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Annual Impact Report  
2024

# Every aspect of our year

# Sharing our brilliant year...



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

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 (ATO).

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 CCP3486; and is registered to collect charitable donations within Tasmania (fundraising number C/10209). Aspect is also authorised to fundraise in the Northern Territory.

Aspect promotes an awareness and understanding of the national and state-based Carers Recognition Acts.

In preparing the annual report for the year ending December 2024, we have reduced our impact on the environment by retaining it on our website and producing only a limited number of copies in print.

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## What's inside?

### WELCOME

Acknowledgment of Country	4
Aspect Inclusion Statement	5

### OUR YEAR

Message from the Chair	6
Message from the CEO	8

### OUR STRATEGY

Our 2023–2025 strategic plan	10
Snapshot of our impact in 2024	12

<b>Core Strategy 01:</b> Deliver evidence-based, high quality, highly valued autism-specific education and services for our students, participants, and their families.	14
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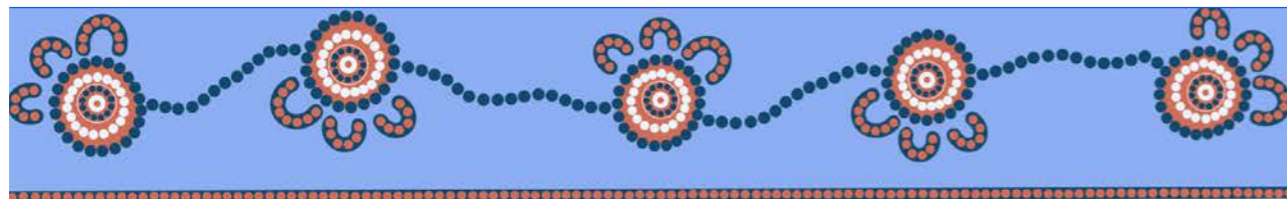
<b>Core Strategy 02:</b> Build new opportunities and create greater impact through strong partnerships.	20
--	----

<b>Core Strategy 03:</b> Develop community understanding about autism to create a more inclusive world.	26
--	----

<b>Core Strategy 04:</b> Position Aspect for a strong future through innovation.	32
---	----

### THE NITTY GRITTY

Fundraising	40
Our supporters and partners	42
Facilities	44
Our people	50
Our Patron, Life Governors and Life Members	54
Our Board of Directors	55
Treasurer's Report	56

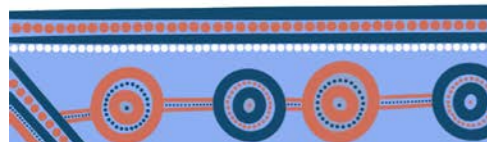


Aspect (Autism Spectrum Australia) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the many lands on which we work and live. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.



#### About our artwork...

We are thrilled to present a series of four artworks created by Brittney Paulson of Ukamirra Art, embodying our vibrant new brand colours and the essence of inclusion, understanding and positivity that is at the heart of Aspect.



Within these artworks, circles serve as gathering spaces, while the U shapes represent communities uniting with optimism and purpose. The trails between these gatherings reflect how far we have come on our journey.



Each piece is a celebration of togetherness, showcasing the strength of our community and inspiring confidence and a positive outlook. This collaboration does more than just enrich our visual identity – it reinforces our commitment to building a diverse and inclusive environment.

We thank Brittney Paulson for this inspired collection.

#### INCLUSION STATEMENT

Everybody is welcome at Aspect.

We want you to feel it is OK to be authentically yourself. Please let us know if there is anything we can do that helps to include you in the training or meeting. Everyone is welcome to use their own strategies to help them feel relaxed.

The Inclusion Statement was co-developed by Autistic and non-Autistic staff in 2020. It facilitates better participation by letting people know they are welcome to be their authentic selves and encouraging them to do whatever they need to feel comfortable.

The statement is read at the beginning of formal meetings and acknowledges that strategies, such as walking around, using a fidget toy, turning off a camera during a Zoom meeting, or simply recognising that there is a child in the background, can help some people feel more productively engaged with a meeting or event.

This statement highlights the importance of a culture of inclusion and the need to explicitly communicate this inclusion with our staff and stakeholders. The statement is also proudly displayed at all Aspect schools and offices across Australia.

# A year of momentum and evolution...

I am delighted to present the Annual Impact Report 2024, a moment to reflect on and celebrate our collective achievements over the past 12 months. At the same time, we need to recognise the evolving landscape in which we operate, as significant reforms continue to build momentum and shape the future of both the education and disability sectors.

### Evolving policy environment

This year brought significant policy developments that have the potential to create lasting, positive change for Autistic people and the broader disability community.

The passing of the Better and Fairer Schools (Funding and Reform) Bill 2024 by the Albanese Government marks a major step toward greater investment in public education. At the same time, the Disability Royal Commission's (DRC) recommendation to strengthen public schools' capacity to support students with disability presents both opportunities and challenges for Aspect's education model. We remain committed to advocating for real choice for parents by offering high-quality educational pathways that reflect the individual needs of students on the autism spectrum.

