

*Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) Annual Report*  
for the year ending December 2016



*Celebrating 50 years of a different brilliant*



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

In preparing the annual report for the year ending December 2016, we have reduced our impact on the environment by retaining it on our website and producing only a limited number of copies in print.

Aspect is a company limited by guarantee, duly registered under the Corporations Act 2001.

Aspect is a public benevolent institution with deductible gift recipient status (DGR6966) as endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office.

In addition, Aspect holds NSW Charitable Fundraising Authority Number 10991, ACT Charitable Collection Authority Number 19000299, Victorian Fundraising Registration Number 10688, QLD Certificate of Registration as a Charity Number CH2466, WA Charitable Collections Licence CC21640 and SA Collections for Charitable Purposes Licence Number CCP2016. Aspect is also authorised to fundraise in Northern Territory and Tasmania.

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Our Annual General Meeting will be held at the State Library of NSW, Sydney, Australia on 30 May 2017 at 2.30 pm.

*Front cover: Architect Jim Bryant, Prime Minister Hon. William McMahon and Dr Andrew Vern Barnett at the opening of Aspect Vern Barnett School at Forestville in 1971.*

*This page: Margaret Vern Barnett (fourth from the right) and the Acacia Fundraising Committee in 1969.*





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## Our Inspiration

A different brilliant

## Our Vision

The best opportunities for people on the autism spectrum

## Our Mission

We develop person-centred solutions which are flexible, responsive and evidence-informed with people of all ages on the autism spectrum

## Our Values

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



## Our Work

We focus on the **strengths and interests** of people on the spectrum

We work in **partnership** with people on the spectrum, their families and their communities

We work to **understand** people on the spectrum from their perspective

Our approach is **autism-specific**

Our **research** focuses on **best practice**

We expect **positive change and progress**

Together we can achieve **positive outcomes**





# Message from the Chair

2016 was a special year for Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) as it marked our 50th birthday. The organisation commenced its life on 7 July 1966, known then as the Autistic Children's Association of NSW.

It was the passion and commitment of Aspect's six founding families and their supporters that created a place for people on the spectrum in New South Wales, led by the remarkable Andrew and Margaret Vern Barnett who were prepared to search for new answers at a time when autism was still thought to be a form of infantile schizophrenia and where children and adults on the spectrum were placed in asylums.

Andrew believed that education, specifically focused and adapted to the needs of the child on the spectrum was the answer. He opened Aspect's first school in 1967 and with the generous support of the community and the NSW and federal governments opened the Forestville school - now known as the Aspect Vern Barnett School - in 1971. What an enterprise that was - and more importantly - a radical and innovative experiment which has resulted in Aspect developing over these past 50 years one of the largest autism-specific school systems in the world, based on evidence-informed practice.

This and all the other services we now offer including diagnosis, early intervention, therapy services for all ages and a range of community supports for children and adults could not have happened without the unending support by parents and carers for their sons and daughters on the spectrum and as well as their support for this organisation.

In turn, because of their advocacy, governments have gradually increased their support for a wide range of services to people on the spectrum which has been the way services in Aspect have been delivered until now. While we continue to offer our schools program with the continued and necessary support from state and federal governments, we are in the middle of the biggest shakeup in the disability sector in Australia's history with the full implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) which commenced in July 2016. This brings an enormous opportunity to continue to grow Aspect's work across Australia whilst knowing that this growth will rely entirely on our relationships with each of our customers who choose to seek our autism-specific services and supports.

We were able to celebrate these achievements and contemplate what lies ahead at a formal lunch at the

Establishment in George St, Sydney on the day of Aspect's 50th anniversary - 7 July, 2016.

The lunch was chaired by Aspect's Patron, John Doyle AM with 100 guests including former patrons, Judy Brewer AO and the Hon. Tim Fischer AC. The story of Aspect was shared through a series of interviews by John with past significant Board Directors including Ian Barnett, Aspect's first solicitor and cousin of Andrew Vern Barnett, who attended the very first meeting of Aspect and has attended every Annual General Meeting since; David Foster, Aspect's longest serving Board Director from 1975 to 2013 and Peter Werner who was chair of the Board when its Constitution was completely revised and the organisation became known as Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect). Aspect's pictorial history was launched and the more recent history was recounted by Judy Brewer, CEO Adrian Ford and myself.

Other highlights of the 50th Anniversary year included:

- a new mass participation event, the "Walk for Autism" in April around World Autism Awareness Day which raised \$250,000;
- the 10th Annual Recognition Awards that recognised people throughout the autism community across the nation;
- the creation of the Spirit of Aspect awards presented for the first time at the 2016 AGM where particular staff were recognised for living Aspect's values;
- "1966 Parties" held at all sites in and around 7 July so that staff and service users could all participate in the 50th Anniversary celebrations wherever they were in Australia,
- the 30th Anniversary celebrations of the Aspect South Coast School,
- the 45th Anniversary celebrations of the Aspect Vern Barnett School, and
- the launch of the international publication Shining a Light on the Autism Spectrum written by Aspect staff, led by Dr Debra Costley, National Director, Aspect Practice and based on the We Belong research undertaken some years before by Anthony Warren, Aspect's then senior consultant.

Along with our many celebrations in 2016, the major event from a strategic perspective was the opening of the Aspect Treetop School at the beginning of Term 3 (25 July, 2016) in Ashford, Adelaide. This is Aspect's first regular service in South Australia and its ninth school, which is also the first outside of NSW. The school opened with 22 students following completion of Stage One of the site renovation,

and with the completion of Stage Two of the renovations in the second half of 2016, now has the capacity to accept 66 students.

The Aspect Treetop School is on the former Ashford Special School site generously leased on a peppercorn rent from the South Australian Government for 30 years. Importantly, Aspect was able to keep its commitment to the South Australian autism community and open on the day we had promised eighteen months prior, due to the expert refurbishment of Stage One of the site undertaken by Sarah Constructions of Adelaide. For a total cost of only \$1.3m five classrooms and the school's administration area were refurbished. This work was completed in nine weeks - on time and on budget. Stage Two which cost \$1.2m was again undertaken by Sarah Construction and was again completed on time and on budget. This generated a further six classrooms and some major works in water management of the site required by the local council. Aspect is very appreciative of the outstanding workmanship and strong commitment to this project by Sarah Constructions. The total capital costs were met by Aspect from its reserves generated through many years of fundraising and operational surpluses.

Sadly, Mark Schlosser passed away in 2016, after a long period of illness. Mark had been the former National Director, Aspect Individual Options and Families and had worked for Aspect from 2008 to 2015. Through the

generous support of his family, I am able to announce today the establishment of the Mark Schlosser Fellowship for Person-Centred Practice which will provide up to \$10,000 a year for the next five years to allow an Aspect staff member to further develop their knowledge and experience of person-centred practice with people on the spectrum. This is a wonderful opportunity created by Mark's family and is a fitting tribute to Mark's strong commitment to person-centred practice through the application of the principles of social justice that underlined his work.

Finally, my thanks to all my colleagues on the Board for their ongoing support and dedication to Aspect's governance and its continuing development. I want to thank particularly Peter Werner and Malcolm McEwen, who both completed their terms on the Board during the year. Each of them gave outstanding service to Aspect for more than a decade, including Peter's time as Chair of the Board during the pivotal years from 2004 to 2008 during which Aspect became Autism Spectrum Australia. My thanks also to the Executive and staff led by Adrian Ford who work with great dedication, energy and commitment for this wonderful organisation and who remain focused day in and day out on Aspect's vision - the best opportunities for people on the autism spectrum.



Julie Hamblin  
Chair of the Aspect Board





# Marcus & Khaleesi's story

**"With Marcus, we suspected something at 2 years old - it was quite typical, he wasn't hitting many milestones and he was quite introverted. He didn't want to mix socially with other people and communication was non-existent."**

Within six months of working with Aspect, Shaun and Marika had seen a huge change in their little boy. They found they could go anywhere and do anything with him. He no longer had problems sleeping and his sensory issues weren't affecting him nearly as much anymore.

"Eliza was doing all the occupational therapy with him. She was trying to understand all the inputs that were affecting him - all the sensory things that we weren't necessarily aware of," said Shaun.

Eliza introduced the family to a variety of techniques to incorporate into their lives, including placing visual aids around the house, to help Marcus learn and understand daily tasks more.

The specialist therapy that Marcus received from Aspect helped him develop the skills to cope with everyday life - including building a routine, going to new places, starting at school. It also equips parents with the confidence and knowledge to help their child reach their full potential.

Eliza has seen such an incredible difference in Marcus since she started working with him, she explains: "Marcus has done so well with his communication. He used to be completely non-verbal, but now he can ask for help and articulate what he wants, using pictures - and even some words. Then there's his playful streak. He often comes up to me, gives me a big hug and tries to start a game. Or he just cracks up laughing. Marcus is no longer so cut off from the world."

"From not being able to say anything, to now driving past McDonalds and Marcus saying 'I want chippies!' It's really good. We celebrate all the small little wins," said Shaun.

When Shaun and Marika's second child was diagnosed with autism, they made sure they accessed all the early intervention therapies available to them.

"We spotted it early with Khaleesi because we knew what to look for," explains Shaun. "Her speech was delayed, and she didn't interact socially. Then she started doing things repetitively and obsessively. That's when we knew we had a special little girl on our hands."

"We've been so lucky to get the support we needed for both our children. Aspect are the key part of their journey, the core part of their progression, they are our support team. Everything else is a supplement."





# Message from the Chief Executive Officer

In the celebratory year of 2016 the core strategies that drove Aspect's Business Plan were:

1. be person-centred, family-focused and customer-driven;
2. be the national autism service provider and knowledge leader for people of all ages on the autism spectrum, and
3. enter in strategic alliances with other organisations to build capability and reach.

In other words, the priorities were: (i) people on the spectrum, (ii) national service delivery and knowledge leadership and (iii) growing the organisation through strategic alliances.

This was a significant shift from the year before where the core strategies had been a mixture of focusing externally on growth and internally on improving processes and practices to strengthen Aspect's capability and sustainability while continuing to focus on people on the spectrum.

The new core strategies for 2016 were entirely outward facing. This was determined in part by the changing external environment with the commencement of the national rollout of the NDIS and Aspect's continued drive for growth as the national autism-specific service provider and knowledge leader.

In this new outward facing worldview by Aspect, people on the spectrum and their families remained at the centre of all that we did, with significant growth in service scope and reach evidenced by the following:

- Aspect received 13,476 enquiries, which was 3,000 more than in 2015.
- Aspect worked with 7,307 people on the spectrum as active clients compared to 5,962 the year before.
- Aspect provided 1,071 school places for students on the spectrum at its schools including satellite classes - nearly 50 more places than in 2015.
- 5,115 people registered for workshops provided by Aspect, which was 2,000 more than in 2015.
- Aspect worked with 2,590 people who were receiving individualised funding packages, 500 more than in 2015. The majority of these were children receiving therapy services, particularly early intervention.
- Most importantly, people on the spectrum and their families gave Aspect a Net Promoter Score, (that is, would you recommend Aspect's services to another person), of 79%, a 7 point improvement on 2015. This

meant that 79 people out of every 100 gave Aspect a satisfaction score of 9/10 or 10/10 - which is a very strong result in the new customer-focused world in which we now operate.

