) Statement of Changes in Equity For the year ended 31 December 2009

	Asset Accum revaluation Surp reserve	ulated	Total
Balance at I January 2009	448,838	6,650,710	7,099,548
Total Comprehensive income/(loss) for the year	(1,874,613)	397,539	(1,477,074)
Balance at 31 December 2009	(1,425,775)	7,048,249	5,622,474
Total Comprehensive income / (loss) for the year	283,441	939,201	1,222,642
Balance at 31 December 2009	(1,142,334)	7,987,450	6,845,116

The accompanying notes form part of the concise report.



## Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) (A company limited by guarantee) Statement of Cash Flows For the year ended 31 December 2009

	2009	2008
	\$	\$
Cash flows from operating activities		
Receipts from customers and grants	41,604,805	33,792,170
Payments to suppliers and employees	(42,247,075)	(31,319,095)
Interest received	188,811	390,004
Dividend received	221,939	372,388
Interest paid	(22,444)	(18,951)
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities	(253,964)	3,216,516
Cash flows from investing activities		
Proceeds on disposal of investments	968,228	999,914
Payments for investments	(640,153)	(1,085,153)
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(3,687,479)	(3,131,446)
Net cash used in investing activities	(3,359,404)	(3,216,685)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Proceeds from borrowings	1,600,000	_
Repayment of borrowings	(36,854)	(29,250)
repayment of borrowings	(50,057)	(27,230)
Net cash provided by financing activities	1,563,146	(29,250)
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents held	(2,050,222)	(29,419)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	4,137,383	4,166,802
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	2,087,161	4,137,383

The accompany notes from part of the concise report.



Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)
(A company limited by guarantee)
Discussion and Analysis
For the year ended 31 December 2009

## Discussion and Analysis of the Statement of Comprehensive Income

Aspect's income for 2009 increased by 39% to \$45,338,375 (2008: \$32,506,906). This movement was due to a 46% increase in government grants and subsidies during 2009 of \$12,302,487. This was the result of the continued growth of Aspect's schools program for children and young people with an autism spectrum disorder and the commencement of new funding initiatives. The National Training Program generated \$8,181,697 and the Federal government Better Education Revolution (BER) capital funding provided \$2,398,000 in 2009. Fundraising, including bequests, generated a net result of \$677,277 (2008: \$1,126,109).

Total expenses increased 38% during the year mainly as a result of a general increase in salaries (increase of \$5,528,945 to \$28,683,186), superannuation expenses (increase of \$353,624 to \$2,215,976) and consultants (increase of \$3,244,478 to \$4,052,693). The rise in costs was largely offset by the new funding received for the National Training Program.

The net effects of the increases in income and expenditure combined to produce an operating surplus of \$939,201 compared with a surplus of \$397,539 in 2008.

## Discussion and Analysis of the Balance Sheet

Aspect's net assets increased by 22% to \$6,845,116 during the year.

Aspect's total assets decreased by 3% to \$17,719,636 (2008:\$18,338,470). Increase in Property, Plant & Equipment throughout the year (\$3,047,239) was offset by the \$2,536,328 decline in the Other current financial assets (i.e. Tactical Portfolio). Debtors decreased by \$2,230,038 due to the National Training Program 2008 funding of \$3.6 million not being paid until January 2009.

Total liabilities of Aspect decreased by 14% to \$10,874,520 (2008: \$12,715,996). While payables decreased by \$3,768,553 to \$6,285,705, which mainly relates to Government Subsidies paid in advance, Long term borrowings increased by \$1,524,619 with the establishment of a margin loan to fund the construction of the Vern Barnett School project.

## Discussion and Analysis of Statement of Changes in Equity

Aspect's investment portfolio was greatly impacted by the Global Financial Crisis in the first quarter but has slowly recovered during the course of the year, with the exception of direct property allocations. The total investment portfolio increased from \$3,756,393 to \$4,078,030 as at 31 December 2009 and recorded a positive revaluation of \$283,441. A review of the portfolio in February 2010 indicated no apparent impairment and the prospect of recovering its value over the next five years appears sound.

## Discussion and Analysis of the Cash Flow Statement

Cash balances declined by \$2,050,222 to \$2,087,161 due to the operating deficit of \$1,460,161 (Surplus \$939,201 less capital income of \$2,399,364) and the spending of \$3,687,479 on Property, Plant & Equipment. In support of Aspect's significant building program, a margin loan of \$1,600,000 was established and secured against the investment portfolio; and \$650,000 was withdrawn from the investment portfolio.



## Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) (A company limited by guarantee) Notes to and forming part of the concise financial report For the year ended 31 December 2009

## Note I Basis of preparation of Concise Financial Report

The concise financial report is an extract for the full financial report for the year ended 31 December 2009. The concise financial report has been prepared in accordance with the Accounting Standard AASB 1039 "Concise Financial Reports" and the Corporations Act 2001.

The financial report of Aspect complies with all Australian Equivalents to International Financial Reporting Standards (AIFRS) in their entirety. All amounts are presented in Australian dollars.

The financial statements and specific disclosures required by AASB 1039 have been derived from, and are consistent with, the Company's full financial report for the financial year. Other information included in the concise financial report is consistent with Aspect's full financial report. The concise financial report cannot be expected to provide as detailed an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of Aspect as the full financial report.

## (a) Impairment of Assets

At each reporting date, the company reviews the carrying values of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the Income Statement.

## Note 2 Full Financial Report

Further financial information can be obtained from the full financial report which is available, free of charge, on request from the Company's premises at Building I, Level 2, I4 Aquatic Drive, Frenchs Forrest or calling (02) 8977 8300 or email drenneberg@austismspectrum.org.au.



# Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) (A company limited by guarantee) Notes to and forming part of the concise financial report For the year ended 31 December 2009 (continued)

## Note 3 Revenue from ordinary activities

	2009	2008
	\$	\$
School and residence fees	1,772,705	1,660,795
Other Fee for Service	2,618,142	1,614,280
Federal grants	17,763,618	9,169,534
Government Capital grants	2,398,000	169,709
State grants and subsidies	18,894,196	17,414,084
Donations and bequests	403,456	561,705
Fundraising projects	937,853	1,152,704
Other revenue	550,405	764,095
Total revenue from ordinary activities	45,338,375	32,506,906

### Note 4 Dividends

Aspect has no share capital, as it is a company limited by guarantee. This means it is precluded from paying a dividend to its members.

## Note 5 Remuneration of Directors

The directors of the Company receive no remuneration.

## Note 6 Results of fundraising appeals

Gross proceeds from fundraising appeals	1,341,309	1,714,409
Less: Total costs of fundraising appeals	(664,032)	(588,300)
Net surplus obtained from fundraising appeals	677,277	1,126,109

## Note 7 Events after Balance Sheet date

There has not arisen in the interval between the end of the financial year and the date of this report any item, transaction or event of a material and unusual nature likely, in the opinion of the directors of Aspect to affect significantly the operations of Aspect, the results of the operations, or the state of affairs of Aspect, in subsequent financial years.

The financial report was authorised for issue on 15th April 2010 by the Board of Directors.



## Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) (A company limited by guarantee) Directors' Declaration

The Directors of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) declare that the concise financial report of the Company for the financial year ended 31 December 2009, as set out on pages 37 to 43:

- (a) complies with Accounting Standard AASB 1039: Concise Financial Reports; and
- (b) is an extract from the full financial report for the year ended 31 December 2009 and has been derived from and is consistent with the full financial report of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect).

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors:

K Perkin

Board Chair

Dated this 15th day of April 2010 at Sydney.





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Independent Auditor's Report
To the Members of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)

### Report on the concise financial report

The accompanying concise financial report of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) comprises the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2009, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended and related notes, derived from the audited financial report of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) for the year ended 31 December 2009 and the discussion and analysis. The concise financial report does not contain all the disclosures required by the Australian Accounting Standards.

## Directors responsibility for the concise financial report

The Directors are responsible for the preparation and presentation of the concise financial report in accordance with Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports, and the Corporations Act 2001. This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation of the concise financial report; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

## Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the concise financial report based on our audit procedures. We have conducted an independent audit, in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, of the financial report of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) for the year ended 31 December 2009. Our audit report on the financial report for the year was signed on 15 April 2010 and was not subject to any modification. The Australian Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report for the year is free from material misstatement.

Our procedures in respect of the concise financial report included testing that the information in the concise financial report is derived from, and is consistent with, the

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financial report for the year, and examination on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts, discussion and analysis, and other disclosures which were not directly derived from the financial report for the year. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the concise financial report complies with Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports and whether the discussion and analysis complies with the requirements laid down in AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

## Independence

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of the Corporations Act 2001.

## **Auditor's opinion**

In our opinion, the concise financial report, including the discussion and analysis of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) for the year ended 31 December 2009 complies with Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports.