In order to meet this increased demand, Aspect's turnover grew by \$4m in 2016 to \$83m and employed more than 1100 staff. It provided daily services in NSW, Victoria, the ACT and from July in South Australia with the opening of the Aspect Treetop School.

As well Aspect provided services nationally through Positive Partnerships, a capacity building program funded by the Commonwealth Government for parents and carers of school-aged children on the spectrum along with teaching staff of children on the spectrum and through Aspect Practice, which provided workshops and consultancies based on Aspect's distinctive capabilities such as advanced offerings in positive behaviour support.

Major steps forward in service growth included Aspect gaining an additional \$4.9m for Positive Partnerships over the next three years from the Commonwealth Department of Education & Training. The focus is to work with diverse communities and rural and remote communities through the translation of the latest research findings into practice generated by Positive Partnerships and the work of the Autism Cooperative Research Centre.

A major event in 2016 was the Second National Aspect Autism in Education Conference which was held in Melbourne on 5 - 6 May at the Melbourne Convention Centre with 640 delegates - 200 more than the first conference held in Sydney in 2014. It confirmed Aspect's role as a knowledge leader in the field of autism and a significant contributor internationally in the field of autism education. The consistent feedback was that it was one of the best autism conferences ever, largely due to the inclusion of people on the spectrum throughout the conference events and activities. A number of initiatives were successfully trialled which will be replicated at the Asia Pacific Autism Conference 2017 (APAC 17) to be hosted by Aspect in Sydney at the new International Convention Centre at Darling Harbour on 7 - 9 September 2017.

Aspect entered into a strategic alliance with employment provider EPIC Assist in April, to develop and trial a fee for service model to provide mentoring and support services to people on the spectrum in an employment, education or training setting. These services could include



any or all of the following – development of individual plans, pre-employment mentoring, work readiness training, further education and post placement support once in employment. The program is being trialled in Melbourne and on the North Coast of NSW and gives Aspect an opportunity to be involved in the employment opportunities for people on the spectrum.

Aspect's diverse range of services and supports to people on the spectrum and their families were funded in the main by state, territory and the Commonwealth governments which provided \$69m in 2016. Aspect was also generously supported by the community of donors and supporters who gave an additional \$3.85m to support Aspect in projects not funded by governments. Aspect deeply appreciates the support of its many thousands of donors that allow Aspect to be innovative and continue to push the boundaries around what is best practice for people on the spectrum both through its research as well as by continuously learning through practice.

During 2016 Aspect was continuing to work on bringing together all our work from early intervention, the school years and adult life into one comprehensive approach. The "hard yards" were done last year and finalised in the first quarter of 2017 with the development of the Aspect Comprehensive Approach which is shown diagrammatically on the following page.

The approach has at its centre the autism-specific person-centred practice based on the Five Point Star developed by Autism Initiatives in the UK and licensed to Aspect for application Australia-wide. Person-centred practice focuses on understanding the uniqueness of each person on the spectrum across five areas based on the latest thinking and knowledge of autism. Around the practice are eight elements which have stemmed from work in Aspect Education and developed over the past fifteen years. Together they form the Aspect Comprehensive Approach.



\*Based on Autism Initiatives (UK) Five Point Star

In a year where so much of our focus was on the past and the journey Aspect had travelled to reach this point, it was very significant that serious new work emerged which looked forward to new ways of being with people on the spectrum which were responsive to the ever developing 21st century understanding of people on the autism spectrum and their families.

My sincere thanks to Julie Hamblin and the Board of Aspect for their continued thoughtful leadership and governance of Aspect and to all my colleagues on the staff of Aspect that remain so committed to doing the best of work for people on the spectrum and their families. My special thanks to my colleagues on the Executive who carry so readily both the responsibility and opportunity to lead the organisation day to day.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Adrian Ford".

Adrian Ford  
Chief Executive Officer









# Avalon's story

When 8 year old Avalon described school as "all blurry, the teacher sounds like she is going blah blah blah and I feel like my head is just going around and around," her mum Jill knew that she needed to do something about it.

In July 2016, Jill enrolled Avalon at Aspect Treetop School, Aspect's first school in South Australia.

"In a mainstream class, Avalon was unable to process information provided to the class, she felt confused, anxious and unsure of what she was supposed to be doing. She was stressed and exhausted at the end of the day from trying to cope in an environment where she felt misunderstood and left behind," says Jill.

"The Treetop School provides us with an opportunity to interact and develop friendships with other parents who understand the challenges a child with autism faces.

It is great to have regular communication with the teachers and understand what Avalon is learning about at school and support her learning at home.

But the most important thing is for Avalon to enjoy going to school, feel happy at the end of her day and actually look forward to going back the next day!" said Jill.

After her first day at Aspect Treetop School Avalon said, "It was awesome, I want to go back tomorrow & jump on the trampoline some more."

Jill is delighted with the new school. "We really couldn't have wished for a better start. The tremendous amount of work the whole staff team have put in is amazing. I feel very privileged to be a part of it. I couldn't be offering Avalon a better schooling option," said Jill.







# Treasurer's report

## Overview

Aspect had another strong year in 2016, highlighted by the launch in July of Aspect's first school in South Australia, Aspect Treetop School with a capital investment over \$2.65m. The strong surplus of \$0.68 million achieved in the 2016 financial year further enabled Aspect to grow its service coverage whilst continuing to prepare for the transition into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

During 2016, Aspect continued to develop its service offerings. We increased the total number of students in our schools by 40, including 22 students from Aspect Treetop School in Adelaide. At the end of the year, Aspect had 1,071 students registered in its schools. There is potential for Aspect to further triple its student numbers at the Aspect Treetop School following the completion of additional classrooms in early 2017. Aspect has also been successful in securing additional funding for Phase Three of the Positive Partnerships program of \$4.9m for Collaborative Initiatives, increasing the total program funding to \$22.9m. This program will run until June 2019 and enables Aspect to continue to contribute to and build on the existing autism-related support and skills for professionals and carers during the school years.

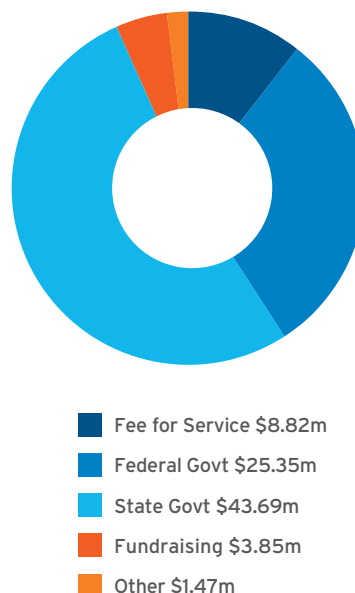
Total Comprehensive Income for the year was \$0.68 million, which was an excellent result and was nearly entirely related to the operating surplus for the period. In comparing the 2016 result to that of 2015, it should be noted that the 2015 result included a higher percentage of block grants as opposed to a higher percentage of individualised NDIS income in 2016. This trajectory is expected to continue in the next few years under the NDIS.

Under a more challenging funding environment, the strong result reflects the operating efficiency of our services and the continued tight management of our resources. This surplus provides us with some of the necessary funds to prepare Aspect for the full implementation of the NDIS as reflected in its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project aiming to deliver superior customer service and enhance efficiency across the whole organisation.

## Income

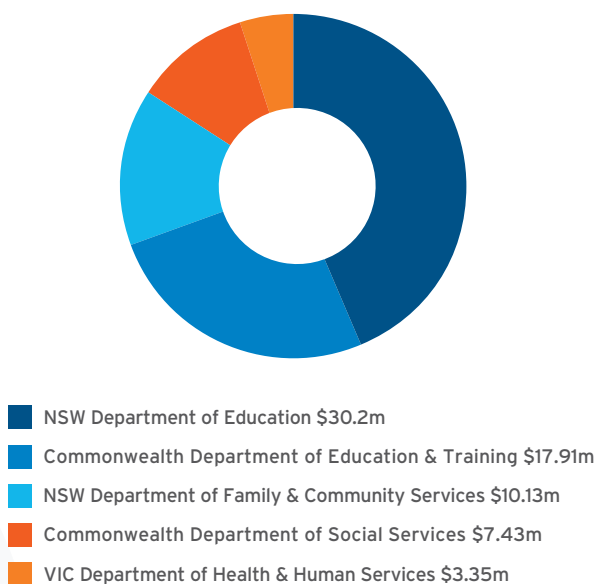
Total income for 2016 was \$83.16 million (Graph 1), an increase of 4.2% or \$3.31m from 2015. Government funding continued to be the major source of income for Aspect representing 83% percent of total income, which is consistent with 2015.

Graph 1:  
Source of funds



Government grant income increased by \$3.39 million to \$69.03 million (Graph 2) which reflected a higher level of government subsidies due to the increase in student numbers in both New South Wales and South Australia, the number of teachers across the school network and the expected increases in salary levels.

Graph 2:  
Source of Government funding



Total fees for services provided was \$8.81 million (\$8.82 million in 2015) which accounted for 10.59% (11.04% in 2015) of total income. This reflects a continuing shift from a



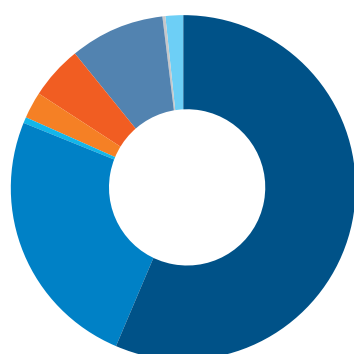
private fee for service model to the NDIS funding model as the momentum of the NDIS rollout builds.

Gross fundraising income for 2016 was \$3.85 million compared to \$4.23 million in 2015 reflecting a more volatile fundraising environment. We very much appreciated the 27,269 active donors who supported us during the year. Fundraising continues to represent a vitally important part of our income as it allows Aspect to provide services that are either not funded by government, or where the costs are not fully met.

## Expenses

Total expenses for 2016 increased by 4.2% over prior year to \$82.49 million in 2016 (Graph 3). Each business unit manager was responsible for their unit's expenditures and monitor expenses closely to ensure Aspect resources are being used efficiently.

**Graph 3:**  
Where the money was spent



By group, Aspect Education accounted for 56% of total expenses, which was consistent with 2015 (58%). The Shared Services administrative costs were slightly lower than 2015 at 8.9% (2015: 9.6%) of the total expenditure, which remains significantly lower than the sector average. There was an ongoing focus on administrative cost management during 2016 together with the recognition that some additional capacity was required in respect of Technology, Finance, Customer Services and Business

Solutions to accommodate the changes arising from the NDIS rollout.

By expense type, salary costs were \$67.5 million representing 81.8% of total expenditure, which was consistent with 2015 (80%). All business units managed their staffing mix to take account of the demand for services.

The overall total of other expenses excluding employee expenses decreased by \$1.28 million, from \$16.3 million in 2015 to \$15.02 million in 2016. Within this, total consultant costs represented the highest non-salary expense item at \$1.6 million, which was down from \$2.2 million in 2015. The majority of consultant expenses relate to the engagement of facilitators and learning specialists for workshops in the Positive Partnerships program. Phase Three of the Positive Partnerships program was commenced in late 2015 and the reduction in consultant costs reflected a slightly different operating model compared to Phase Two of the program.

Capital expenditure in 2016 was \$2.7 million compared to \$0.46 million in 2015. The substantial increase in capital expenditure in 2016 was mainly attributed to Aspect Treetop School in South Australia. The remainder relates to a range of improvements in Aspect's schools and technology connectivity across the whole organisation.

## Assets & Reserves

Overall net assets of the organisation increased by \$0.67 million to \$23.65 million in 2016 from \$22.98 million in 2015.

Aspect's Long Term Investment Reserve increased from \$3.42 million as at December 2015 to \$3.54 million at 31 December 2016. The portfolio is actively managed in conjunction with Aspect's investment advisers and the performance of the portfolio is measured against defined benchmarks that are aligned with the long-term strategic objectives, liquidity considerations and risk profile. The Long Term Reserve is intended to be used in the event where Aspect needs to fund a major long term Board approved capital investment that is consistent with Aspect's strategic plan or to address a major adverse financial event.

Aspect also maintains a Tactical Reserve to provide a funding base for medium term projects that require capital funding. The balance of this reserve as at 31 December 2016 was \$2 million, which was \$2.13 million down from 2015 largely related to the establishment of Aspect Treetop School in South Australia. The operating surplus for the

2016 year will be added to the Tactical Reserve when the financial statements have been formally adopted.

The cash position fluctuates throughout the year and is influenced by the timing of government grants and school fees which are invoiced in three instalments. Ending period cash and cash equivalent balances increased to \$23.3 million in 2016, up from \$19.7 million in 2015. The increment of \$3.6 million in cash was predominantly related to various government grants paid in advance.

Management continually focuses on cash flow and the improvement of operating margins in order to position itself well for the future as it prepares for the full implementation of the NDIS in 2019. In addition, Aspect has in place a bank overdraft facility and also maintains a level of liquidity in the investment portfolio to cover potential temporary shortfalls. The overdraft facility was not drawn upon during 2016.

The trade payables balance of \$13.4 million primarily reflects government grant income, which has been received in advance and will be expended on programs during 2017. The provisions balance, which totals \$9.05 million, mainly comprises of annual leave and long service leave liabilities accrued for staff members.

## Conclusion

A strong financial base is an essential element of delivering sustainable quality services. The robust financial result for 2016 enables Aspect to execute its strategic plan, increase the range of services and the geographical area in which it delivers its services. The continued phased implementation of the NDIS provides ongoing challenges and opportunities that Aspect can best respond to from a sound financial base. The Board and management recognise the fine margins that apply to the services we provide and have been continually developing tools and processes to enhance Aspect's ability to proactively engage with the changing environment.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Finance team within Aspect who have an ongoing focus to improve effective financial reporting processes during 2016, and to the Executive team as a whole for their continued focus on financial dimensions.

Finally, I offer my sincere thanks to my colleagues on the Board, particularly those on the Audit and Risk Committee for their support during the year.

Henry Capra  
Honorary Treasurer







*Aspect Treetop opened July 2016*

# 50 years of a different brilliant

In 2016, Autism Spectrum Australia celebrated its 50th Anniversary. We are pleased to share with you our long and proud history of providing support to children and adults on the autism spectrum and their families.

Aspect began on 7 July 1966, when a group of parents realised that existing educational facilities were unable to address the specific needs of children and adults on the spectrum.

Led by Dr Andrew and Mrs Margaret Vern Barnett (pictured here on the far right), these parents formed the Autistic Children's Association of NSW. Our first service was educational – a class of 6 children in a rented hall.



## 1960s



Above: Student Michael Stead with Principal Roger Allen at Blue Hills School in 1969.



Left: Aspect's first school site at a leased premises at Belrose Country Club.





Above: Students at Aspect Hunter School using a computer based spelling program in 1977.



Above: Diagnostic assessment using a one-way mirrored room in the 70s.



Left: Sir Lorimer Dods LVO Aspect's first Patron from 1966-1980 and Dr Andrew Vern Barnett at the opening of the Forestville Social Facilitation Unit in 1974.

Below: Students and staff at Aspect Vern Barnett School in 1981.



# 1970s & 1980s

The 70s and 80s was a period of substantial growth, with the opening of several new schools across NSW.



Above: Master of Ceremony Gordon Boyd with Quest Patroness Julie Anthony OBE at the Sydney Princess Quest Presentation Ball 1985.

# 1990s & 2000s

Throughout the 1990s, new services were introduced including early intervention, parent support and outreach services and our first satellite classes in mainstream schools were opened. In the 2000s we become Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect), committed to creating the best opportunities for people of all ages on the autism spectrum.



Above: Aspect Western Sydney School site under development in 1991.



Above: Banner held by the association's Executive Director Imelda Dodds and school teacher Chris Frost at the Charity Awareness Week walk in Martin Place in 1998.



Above: President of the Board Michael McColm at the Action for Autism Ball at the Sebel Town House in 1993.



Above: Aspect's first Comedy Night in 2004, with Fiona O'Loughlin, Sandman, Mikey Robins & Peter Berner.



Above: Patrons from 2000-2006, Judy Brewer AO and the Hon. Tim Fischer AC at Aspect's 40th anniversary dinner.





Above: Anita Russell, Principal Autism Consultant at Autism Resource Centre (Singapore). Aspect co-hosts the Asia Pacific Autism Conference 2009 (APAC 09) in Sydney.



Above: British artist Stephen Wiltshire MBE visited Aspect in 2010. Pictured above with Dr Trevor Clark with his Sydney cityscape drawn purely from memory.

Right: CEO Adrian Ford and Aspect Patron John Doyle AM at the opening of Aspect Victoria in 2010.



Above: Golf Day founder David Epper OAM and his wife Megan (couple far right) have helped raise more than \$1m with this event.



Above: Some of the action from the 2015 Aspect Combined Schools Sports Carnival – the world's biggest athletics carnival for children on the autism spectrum.

# In our 50th year

2016 has been an extraordinary year for Autism Spectrum Australia, with a number of new activities and events to commemorate the special anniversary year.



## 1 April

**10th Annual Recognition Awards ceremony** - recognising the achievements of people within the autism community.



## 2-9 April

### Walk for Autism

- our inaugural community participation fundraiser on World Autism Awareness Day.

**Celebrating 10 years as Patron of Aspect** - Chair of the Board Julie Hamblin, presents John Doyle with a gift in celebration of his 10 year anniversary, at Aspect's 50th Anniversary party.



## 5-6 May

**2nd Aspect Autism in Education Conference** - sharing ideas and best practices in Victoria.



## 7 July

**Aspect's 50th Anniversary party** - marking 50 years of a different brilliant.







## 17 August

**Official launch of the Aspect Treetop School** - our very first school in SA.



## 7-11 November

**Sharing the ACAE approach** with Cana School in Guangzhou, China.



## 15 September

**30th Anniversary of the opening of Aspect South Coast School** - Aspect's Thomas Kuzma, Lord Mayor Gordon Bradbury, Bruce Rowles, School Principal at the special gala dinner fundraiser.



## 25 November

**45th Anniversary of the opening of Aspect Vern Barnett School** - a collection of artworks created by students.



## 17 October

**Aspect Research Book Launch** - 'Shining a Light on the Autism Spectrum: Experiences and Aspirations of Adults'.





- In 2016, we received \$3.85m from our generous supporters
- 27,269 individuals and organisations made a donation in 2016
- 2,843 individuals were regular donors
- 1,096 individuals and groups fundraised for Aspect by taking on sponsored challenges or holding their own events
- The first 'Walk for Autism' campaign raised over \$250, 000
- 40 registered clubs and councils supported Aspect through Council & ClubGRANTS
- We received significant support from 32 trusts and foundations
- David Epper and the team at Accident & Health successfully ran the 17th annual celebrity golf day
- Peter & Andrea Werner helped us celebrate the 15th Annual Comedy Night in Sydney's Town Hall
- The Parents & Friends groups provided tremendous support to all our schools
- 4 people supported Aspect with a bequest in their Will



Aspect thanks all of our  
donors and supporters for  
their generous gifts throughout  
the year - all of you have made  
a difference



# Our supporters

## Platinum

Aberdeen Asset Management  
Charitable Foundation  
Accessible Arts  
Adelaide Crows Children Foundation  
Anna White Trust  
ASX Thomson Reuters Charity  
Foundation  
John & Lynne Church  
Coopers Brewery Foundation  
Dee Why RSL Club Ltd  
Department of Family and  
Community Services  
Financial Report Specialists (FRS)  
Greater Charitable Foundation  
Kenneth & Peter Gibbs Foundation  
P & F South Coast School  
P & F Vern Barnett  
QBE Foundation  
Scentsy, Inc  
The Bluesand Foundation  
The James N Kirby Foundation  
Westfield Kotara  
Woodend Foundation

## Gold

Accident & Health International  
Underwriting Pty Limited  
Alfieris Foundation  
AON  
Atlassian Pty Ltd  
Australian Sports Commission  
Bankstown District Sports Club  
Limited  
Beeren Foundation  
Con Bellos  
Ralph Bierbaum  
Burwood RSL Club Limited  
Donna Boughton  
Campsie RSL Sub-Branch Club  
Limited  
Carthew Family Charity  
Cessnock Rugby League Supporters  
Club Ltd

City of Parramatta  
CMV Group Foundation  
CMV Truck & Bus  
Commercial Club Albury Ltd  
Commercial SA Property Group  
Commonwealth Bank, Mortgage  
Services Sydney  
Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club  
John Doyle AM  
Shane & Michelle Finlay  
Forestville RSL Club Limited  
James Goldman  
GPIS  
Lorette Graham  
Hale Imports Pty Ltd  
Stephen Harris  
HepMac Lawyers  
ICAP  
Inner Wheel Club of Wollongong Inc  
Jamberry Nails  
JLDJS Foundation  
Keating Plasterers  
Lions Club of Reservoir  
Liverpool Catholic Club  
Media Money Management  
Mount Thorley/Warkworth Lodge  
Sarkis Nalbandian  
Dr & Mrs P O'Brien  
Mary O'Sullivan  
Renee Pollack Foundation  
Ms Annie Rose  
Rotary Club of Wetherill Park  
St George Foundation  
St Johns Park Bowling Club  
Steel City Financial Planners  
I Stone  
Suncorp Group  
Sutherland Trade Union Club  
The Westport Club  
United Parcel Service  
Universal Motor Auctions  
University of Wollongong  
Variety SA