GRANT THORNTON NSW Chartered Accountants

a + Thumber NSW

F Farley

Sydney, 15 April 2010



## **Glossary**

Aspect – The nickname for Autism Spectrum Australia

**ACEA** – Aspect Comprehensive Educational Approach. This is the philosophy which underpins the Aspect Schools

ADHC – Ageing, Disability and Home Care, part of the NSW government department of Human Services. Previous to 1 July 2009, known as the Department of Aging, Disability and Home Care (DADHC)

AIL - Aspect Autism Information Line

**APAC 09** – Asia Pacific Autism Conference. The inaugural conference was held in 2009, hence APAC 09

ARC - Australian Research Council

ASD - Autism Spectrum Disorder

**BER** – Building the Education Revolution, a federal funding program to upgrade school facilities. There are two programs within the BER: National School Pride (for equipment and minor upgrades) and Primary Schools for the 21st Century (for major building works)

CALD - culturally and linguistically diverse

**CEO** – Catholic Education Office

**DEEWR** – Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

**DET** – NSW Government Department of Education & Training

**ECIP** – Early Childhood Intervention Coordination Program

**FaHCSIA** – the federal department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

**HCWA** – the federal government's Helping Children with Autism Package

NDS – National Disability Services

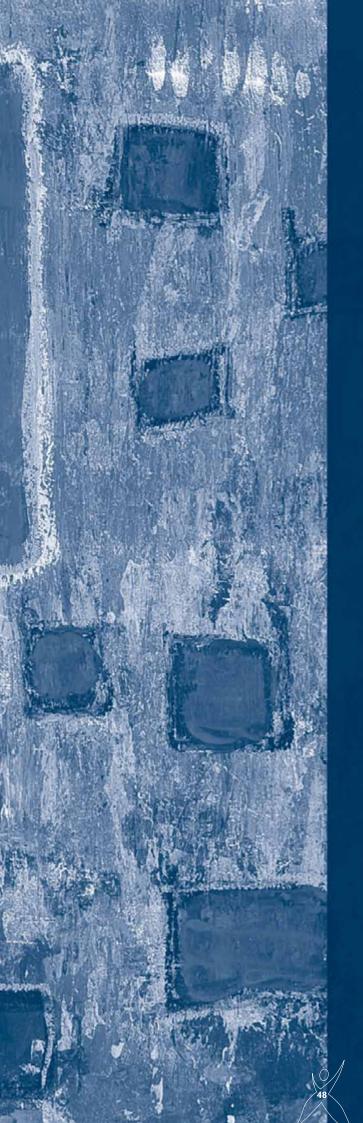
NISSA – National Independent Special Schools Association PRT – Pivotal Response Training, an educational approach

**Satellite class** – An Aspect autism-specific class based in a mainstream primary or high school

**SST** – Social Skills Training Program run by Autism Spectrum Australia

**TEACCH** – Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped CHildren, an educational approach





Aspect increased the number of places on offer in schools to a total of

612

8,053

people with an autism spectrum disorder were in contact with Aspect

Aspect's turnover was

\$45 39% million

Government funding increased by

\$12.3 million

Aspect launched a new website.

112,062

visits recorded from June 1 to December 31



## LIFE GOVERNORS

lan Barnett Jim Bryant Rick Damelian David Foster Gerry Harvey Betty Hatch L Rawstorne Ray Seager Andrew Vern Barnett AM MBE Peter Werner A Whelan

## LIFE MEMBERS

Roger Allen OAM George Andrews Julie Anthony AM OBE Mark Bowen Val Browne OAM Geraldine Bryant Arthur Byrne J C Crow Peter Dodd H Emanuel David Epper Mark Fogarty John Gerahty John Gibbs Patricia Gibbs Marie Goodare Nancy Graham-Taylor Sybil Joel Judith Johnson Olivia Keighley Joyce Kennedy Marion Kingston Errol Larbalestier P Mayne Michael McColm Marjorie McDonald OAM Tony McGrath AM Jill McGrath Shirley McIntosh Cath Mount Ron Mulock Claire O'Keefe Robert Pesavento Kathleen Pigram Ostilio Pisanu Gretchen Poiner A Polyblank D Robbins Jacqueline Roberts Weston Ryan Basil Sellers AM John Shand Jean Slaughter Paul C J Smith Margaret Stead David Stead Andrea Werner

Aspect Life Members Eileen Ward and Margaret Vernon passed away during 2009. We are forever grateful for their generous long term support, they will be missed.