Water Wine & Juice Pty Ltd  
Western Suburbs (N'cle) Leagues  
Club Ltd

## Silver

A Cleaner World  
A. Skothos Family Trust  
Robert Albert AO  
Amadio Wines  
AMP Foundation  
George Andrews  
AON Benfield  
Aristocrat Technologies Australia  
Pty Ltd  
Artarmon Masonic Hall Company  
Pty Ltd  
Atlassian Pty  
Aussieroma  
Australasian Performing Right  
Association Limited  
Australian Caravan Co.  
John Bagnall  
Balgowlah RSL Memorial Club  
Beechwood Homes (NSW) PTY LTD  
Bellambie Blue Bottles Swimming  
Club  
Belmont 16 Foot Sailing Club Ltd  
BlueScope Steel Ltd T/A Fielders  
Brendan Bond  
Jill Boorne  
Bowlers' Club of NSW Ltd  
Phyllis Breen  
Kenneth Brown  
Marc Buman  
Bunnings Heatherton  
Nicola Burgess  
Cabramatta Public School  
Camden Council  
Andrew Carney  
Ben Carr  
Noel Carroll  
Carsales.com.au  
CGU Insurance  
Stephanie Challinor



Dr Tenille Chapman  
 Charity Greeting Cards  
 Charlestown Bowling Club  
 Chatswood RSL Club  
 Douglas Chiganze  
 City of Boroondara  
 City of Sydney RSL & Community Club Ltd  
 City Tattersalls Club  
 Collaroy Airport Transfers  
 Susan Collins  
 Commercial Motor Industries Pty Ltd  
 Commuserv  
 John Conroy  
 Margaret Conway  
 Corrimall Lions Club  
 Barbara Cummins  
 John Dagas  
 Laura Daley  
 H d'Apice  
 Marilynne Dearn  
 Delphi Financial Management  
 Kylie Ditton  
 Bruce Downie  
 DRB Group  
 Earlwood-Bardwell Park RSL Club Ltd  
 East Maitland Bowling Club Ltd  
 Susan Edmondson  
 Edwin Street Christmas Lights  
 Monir Elhage  
 David Epper OAM  
 Ernst & Young  
 Essential Employment & Training  
 Jane Farrell  
 Festival Function Centre  
 Elizabeth Field  
 Adrian Ford  
 Forster Tuncurry Memorial Services Club Ltd  
 Friends & Family of Paul Cousins  
 Furniture Fetish

Angela Gakadellis  
 Daryl George AM  
 Kenneth Glover  
 L Glynn  
 GoFundraise Pty Ltd  
 Gold Cup Charity  
 Richard Goyder  
 Dr Jean Grierson  
 Griffith Ex-Servicemen's Club Ltd  
 Griffith Leagues Club Ltd  
 Peter & Roslyn Griffiths  
 GSA Insurance Brokers  
 Guildford Leagues Club  
 Guy Carpenter  
 Hall & Wilcox  
 Julie Hamblin  
 Tim & Barbara Hanbury  
 Rose Harkness  
 Harris Freidman Lawyers  
 Betty Hatch  
 Michael Head  
 John Heathers  
 Margaret Henley  
 Henry Pollack Foundation  
 Halloluwage Hewawasam  
 Rebecca Hill  
 Ronald Hincksman  
 HOGS Illawarra  
 Holy Spirit School  
 Hornsby RSL Club Limited  
 Michael Hulland  
 Hutchinson Builders  
 Linda Hutchison  
 Illawarra Catholic Club Ltd  
 Independent Photographic Supplies  
 Infocus East Adelaide  
 Inner West Council  
 J A Wales Pty Ltd  
 Jardine Lloyd Thompson  
 Job Centre Australia  
 JOCON (SA) Pty Ltd  
 Diane Joyce

JustGiving Pty Ltd  
 Kapis Bros Vic Pty Ltd  
 Louise Keady  
 Kempsey Shire Council  
 Nicky Kettley  
 Kingsgrove RSL Club Limited  
 Olga Knezevic  
 KPMG  
 Ktronics  
 John Laidlaw  
 Alison Lambert  
 Stacy Lambert  
 Olive Lang  
 Elizabeth Law-Smith  
 Helen Lawson Williams  
 Mark Lennon  
 B Lewis  
 Liangrove Foundation Pty Ltd  
 Lions Club of Terrigal-Wamberal Incorporated  
 Lions Club of Woonona  
 Lions Club of Woy Woy Peninsula Inc  
 Catherine Liston  
 Edward Lo  
 Ted Longhurst  
 Chee Kian Kenneth Low  
 Lurnea High School  
 Luscombe Foundation  
 Sue Lyons  
 Meryll Macarthur  
 MACQM  
 Macquarie Group Foundation  
 Magpies Waitara  
 Maras Foundation  
 Maroubra Seals Sports & Community Club  
 Marsh Pty Ltd  
 Sir Anthony Mason  
 Mates on a Mission  
 Meredith Miller  
 Mingara Recreation Club Ltd  
 Mittagong RSL Club Limited

Catherine Moroney  
 Peter Murdocca  
 National Transport Insurance Ltd  
 Jeanette Neill  
 Jeffery Nelson  
 John Neumann  
 Newcastle Darts Club  
 Ben Newman  
 Nix Anderson Pty Ltd  
 Anna Noon  
 North Sydney Leagues Club Limited  
 Northern Rivers Community Foundation  
 NOVA Employment  
 Oasis Australasia  
 Trevor Oldfield  
 Laura Oliver  
 Omni Wealth  
 Susan O'Neill  
 Optus Pty Ltd  
 Orange Ex-Services' Club Limited  
 Melanie Osmotherly  
 P & F Hunter School  
 Ian Paroissien  
 Bronwyn Perry  
 Gino Pignone  
 Pittwater RSL Club Limited  
 Port Hacking High School  
 Thomas Clive Powell  
 Timothy Powell  
 Lyne Pratt  
 Pro Paint n Panel  
 Mark Procajlo  
 Professional Advantage Pty Ltd  
 Pyramid Concrete  
 Qantum Group  
 Brian Quigley  
 Quota International of the Leisure Coast Inc  
 Randwick City Council  
 Sean Rapley  
 David Redfern  
 Revesby Workers' Club

Kaylene Roach  
 Marjorie Roberts  
 Mark Robertson  
 James Rolfe  
 Romaldi Constructions  
 Damiano Romano  
 Rotary Club of Frenchs Forest Inc  
 Rotary Club of Illawarra Sunrise  
 Rotary Club of Rutherford-Telarah Inc  
 Rotary Club of Wollongong  
 Rubin Group Pty Ltd  
 Rules Club Wagga  
 Russo & Co Accounting  
 Nancy Sakun  
 Maureen Salkeld  
 Najwa Sawan  
 Scentre Group  
 Kylie Scott  
 Scott & Broad Pty Ltd  
 Norman Seckold  
 Shoalhaven Ex-Servicemen's Club Ltd  
 William Shorrock  
 Sunil Shrestha  
 Neil Simpson  
 Brendan Sinnamon  
 Jennifer Slaney  
 SLE Worldwide  
 Southgate Holden  
 C & J Spark  
 Spot on Coupons  
 John Stanton  
 David Starte  
 Nigel Stoker  
 Rhonda Storey  
 Nick & Cindy Stratikopoulos  
 Sussex News Advertising Pty Ltd  
 Jeremy Sutcliffe  
 Swansea Workers Co Op Club Ltd  
 The Isabel & John Gilbertson Charitable Trust  
 Thomson Geer

Ian Thorpe  
 Grace Titioka  
 Arimudin Tjanaria  
 James Turner  
 Unity Group  
 Simon Howard Vaux  
 Victorian Tavern  
 Walter Campbell Memorial Trust  
 Waratah Golf Club  
 Wentworthville Leagues Club  
 Edward West  
 West Pennant Hills Sports Club Ltd  
 Westpac Banking Corporation - GOPPCS  
 Westpac Community Involvement  
 Wests Ashfield Leagues Club Ltd  
 Wests New Lambton  
 Matthew White  
 Pamela Whitehead  
 Beverley Whitehouse  
 Murray Wilcox  
 Susan Wishart  
 Woonona Womens Bowling Club  
 Robert Yeates  
 Jenny Young  
 Jim Young  
 Young North Public School  
 Dunia Yousip  
 Jim Zerella  
 Anzhela Zla  
 Wayne Zong

## Legacies

Estate of Marion Armstrong Kingston  
 Estate of Gwendoline Alice Uphill  
 Estate of George Alistair Roberts  
 Estate of Ann McCormick



# Our Patron, Life Governors & Life Members

## Our Patron

John Doyle AM is an award-winning Australian actor, writer, radio presenter and comedian. He has continued to support Aspect in raising awareness and much needed funds to help people on the autism spectrum and their families. John has a sister on the spectrum, and brings his warmth and personal connection to everything he does for Aspect.

## Life Governors

Ian Barnett  
Rick Damelian  
John Doyle AM  
David Epper OAM  
David Foster  
Hilton Grugeon AM  
Gerry Harvey

Betty Hatch  
Larry A Rawstorne  
Peter Werner  
A G Whelan

Aspect Life Governor Mr Ray Seager sadly passed away during 2016. He is remembered for his unwavering commitment to supporting people on the autism spectrum and their families.

## Life Members

Roger Q Allen AM  
George Andrews  
Julie Anthony AM OBE  
Mark Bowen  
Judy Brewer AO  
Geraldine Bryant  
John Crow  
Barbara Cummins  
Peter Dodd  
Peter Drayton  
H Emanuel  
Tim Fischer AC  
Mark Fogarty  
John Gerahty

Patricia Gibbs  
Marie Goodare  
Sybil Joel  
Judith A Johnson  
Errol Larbalestier  
P Mayne  
Michael McColm  
Jill McGrath  
Tony McGrath AM  
Shirley McIntosh  
Cath Mount  
Claire O'Keefe  
Richard Owens AM  
Keith E Perkin

Robert Pesavento  
Kathleen Pigram  
Ostilio Pisanu  
Gretchen Poiner  
A H Polyblank  
Jacqueline Roberts  
Weston Ryan  
Basil Sellers  
John Shand  
Jean Slaughter  
Paul C J Smith  
David Starte  
Margaret Stead  
Andrea Werner





## Spencer's story

**Spencer Thew, Trainee Repair Shop Technician, Fujitsu Australia Limited**

"My role presently at the National Repair Centre for Fujitsu is as trainee repair shop technician.

The role involves getting hands on with printers, working out what's wrong with them, diagnosing the problem using the system and then making the fixes we need to.

I like how methodical it is. And how I can go through and try to refine the process and push myself to go further each day.

Aspect were initially in contact with Fujitsu, and told them the benefits of hiring someone on the spectrum.

That allowed me to change what would have been a negative (my autism) for some employers into a positive for Fujitsu.

Aspect helped me with interview tips, by sitting in on the interview with me and then working out what needed to be done to help me settle in when I started the job.

Aspect have negotiated a number of adjustments for me within the role. I can use headphones and listen to music while I work, which helps me with a number of focus issues.

The big thing Fujitsu have done for me is give me someone I can turn to (my colleague James) if I am having a problem. Whenever I have a problem which would usually cause me to have a bit of a meltdown, I can simply turn to James and he helps me. It has helped me to keep stress at a really low level.

I went through years of feeling that if I disclosed I was on the spectrum to other people, they would see me as lesser, they would see me as less capable. And I found quite the opposite. They've been very accepting and have allowed the job to be moulded to better fit me, so that I can succeed, where I wouldn't if I had just said 'Oh, I'm just like everyone else.'"

# Strategic Plan 2017 – 2019

The strategic plan charts the course for Aspect over the coming three years. Aspect's strategic plan also has been designed to be flexible in order to cope with any future changes in the sector. Aspect is committed to monitoring its plan at its Board meetings, Executive meetings and Management Network meetings to check that the plan is being implemented. Any changes which impact on the plan will be progressively factored into the plan.

The plan as a whole is reviewed every year and stepped out one more year so there is always a current three year window. Aspect's strategic plan is built on a system which ensures that:

- Strategies produce competitive advantage;
- Strategies are linked to quantifiable objectives; and
- Strategies are implemented.

The strategy development in the plan takes place within a scope defined by the following guidelines:

- Always plan 3 years ahead;
- Have a Business Plan for the immediate year ahead;
- Have measurable key performance indicators; and
- Be financially sustainable.

In order to have a rolling three year plan, Aspect reviews its current three year strategic plan every year and then takes it out one more year to create its new three year strategic plan.

The annual planning cycle incorporates:

- » A strategic audit of Aspect's external and internal environments.
- » Management's vision for the organisation three years ahead.
- » The development by the Board and the Executive of Aspect's Core Strategies for the next three years. These form the foundations of the next Strategic Plan
- » The Strategic Plan is developed around Aspect's Key Stakeholders.
- » From this the Business Plan for the coming year is developed which then drives the Budget.
- » Finally, a set of Key Performance Indicators are approved by the Board which defines the success of the Business Plan for the coming year and in the longer term, the Strategic Plan.

Integral to Aspect's success and the development of winning strategies is its focus on its Key Stakeholders. These are organisations and individuals with whom Aspect interacts and on whom it depends for success. They are our most important customers in this new market driven economy.

Therefore, Aspect actively engages with its Key Stakeholders to build and maintain strong ongoing relationships. These relationships allow Aspect to identify those strategic factors and actions that will ensure Aspect meets the expectations of each of its Key

Aspect's Performance	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of enquiries to Aspect	N/A	N/A	6,774	10,387	13,476
Number of active clients	N/A	N/A	N/A	5,962	7,307
Number of student places in Aspect's schools	879	968	982	1,024	1071
People we support with individualised funding	627	1,003	1,155	2,102	2,590
% Net Promoter Score	N/A	N/A	75	72	79
\$m turnover	54.39	61.18	70.33	78.4	83.16
\$m received from government	43.08	51.37	57.9	66.1	68.97
\$m received by fundraising	4.28	1.72	1.93	4.23	3.85
\$m Total Comprehensive Income	4.05	1.50	2.59	0.66	0.68

N/A = This particular data set was not collected at this time.



Stakeholders. By succeeding in this task, Aspect gains competitive advantage and succeeds as an organisation. As well, Aspect has its own objectives and associated actions for each key stakeholder which in turn identifies what Aspect wants from them.

### Aspect's Key Stakeholders: 2017-2019

These are organisations and individuals with whom Aspect interacts and on whom it depends for its success.

1. People on the autism spectrum
2. Families and carers of people on the autism spectrum
3. Governments
4. Donors & supporters
5. Strategic alliance partners
6. Aspect's staff

### The Vision for Aspect in 2019

- People on the spectrum are at the centre of our organisation's advice and decision making with an established Aspect Advisory Council comprising people on the spectrum who regularly advise the Board and the Executive on issues important to people on spectrum and the organisation itself.
- Continue the organic growth both in Aspect's education and disability services.
- Extend Aspect's reach and capability in the services it offers to people on the spectrum with a number of strategic alliances.
- Be recognised as the premium national provider of autism services with regular services in five states and territories.
- Be known by its inspiration – a different brilliant, focusing on strengths and interests.
- Develop a service wide framework providing support across the life-stages - the Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA).
- Ensure a person-centred approach to working with individuals on the spectrum for all staff - using the Five Point Star (licensed from Autism Initiatives in the UK).
- Further strengthen Aspect's position as the leading national autism-specific education provider, with the Aspect Comprehensive Approach to Education (ACAE) increasingly accepted as a preferred model of educating students on the spectrum.
- Be recognised as the "go to" organisation for people on the spectrum requiring supports under the NDIS.
- Be recognised as the national knowledge leader for autism services and activities that make a difference for people with autism through Aspect Practice's workshops, consultancies and research.
- Successfully conclude Phase 3 of Positive Partnerships with outstanding national results in building capacity among school communities for students on the spectrum, including successful outcomes with Aboriginal and CALD communities.
- Establish an engaged social media audience with a central role in every part of the business.
- Expect Aspect Fundraising will continue to play a critically important role in the development of innovative practice that changes the lives of people on the spectrum.
- Have Aspect's National Office tailored externally to individual service users and internally as a customer-focused internal service provider.
- Increase Aspect's efficiency and effectiveness and so reduce the per capita costs of Aspect's National Office by having successfully implemented an enterprise-wide solution for its IT systems.

### Aspect's Core Strategies: 2017 - 2019

1. Be person-centred, family-focused and customer-driven.
2. Be the national autism-specific service provider and a global knowledge leader for autism.
3. Build capability and reach by entering into strategic alliances with complementary organisations or by integrating organisations into Aspect.

# Our People

Aspect's strength lies in the passion of its people and our continued success as an organisation is intrinsically linked with the skills, passion and experience of the people who work with us. We value, respect and promote the diversity of our team as we believe this can lead to new insights and new thinking about our approach and our work.

We believe our work makes a difference and we offer a career that is exciting, challenging and rewarding for the people who choose to work with us. As an employer we are committed to working together to ensure the best possible opportunities for the communities in which we operate.

In 2016, we introduced a new series of employee awards to celebrate the passion and dedication of our staff. Nominated by colleagues, the Spirit of Aspect Awards recognise staff who demonstrate exemplary practice in applying one of Aspect's values in their day to day work. Congratulations to all recipients of the inaugural Spirit of Aspect staff awards presented at Aspect's Annual General Meeting in May. The 6 recipients and finalists were:

## Passionate about people:

Elaine Baxter, HR Coordinator, Aspect People  
Jodi Rodgers, Manager, Aspect Northern NSW (finalist)



## Passionate about being positive:

Melissa Webster, Manager, Aspect Choose & Connect, Victoria  
Lyn York, Teacher Aide, Aspect Hunter School (finalist)



## Passionate about what's possible:

Kerry Ritzrow, Workshop Coordinator, Aspect Practice  
Rod O'Connor, Instructor, Aspect Choose & Connect Victoria (finalist)



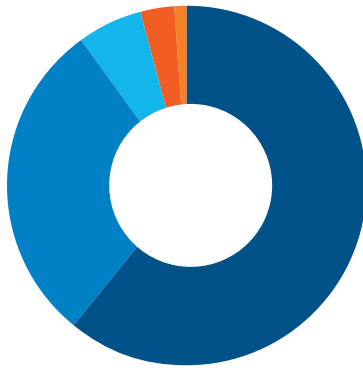


Number of staff  
including casuals

**1191** staff

### Breakdown of staff

#### By Corporate group



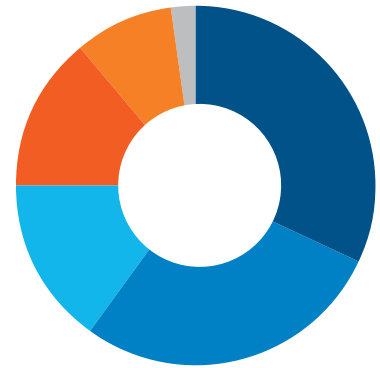
- Education
- Individual Options
- National Office
- Positive Partnerships
- Aspect Practice

#### By type of employment



- Permanent Full time
- Permanent Part time
- Contract Full time
- Contract Part time
- Casual

#### By Occupation



- Teachers
- Teacher's Aides
- Support Workers
- Allied Health Professionals
- Administration staff
- Management

### Staff length of Service (presented at 2016 AGM)

**10** years **21** staff

**15** years **8** staff

**20** years **2** staff

**30** years **1** staff



*Ms Elizabeth Gadek, now National Director Aspect Education, celebrating 30 years with Aspect*

# Directors' report

The Directors present their report together with the financial report of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) for the year ended 31 December 2016 and the auditors' report thereon.

As defined in section 205-30 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 the Directors referred to in these financial statements are Aspect's Responsible Entities for the purposes of that Act.



**Julie Hamblin**  
Chair of the Board



**Jenny Young**  
Immediate Past Chair



**Henry Capra**  
Honorary Treasurer



**Robert J. Brown**  
Director



**Annette Gallard**  
Director



**Laurie Horin**  
Director



**Ian Joseph**  
Director



**Malcolm McEwen**  
Director



**Karyn Sobels**  
Director



**Peter Werner**  
Director



**Julie Hamblin**, B.A., LL.B (Hons) (Syd), LL.M (McGill), GAICD, has worked for more than 25 years as a lawyer and policy consultant in health law, clinical risk, disability and international development. A former partner of HWL Ebsworth, she has served on numerous government and non-government advisory bodies in the areas of health, medical research and clinical risk, including international work with United Nations agencies on HIV policy. Julie is Deputy Chair of Plan International Australia and a member of the Australian Research Integrity Committee. She joined the Aspect Board in April 2010 and is a Member of the Audit and Risk Committee, the Governance Committee and the Strategy Group. Julie is a Member-elected Director.

**Jeanie Young** (known as Jenny), B.Bus., FAICD, is Lead Partner in Ernst and Young's Customer Advisory practice. She was formerly Executive Director, NBN Transition at Telstra Corporation Limited. Jenny has held senior marketing positions for Unilever, Lion Nathan, Pepsi and Telstra, and has worked in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Australia. Jenny has a son on the autism spectrum. She joined the Board in March 2010 and is the Chair of the Fundraising and Communications Committee and a member of the Governance Committee. Jenny is a Member-elected Director.

**Henry Capra**, B.Ec., ACA, has more than 27 years of senior management and finance experience in the financial services industry. He is currently a non-executive director of Suncorp Portfolio Services Limited, CBHS Corporate Health Limited and Millinium Capital Managers Limited. He is also Chairman of the Investment Committee for Ignition Wealth Pty Limited and a member of their Advisory Board. He has held senior positions at JP Morgan, Blackrock, AMP Capital, Colonial First State Investments, BNP Paribas Asset Management and Barclays Global Investors after commencing his career with chartered accountants KPMG. Henry joined the Aspect Board in December 2010 and chairs the Audit and Risk Committee. Henry is a Member-elected Director.

**Robert J. Brown**, GAICD, B.Sc., M.A. (Applied Mathematics), Grad. Dip. Applied Finance, is the founder of Alford Brown & Associates. Robert has previously held senior executive roles with HSBC, Westpac, the Commonwealth Bank and State Street Bank and Trust. He is experienced in the governance of not-for-profit organisations, and has a personal interest in special education and the needs of children with learning difficulties. Rob joined the Board in June 2008, formerly held the position of Honorary Treasurer, and remains a member of the Audit and Risk Committee. Rob is a Member-elected Director.

**Annette Gallard**, Annette Gallard PSM, B. Soc. Stud., M. Comm, has more than 20 years' experience as a senior executive in the NSW Public Service in both the Housing and Community Services Portfolios. She retired from the position of Chief Executive of the NSW Department of Community Services in 2011 and has since focused on assisting the not-for-profit sector as a Board Member. She was awarded the Public Service Medal in 2012 for services to disadvantaged communities particularly Aboriginal people. Annette joined the Board in March, 2014 and is the Chair of the Governance Committee and a member of the Strategy Group. Annette is a Member-elected Director.

**Laurie Horin**, B.Bus., FCA, F Fin, has more than 25 years' experience in professional accounting, corporate and investment management, and investment banking. Laurie has worked extensively in Australia, the USA and South East Asia. He was an executive director of Carlisle Partners, a corporate advisory firm specialising in mergers and acquisitions, debt and equity funding for mid-market companies. He was also a board member of a number of client companies. Laurie joined the Board in September, 2012, is a member of the Audit and Risk Committee and co-chairs the Strategy Group. Laurie is a Member-elected Director.

**Ian Joseph**, Ian Joseph B.Bus., Grad Dip Ed, FAMI, AFAIM, is a private banking and finance industry consultant and a former Chair of the Agribusiness Council of Australia. He was formerly Head of Strategy - Service and Sales with Regional and Agribusiness Banking at the Commonwealth Bank. Ian and his family care for his sister who is on the spectrum. Ian joined the Board in March, 2011, and is a member of the Strategy Group and the Fundraising and Communications Committee. Ian is a Member-elected Director.

**Malcolm McEwen**, B.Bus., M.Bus., is an executive search and selection consultant with Carmichael Fisher. Malcolm is the father of a child who is on the spectrum. He joined the Board in 2004 and prior to his resignation was a member of the Nominations and Remuneration Committee. Malcolm was a Member-elected Director. (Resigned 31 August 2016)

**Karyn Sobels**, Karyn Sobels MComLaw, BA, GAICD, is a Director of Simply Business, a business advisory firm based in Melbourne. Previously a senior executive in banking and retail, she is also a non-executive director of several other companies, including the Telstra Licensee Association, and serves on the Risk and Audit Committee of the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Karyn was the former Chair of the Board of Alpha Autism Inc. and has a personal interest in the development of support services for adults and children with autism. Karyn joined the Aspect Board in June, 2015 and is a member of the Fundraising and Communications Committee. Karyn is a Member-elected Director.

**Peter Werner**, B.Comm., is a Director of PW Executive. He has previously worked in the banking industry with BT Australia and Citibank. Peter is the father of a young man who is on the spectrum. He joined the Board in 2001 and prior to his resignation chaired the Nominations and Remuneration Committee. Peter is a Life Governor of Aspect, a former Chair of the Board and was a Member-elected Director. (Resigned 2 November 2016)

## Meetings of Directors

	Directors' Meetings		Audit and Risk Committee (formerly the Finance and Audit Committee)		Strategy Group		Governance Committee (formerly the Nominations and Remuneration Committee)		Fundraising and Communications Committee	
	No. of meetings attended									
Ms J Hamblin	6	6	10	10	5	6	3	3		
Ms J Young	5	6			3	4	3	3	1	1
Mr H Capra	5	6	9	10						
Mr R Brown	5	6	8	10						
Ms A Gallard	6	6			4	6	2	2		
Mr L Horin	4	6	8	10	6	6				
Mr I Joseph	5	6			3	6			1	1
Mr M McEwen	3	4					1	1		
Ms K Sobels	4	6	4	5					1	1
Mr P Werner	4	5					2	2		

## Company Secretary

Adrian Ford, who is also the Chief Executive Officer, held the position of Company Secretary at the end of the financial year:

### Name & Qualifications:

Mr Adrian Ford FAICD, B. Soc.Stud

Appointment date:

2000

## Principal activities

The principal activities of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) are to provide a range of flexible, responsive and evidence-informed services to children, young people and adults on the autism spectrum. These include customer engagement services, diagnostic and assessment services, therapy services (speech pathology, occupational therapy and psychology) including behaviour support programs, educational services for school-aged children to prepare them for transition to environments that are not autism-specific and individually-funded and block-funded programs for children, young people and adults in response to their individual needs, strengths and capabilities. A range of

support services are provided to families of people on the spectrum. The the provision of workshops, training and consultation to other professionals and parents in ways of working with people on the spectrum continues, as does Aspect's research program. There were no significant changes in the nature of its activities during the year.

## Short- and long-term objectives

Aspect's long-term objective or vision is the best opportunities for people on the autism spectrum. It does this through its mission by developing person-centred solutions, which are flexible, responsive and evidence-informed, with people of all ages on the autism spectrum. Its short-term objectives for the next three years are:

1. Be person-centred, family-focused and customer-driven;
2. Be the national autism-specific service provider and a global knowledge leader for autism; and
3. Build capability and reach by entering into strategic alliances with complementary organisations or by integrating organisations into Aspect.



## Strategies for achieving those objectives

Aspect's strategies for achieving these objectives include:

- continuing to grow the number of people on the autism spectrum & their families who use and recommend Aspect's services;
- increasing the level of funding available from government for services and supports;
- encouraging donors and supporters to continue to increase their giving to Aspect;
- having strategic alliances that increase Aspect's services, service options, capability and market edge; and
- attracting the best people to work at Aspect, ensuring high levels of engagement and staff retention.

The Board continuously reviews the entity's performance against these strategic objectives using a set of key performance indicators which include indicators on service performance, funding from government and fundraising, human resource management and financial performance.

## Operating results

The operating result for 2016 was a surplus of \$673,685 (2015: surplus \$663,748).

## Review of operations

Government grants continued to provide the major operational income for Aspect, supported by fundraising and contribution by clients' families for some of the services through a fee for service charge. Income from these three sources increased in 2016 to \$81,691,594 compared with \$78,686,781 in 2015.

## Contribution on winding up

The company is incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 and is a company limited by guarantee. If the company is wound up, the constitution states that each member is required to contribute a maximum of

\$20 towards meeting any outstanding obligations of the entity. At 31 December 2016, the total amount that members of the company would have been liable to contribute if the company was wound up was \$3,600 (2015: \$4,600).

## Significant changes in 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.

## Events after the reporting 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.

## Auditor's independence declaration

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration as required under section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 for the year ended 31 December 2016 has been received and can be found on page 40 of the financial report.

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



Julie Hamblin  
Chair of the Board

Dated this 24th day of March 2017 at Sydney

# Auditor's Independence Declaration



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## **AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION TO THE DIRECTORS OF AUTISM SPECTRUM AUSTRALIA (ASPECT)**

In accordance with the requirements of section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, as lead auditor for the audit of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) for the year ended 31 December 2016, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

A stylized blue ink signature of Grant Thornton.

GRANT THORNTON AUDIT PTY LTD  
Chartered Accountants

A blue ink signature of C F Farley.

C F Farley  
Partner - Audit & Assurance

Sydney, 24 March 2017

Grant Thornton Audit Pty Ltd ACN 130 913 594  
a subsidiary or related entity of Grant Thornton Australia Ltd ARN 41 127 558 380



# Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income

For the year ended 31 December 2016

	Notes	2016 \$	2015 \$
Revenue from rendering of services		8,810,853	8,817,607
Federal/state grants and salary subsidies		69,032,548	65,638,558
Fundraising		3,848,193	4,230,616
Other revenue		1,467,589	1,159,589
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>83,159,183</b>	<b>79,846,370</b>
Employee expenses		(67,465,308)	(62,881,876)
Transportation costs		(2,351,434)	(2,192,717)
Insurance expense		(1,625,282)	(1,224,834)
Depreciation and amortisation expenses	4	(1,084,982)	(1,155,290)
Finance costs	4	(59,896)	(66,749)
Services		(3,585,847)	(4,686,074)
Other expenses from ordinary activities		(6,312,749)	(6,975,082)
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>(82,485,498)</b>	<b>(79,182,622)</b>
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<b>673,685</b>	<b>663,748</b>
<b>Other gain/(loss) income</b>			
Net (loss)/gain on revaluation of investments		(55,685)	3,017
Net gain/(loss) on sale of investments		58,965	(1,592)
Other comprehensive income for the year		3,280	1,425
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>676,965</b>	<b>665,173</b>

These financial statements should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

# Statement of financial position

As at 31 December 2016

	Notes	2016 \$	2015 \$
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	23,028,358	19,498,522
Trade and other receivables	7	376,727	302,147
Other financial assets	8	249,145	229,917
Other assets	9	1,092,573	684,840
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>24,746,803</b>	<b>20,715,426</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Other financial assets	8	3,536,625	3,415,283
Property, plant and equipment	10	19,035,582	17,422,988
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>22,572,207</b>	<b>20,838,271</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>47,319,010</b>	<b>41,553,697</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	11	13,424,916	9,689,841
Short term borrowings	12	101,910	77,027
Short term provisions	13	6,978,090	5,853,647
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>20,504,916</b>	<b>15,620,515</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Long term borrowings	12	1,082,728	1,188,091
Long term provisions	13	2,076,706	1,767,396
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>3,159,434</b>	<b>2,955,487</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>23,664,350</b>	<b>18,576,002</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>23,654,660</b>	<b>22,977,695</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Asset revaluation reserve	14	(54,509)	1,176
Asset realisation reserve	14	(872,675)	(931,640)
Accumulated surplus		24,581,844	23,908,159
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>23,654,660</b>	<b>22,977,695</b>

These financial statements should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.



# Statement of changes in equity

For the year ended 31 December 2016

	Asset Revaluation Reserve \$	Asset Realisation Reserve \$	Retained Earnings \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 January 2015	(1,841)	(930,048)	23,244,411	22,312,522
Surplus for the year	-	-	663,748	663,748
Total other comprehensive income for the year	3,017	(1,592)	-	1,425
Balance at 31 December 2015	1,176	(931,640)	23,908,159	22,977,695
Surplus for the year	-	-	673,685	673,685
Total other comprehensive income for the year	(55,685)	58,965	-	3,280
Balance at 31 December 2016	(54,509)	(872,675)	24,581,844	23,654,660

# Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 December 2016

	Notes	2016 \$	2015 \$
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Receipts from customers and grants		84,682,902	78,718,910
Payments to suppliers and employees		(78,932,452)	(76,079,166)
Interest received		665,467	872,538
Dividend received		89,161	94,691
Interest paid		(59,896)	(66,749)
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>		<b>6,445,182</b>	<b>3,540,224</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Proceeds on disposal of investments		643,941	423,347
Payments for investments		(762,003)	(574,139)
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(2,697,576)	(456,203)
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		<b>(2,815,638)</b>	<b>(606,995)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Repayment of borrowings		(80,479)	(75,054)
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>		<b>(80,479)</b>	<b>(75,054)</b>
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents held		3,549,065	2,858,175
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		19,728,438	16,870,264
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	6	23,277,503	19,728,439

These financial statements should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

# Notes to the financial statements

## For the year ended 31 December 2016

### 1 General information and statement of compliance

The financial report includes the financial statements and notes of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect).

The financial statements are general purpose financial statements that have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

The financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2016 (including comparatives) were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors (who are Aspect's Responsible Entities under the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*) on 24 March 2017.

### 2 Statement of significant accounting policies

#### Changes in accounting policies

There have been no changes to the accounting policies applied by the company during the reporting period.

#### New and revised accounting standards that are effective for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2016

A number of new and revised standards became effective for the first time for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2016. There was no material impact on the financial statements as the changes are largely clarifications of existing requirements.

#### Summary of accounting policies

The significant accounting policies that have been used in the preparation of these financial statements are summarised below.

The financial statements have been prepared using the measurement bases specified by Australian Accounting Standards for each type of asset, liability, income and expense. The measurement bases are more fully described in the accounting policies below.

All amounts are presented in Australian dollars which is Aspect's functional and presentation currency, unless otherwise noted.

#### a. Income tax

Under Section 50-1 and 50-5 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, the income of Aspect is exempt from income tax.

#### b. Property, plant and equipment

Each class of property, plant and equipment is carried at cost or fair value less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses.

##### Property

Freehold land and buildings purchased are recorded at cost.

Freehold land and buildings that have been donated, are valued at the fair value of the asset at the date it is acquired, in accordance with the requirements of AASB 1004: Contributions.

##### Plant and equipment

Plant and equipment are measured on the cost basis less depreciation and impairment losses.

Property and equipment are reviewed each year for impairment or whenever events or changes in business circumstances indicate that the carrying value of the assets may not be recoverable. Impairment losses are recognised if expected future cash flows from the assets are less than their carrying values.

Plant and equipment that have been donated are valued at the fair value of the asset at the date it is acquired, in accordance with the requirements of AASB 1004: Contributions.

##### Depreciation

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets, excluding freehold land, is depreciated on a straight-line basis over the useful life to Aspect commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful life of the improvement.

The depreciation rates used for each class of depreciable assets are:



<i>Class of fixed asset</i>	<i>Depreciation rate</i>
Buildings	2.5%
Building with demountable classrooms	10%
Leasehold improvements	10%
Plant and equipment	20-33%
Library	10%

Residual values and useful lives of assets are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each balance sheet date.

The carrying amount of an asset is written down immediately to its recoverable amount if the carrying amount is greater than the estimated recoverable amount.

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing proceeds with the carrying amount. These gains or losses are included in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income. When revalued assets are sold, amounts included in the revaluation reserve relating to that asset are transferred to retained earnings.

### **c. Leases**

#### **Operating leases**

Where the company is a lessee, payments on operating lease agreements are recognised as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term. Associated costs, such as maintenance and insurance, are expensed as incurred.

### **d. Financial assets**

#### **Initial recognition and measurement**

Financial instruments, incorporating financial assets and financial liabilities, are recognised when the entity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. Financial instruments are classified and measured as set out below.

#### **Classification and subsequent measurement**

##### *Financial assets measured at amortised cost*

Loans and receivables are non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market and are stated at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

##### *Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income*

Aspect early adopted AASB 9 Financial Instruments

in 2010 and therefore all investments form part of Aspect's investment portfolio and have been classified as available for sale financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income.

Unrealised gains and losses arising from changes in fair value are taken directly to equity (into the asset revaluation reserve).

Realised gains or losses on the sale of investments are transferred from the asset revaluation reserve into the asset realisation reserve.

#### *Financial liabilities*

Non-derivative financial liabilities (excluding financial guarantees) are subsequently measured at amortised cost.

#### **Fair value**

Fair value is determined based on current last sale prices for all quoted investments. Valuation techniques are applied to determine the fair value for all unlisted securities, including recent arm's length transactions, reference to similar instruments and option pricing models.

#### **Impairment of financial assets**

At each reporting date, Aspect assesses whether there is objective evidence that a financial instrument has been impaired. Impairment losses on financial assets other than those held at fair value through other comprehensive income are recognised in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income.

#### **Derecognition**

Financial assets are derecognised where the contractual rights to receipt of cash flows expire or the asset is transferred to another party whereby the entity no longer has any significant continuing involvement in the risks and benefits associated with the asset. Financial liabilities are derecognised where the related obligations are either discharged, cancelled or expire. The difference between the carrying value of the financial liability extinguished or transferred to another party and the fair value of consideration paid, including the transfer of non-cash assets or liabilities assumed is recognised in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income.

### **e. Impairment of non-financial assets**

At each reporting date, Aspect reviews the carrying values

of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell or 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 statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income. Where it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, the company estimates the recoverable amount of the cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs.

#### **f. Employee benefits**

Provision is made for Aspect's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees up to the reporting date. Employee benefits that are expected to be settled within one year have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled, plus related on-costs.

Employee benefits payable later than one year have been measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made for those benefits plus related on-costs using the government bond rate that represents the period to the expected payment.

Aspect contributes to several contribution superannuation plans. Contributions are charged against income in the period to which they relate.

Aspect contributes to several contribution superannuation plans. Contributions are charged against income in the period to which they relate.

#### **g. Provisions**

Provisions are recognised when Aspect has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured.

#### **h. Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within short-term borrowings in current liabilities on the statement of financial position.

#### **i. Revenue and other income**

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when goods are provided to entities outside Aspect.

Revenue from the rendering of a service is recognised upon the delivery of the service to the stakeholders. Interest revenue is recognised on a proportional basis taking into account the interest rates applicable to the financial assets.

Grant monies and donations are recognised upon receipt of the monies. Where conditions are attached to the receipt of these monies, revenue is only recognised once these conditions have been fulfilled and the company is assured of control of the funds.

#### **j. Goods and services tax (GST)**

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense of an item. Receivables and payables in the statement of financial position are shown inclusive of GST.

Cash flows are presented in the statement of cash flows on a gross basis, except for the GST components of investing and financing activities, which are disclosed as operating cash flows.

#### **k. Borrowing costs**

Borrowing costs directly attributable to the acquisition, construction or production of assets that necessarily take a substantial period of time to prepare for their intended use or sale, are added to the cost of those assets, until such time as the assets are substantially ready for their intended use or sale.

All other borrowing costs are expensed in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income in the period in which they are incurred.

#### **l. Government grants**

A number of the company's programs are supported by grants received from the federal and state governments.

If conditions are attached to a grant which must be satisfied before the company is eligible to receive the

contribution, recognition of the grant as revenue is deferred until those conditions are satisfied.

Where a grant is received on the condition that specified services are delivered to the grantor, this is considered a reciprocal transaction. Revenue is recognised as services are performed during the year.

Revenue from a non-reciprocal grant that is not subject to conditions is recognised when the company obtains control of the funds, economic benefits are probable and the amount can be measured reliably. Where a grant may be required to be repaid if certain conditions are not satisfied, a liability is recognised at the year end to the extent that such conditions remain unsatisfied.

#### **m. Business combination**

The company applies the acquisition method in accounting for business combinations. The consideration transferred by the company to obtain control of another entity or its net assets and operations is calculated as the sum of the acquisition-date fair values of assets transferred and liabilities incurred by the company, which includes the fair value of any asset or liability arising from a contingent consideration arrangement. Acquisition costs are expensed as incurred.

The company recognises identifiable assets acquired and liabilities assumed in a business combination regardless of whether they have been previously recognised in the acquiree's financial statements prior to the acquisition. Assets acquired and liabilities assumed are generally measured at their acquisition-date fair values.

Goodwill is stated after separate recognition of identifiable intangible assets. It is calculated as the excess of the sum of: (a) fair value of consideration transferred; (b) the recognised amount of any non-controlling interest in the acquiree; and (c) acquisition-date fair value of any existing equity interest in the acquiree, over the acquisition-date fair values of identifiable net assets. If the fair values of identifiable net assets exceed the sum calculated above, the excess amount (i.e. gain on a bargain purchase) is recognised in profit or loss immediately as a contribution on acquisition.

#### **n. Comparative figures**

When required by Accounting Standards, comparative figures have been adjusted to conform to changes in presentation for the current financial year.

#### **o. Critical accounting estimates and judgements**

The directors evaluate estimates and judgements incorporated into the financial report based on historical knowledge and best available current information. Estimates are based on a reasonable expectation of future events and are based on current trends and economic data, obtained both externally and within Aspect.

#### **Key estimates - Impairment**

Aspect assesses impairment at each reporting date by evaluating conditions specific to the company that may lead to the impairment of assets. Where an impairment trigger exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is determined. Value-in-use calculations performed in assessing recoverable amounts incorporate a number of key estimates.

#### **Key estimates - Long service leave**

Management continue to review the probability factors used to accurately reflect the liability for long service leave for all staff.

The Directors believe that there are no other key estimates or judgements.

### **3 Revenue from ordinary activities**

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
School fees	5,375,385	4,893,545
Other fee for service	3,435,468	3,924,062
Federal grants	25,344,406	22,880,606
State grants and subsidies	43,688,142	42,757,952
Donations and bequests	3,848,193	4,230,616
Other revenue	1,467,589	1,159,589
Total revenue from ordinary activities	83,159,183	79,846,370

### **4 Operating surplus from operating activities**

Operating surplus from operating activities has been arrived at after charging the following items:



	2016	2015
	\$	\$
<b>Depreciation of:</b>		
- Freehold land and buildings	88,520	88,277
- Leasehold buildings	263,093	261,531
- Office machines and equipment	314,106	372,270
- School library	2,535	2,785
<b>Amortisation of:</b>		
- Leasehold improvements	416,728	430,427
Total depreciation and amortisation	1,084,982	1,155,290
<b>Finance costs</b>		
Bank loans and overdraft	59,896	66,749
Net bad and doubtful debts expenses including movements in provision for doubtful debts	184,320	171,857
Net expenses from movements in provision for employee benefits	3,600,712	3,179,891
Operating lease and other rental payments during the year	1,157,948	1,333,655
Net loss/(gain) on disposal of non-current assets	-	166,483

## 5 Taxation

Aspect is a charitable institution and meets the necessary conditions for its income to be exempted from income tax under Sections 50-1 and 50-5 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

## 6 Cash and cash equivalents

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Cash at bank	23,008,387	19,486,487
Cash on hand	19,971	12,035
Cash and cash equivalents	23,028,358	19,498,522

### Reconciliation of Cash

For the purposes of the statement of cash flows, cash includes cash on hand, cash at bank and cash equivalents and short-term deposits at call, net of outstanding bank overdrafts. Cash at the end of the financial year as shown in the statement of cash flows is reconciled to the related items in the statement of financial position as follows:

		2016	2015
	Notes	\$	\$
Cash at bank and on hand		23,028,358	19,498,522
Bank term deposits	8	249,145	229,917
		23,277,503	19,728,439

## 7 Trade and other receivables

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Fees and government subsidies	835,562	564,413
Less: Provision for doubtful debts	(486,240)	(373,492)
	349,322	190,921
Other receivables	27,405	111,226
	376,727	302,147

The company does not have any material credit risk exposure to any single receivable or group of receivables.

At 31 December 2016, the ageing analysis of trade receivables was as follows:

	Total	0-30 days	31-60 days	61-90 days	+91 days
2016	835,562	151,505	109,172	8,645	486,240
2015	564,413	117,712	24,574	60,813	361,314

Trade receivables are non-interest bearing loans and generally on 30-day terms. A provision for impairment loss is recognised when there is objective evidence that an individual trade receivable is impaired. A net expense of \$184,320 was recognised in 2016 (2015: expense of \$171,857).

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Balance 1 January 2016	373,492	278,961
Charge for the year	184,320	171,857
Amounts written off	(71,572)	(77,326)
Balance 31 December 2016	486,240	373,492

Receivables past due but not considered impaired are:

31-60 days	\$109,172	(2015: \$24,574)
61-90 days	\$88,645	(2015: \$48,635)
91 days and over	\$nil	(2015: \$nil)

These receivables relate to fee for service charges for school fees, other fee for service charges and contracted government grants. These receivables are not considered impaired as, based on historic recovery patterns, they are recovered before ageing beyond 120 days.

## 8 Other financial assets

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
<b>Current</b>		
Bank term deposits	249,145	229,917
<b>Non-current</b>		
Available for sale financial assets	3,536,625	3,415,283

The available for sale financial assets are Aspect's investment portfolio. They are measured at fair value on a recurring basis.

## 9 Other assets

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Accrued income	690,031	512,018
Prepayments	402,542	172,822
	1,092,573	684,840

## 10 Property and equipment

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Freehold land and buildings - at deemed cost	7,043,461	7,043,461
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(413,127)	(324,607)
	6,630,334	6,718,854
Leasehold buildings - at cost	10,488,590	10,481,010
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(2,475,843)	(2,212,750)
	8,012,747	8,268,260
Leasehold improvements - at cost	6,384,461	4,054,472
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(2,807,635)	(2,390,907)
	3,576,826	1,663,565
Office machines and equipment - at cost	4,224,509	3,864,502
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(3,409,891)	(3,095,785)
	814,618	768,717
School library - at cost	27,874	27,874
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(26,817)	(24,282)
	1,057	3,592
<b>Total property, plant and equipment</b>	<b>19,035,582</b>	<b>17,422,988</b>

	Freehold land and buildings (a)	Leasehold buildings	Leasehold improvements	Office machines and equipment	School library	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Asset gross carrying amount</b>						
Balance at 1 Jan 2016	7,043,461	10,481,010	4,054,472	3,864,502	27,874	25,471,319
Additions	-	7,580	2,329,989	360,007	-	2,697,576
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balance at 31 Dec 2016	7,043,461	10,488,590	6,384,461	4,224,509	27,874	28,168,895
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>						
Balance at 1 Jan 2016	(324,607)	(2,212,750)	(2,390,907)	(3,095,785)	(24,282)	(8,048,331)
Depreciation	(88,520)	(263,093)	(416,728)	(314,106)	(2,535)	(1,084,982)
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balance at 31 Dec 2016	(413,127)	(2,475,843)	(2,807,635)	(3,409,891)	(26,817)	(9,133,313)
<b>Carrying amount 31 December 2016</b>	<b>6,630,334</b>	<b>8,012,747</b>	<b>3,576,826</b>	<b>814,618</b>	<b>1,057</b>	<b>19,035,582</b>

(a) Management's assessment on the fair value of land and buildings at 31 December 2016 is \$21,230,000. These estimates include Aspect South Coast School (\$1,975,000), Aspect Central Coast School (\$3,100,000), Aspect Western Sydney School (\$3,600,000), Aspect Vern Barnett School at Forestville (\$6,100,000), Aspect Hunter School (\$5,500,000) and a property in Altona, VIC (\$955,000) which are reflected in our insurance coverage.

## 11 Trade and other payables

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
<b>Current</b>		
Trade creditors	791,775	320,927
Other creditors and accruals	2,948,760	3,515,574
Goods and services tax payable	782,314	129,506
Government subsidies in advance	8,902,067	5,723,834
	<u>13,424,916</u>	<u>9,689,841</u>

## 12 Borrowings

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
<b>Current</b>		
Bank loan - secured	<u>101,910</u>	<u>77,027</u>
<b>Non-current</b>		
Bank loan - secured	<u>1,082,728</u>	<u>1,188,091</u>

There is one bank loan denominated in Australian dollars. The amount in current liabilities comprises the portion of the bank loan payable within one year. The non-current balance represents the portion of the bank loan not due within one year.

The bank loan with Westpac is secured by first mortgage over Aspect's land at Thornton and Corrimall, as well as the lease at Terrigal and a fixed/floating charge over Aspect's assets. The business loan bears interest at 4.46% (2015: 4.98%) per annum, payable monthly and is expected to be repaid by 2029. The purpose of the loan was to finance the upgrade project of Vern Barnett School.

In addition, interest on the above mentioned loan is partly subsidised by the Department of Education NSW. The rate varies and is currently reimbursed at about 3.46% per annum.

### Financing arrangements

Aspect has access to the following financial facilities:

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
<b>Total facilities available:</b>		
Bank overdraft	150,000	150,000
Bank loan	<u>1,184,638</u>	<u>1,265,118</u>
<b>Facilities utilised at balance date:</b>		
Bank loan	<u>1,184,638</u>	<u>1,265,118</u>

## 13 Provisions

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
<b>Current</b>		
Provision for remediation of leasehold properties	60,000	80,000
Provision for long service leave	5,410,525	4,544,513
Provision for annual leave	<u>1,507,565</u>	<u>1,229,134</u>
	<u>6,978,090</u>	<u>5,853,647</u>
<b>Non-current</b>		
Provision for remediation of leasehold properties	820,000	685,000
Provision for long service leave	<u>1,256,706</u>	<u>1,082,396</u>
	<u>2,076,706</u>	<u>1,767,396</u>
<b>Total</b>	<u>9,054,796</u>	<u>7,621,043</u>

## 14 Reserves

The asset revaluation reserve records revaluations in available for sale financial assets. The asset realisation reserve records the gain or loss on disposal of financial assets.

## 15 Commitments

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
<b>Non-cancellable operating lease</b>		
Future operating lease rentals not provided for in the financial statements and payable:		
Within one year	981,165	1,099,546
One year or later and not later than five years	<u>1,673,632</u>	<u>1,141,808</u>
	<u>2,654,797</u>	<u>2,241,354</u>

Aspect leases property and equipment under non-cancellable operating leases expiring from 1 to 73 years. Leases generally provide Aspect with a right of renewal at which time all terms are renegotiated.

The company has no contractual commitments for the acquisition of property, plant and equipment.

## 16 Fundraising Appeals conducted during the year

Fundraising appeals conducted during the financial period included mail and telephone appeals, payroll giving, raffles, Comedy Night, Celebrity Golf Day, active challenges, merchandise sales, applications to trusts, foundations and registered clubs, donations provided by corporate, community



group and club fundraising events and the general receiving of directly and indirectly solicited donations and bequests. This money helped to supplement the income received from governments and fees. As a result Aspect was able to expand the range and level of the services provided for people with autism and their families.

In particular this income was used to fund part of the redevelopment of Aspect's schools, resources for Aspect schools, Aspect therapy services, some services for adults with autism and some of the work of the Aspect Research team.

The cost of raising these funds was 32% (2015: 25%) of the gross revenue received. This included the costs of events, all promotional activity and the payment for all administrative services including salaries for Aspect Fundraising staff.

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
<b>Results of fundraising appeals</b>		
Gross proceeds from fundraising appeals recognised in current year	3,848,193	4,230,616
Less: Total costs of fundraising appeals	(1,237,243)	(1,076,764)
Net surplus	<u>2,610,950</u>	<u>3,153,852</u>

## 17 Related party transactions

Transactions between related parties are on normal commercial terms and conditions no more favourable than those available to other parties unless otherwise stated.

## 18 Transactions with key management personnel

Key management within the Company are the members of the Executive. Compared to 2015 there was one additional position on the Executive for the whole of 2016. During 2016 two members resigned and were replaced with new staff within the context of an Executive re-structure. A team of nine staff continued to fulfill the Executive roles.

Key management personnel remuneration includes the following expenses:	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Total key management personnel remuneration	<u>1,789,583</u>	<u>1,570,442</u>

The Board Directors of Aspect receive no remuneration.

## 19 Events subsequent to reporting 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.

# Responsible Entities' Declaration

In the opinion of the Responsible Entities of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect):

- a. The financial statements and notes of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) are in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, including:
  - i. giving a true and fair view of its financial position as at 31 December 2016 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
  - ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2014, and
- b. There are reasonable grounds to believe that Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

The Responsible Entities are the members of the Board of Directors. This declaration is signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors:



Chair of the Board  
Julie Hamblin

Dated this 24th day of March 2017

# Declaration by Chief Executive Officer

## Declaration by Chief Executive Officer in respect of fundraising appeals

### Opinion

I, Adrian Ford, Chief Executive Officer of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) declare, in my opinion:

- a. the financial statements give a true and fair view of all income and expenditure of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) with respect to fundraising appeal activities for the financial year ended 31 December 2016;
- b. the statement of financial position gives a true and fair view of the state of affairs with respect to fundraising appeal activities as at 31 December 2016;
- c. the provisions of the Charitable Fundraising Acts and the Regulations under the Acts and the conditions attached to the authorities have been complied with during the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016; and
- d. the internal controls exercised by Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) are appropriate and effective in accounting for all income received and applied from any fundraising appeals.



Adrian Ford  
Chief Executive Officer

Dated this 24th day of March 2017



# Independent Auditor's report



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## **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF AUTISM SPECTRUM AUSTRALIA (ASPECT)**

### **Auditor's Opinion**

We have audited the accompanying financial report of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) (the "Company"), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2016, and the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, the Responsible Entities' declaration and the declaration by the Chief Executive Officer in respect of fundraising appeals.

In our opinion, the financial report of Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, including:

- a giving a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 31 December 2016 and of its financial performance for the year then ended;
- b complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013;
- c the financial report shows a true and fair view of the financial results of fundraising appeals conducted during the year;
- d the financial report and associated records have been properly kept during the year in accordance with the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and the regulations;

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- e monies received as a result of fundraising appeals conducted during the year has been properly accounted for and applied in accordance with the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and its regulations; and
- f there are reasonable grounds to believe Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

**Basis for Auditor's Opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the Company in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

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

**Information Other than the Financial Report and Auditor's Report**

Those charged with governance are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Company's annual report for the year ended 31 December 2016, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

**Responsibilities of the Directors for the Financial Report**

The Directors of the Company are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991, and for such internal control as the Directors



determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Directors are responsible for assessing the Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Directors either intend to liquidate the Company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Company's financial reporting process.

**Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: [http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors\\_files/ar3.pdf](http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_files/ar3.pdf). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Grant Thornton".

GRANT THORNTON AUDIT PTY LTD  
Chartered Accountants

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "C F Farley".

C F Farley  
Partner - Audit & Assurance

Sydney, 24 March 2017





The Mark Schlosser  
Fellowship for Person-Centred Practice.

*In Memory of Mark  
Schlosser (1953 - 2016)*

Former National Director, Aspect Individual  
Options and Families (2008 - 2016)

a different brilliant  
is our inspiration, focusing on the  
strengths & interests  
of people on the spectrum

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