Beyond education, the DRC and National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Review have outlined bold recommendations to drive system-wide improvements, while the launch of the National Autism Strategy (NAS) represents an important step in addressing long-standing barriers faced by Autistic individuals and their families.

I am immensely proud of Aspect's active role in these discussions. We have engaged with policymakers, provided key submissions on inclusive education in NSW, and welcomed government representatives to our schools and services to demonstrate the impact of our approach. Ensuring the voices of the people we support are heard, we have consulted with students, participants and families throughout and facilitated discussions with parents of children with high support needs in collaboration with the Department of Social Services.

### A strong financial foundation

Whilst navigating ongoing sector-wide pressures, including rising wages, complex industrial agreements, workforce shortages and NDIS pricing constraints, Aspect has maintained a position of financial strength. For the first time, revenue exceeded \$150 million, with a Total Comprehensive Income of \$29.43 million. This strong financial foundation enables us to continue to drive our strategic initiatives and invest in new opportunities that deliver positive outcomes for Autistic people and their families.

Our fundraising efforts also saw remarkable growth, raising \$7.58 million – an increase of \$1.36 million from the previous year. We are deeply grateful to our supporters, whose generosity enables us to extend our reach and impact. This result was bolstered by a significant contribution from Gifts in Wills demonstrating the passion that donors have for the work we do and the belief in our vision and purpose.

### Building for the future

As we embark on the next chapter of our Capital Works Master Plan, Aspect continues to demonstrate our commitment to creating inclusive, autism-friendly learning environments.



This year, we completed major refurbishments at Aspect Western Sydney School and are now nearing the completion of our Aspect Hills Shire School in Gables, Box Hill.

This purpose-built campus will provide a specialist learning environment for up to 72 students from Kindergarten to Year 6. With this addition, Aspect's network has grown to 10 specialist schools, each benefiting from major upgrades and enhancements to ensure they remain dynamic spaces for learning and growth.

We also continue to broaden our community impact. With the support of the NSW Government's Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants program, we have secured a new property in Liverpool to establish an innovative Community Services hub – a space designed to provide integrated, tailored support for Autistic individuals and their families.

In August, we settled on a piece of land in Thrumster for our new Aspect Hunter School Port Macquarie campus, which will open in 2026. It will include eight classrooms and support up to 48 students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

In addition to these major developments, several smaller projects have also commenced across our schools – Riverina, Macarthur and South Coast – as well as Adult Community Services at Heatherton, Victoria.

### Strengthening our Board

As we progress through our 2023–2025 Strategic Plan, we continue to strengthen our leadership. This year, we welcomed two new Board-appointed Directors. Dave Cowan, an experienced technology and information security leader with over 26 years in senior roles in Australia and the UK, and Jim Boynton, a seasoned commercial lawyer who spent nearly

30 years as a partner at King and Wood Mallesons, advising local and international clients in the financial services sector. Their expertise will be invaluable as we navigate the next phase of Aspect's growth and impact.

### Looking ahead

As we move forward, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my fellow Board members, our Executive team, and the entire Aspect community for their unwavering commitment. Under the leadership of Jacqui Borland, Aspect continues to innovate and adapt in a rapidly changing environment.

It has been an incredible year and I look forward to continuing our journey of driving meaningful change and shaping a future where Autistic people are supported to realise their full potential.

Paul Khoury  
Chair of the Aspect Board



# Strengthening our foundations for the future

2024 has been another transformative year for Aspect. As we conclude the second year of our Strategic Plan, I am proud to reflect on the significant progress we have made across all four strategic pillars. In a rapidly shifting external environment, our focus has remained resolute: delivering high-quality services grounded in contemporary research and co-designed with Autistic people and their families. This unwavering commitment continues to shape the way we evolve, adapt and grow.

Our transformation journey this year has touched every part of the organisation. From how we deliver services to how we support our workforce, strengthen systems and enhance operations, each change has been deliberate and aligned with our long-term vision. We have laid the foundation for a more agile, responsive, and sustainable Aspect – one that is better equipped to meet the needs of our community now and into the future.

### Driving excellence in Education

In Education, our schools have taken great strides in improving teaching and learning, notably through our partnership with Dr Lyn Sharratt and the implementation of the Aspect Learning Improvement Collaborative (ALIC). This initiative is lifting the standard of autism-specific education and driving measurable outcomes for students. Meanwhile, our physical learning environments continue to evolve. The new Aspect Hills Shire School, alongside major capital works across other campuses, has expanded our reach and created more inclusive spaces where students can thrive.

### Strengthening Individual and Community Services

Our Individual and Community Services (ICS) team has also undertaken a bold transformation. In the face of rising demand and financial constraints, particularly within NDIS-funded therapy services, the team has implemented a strategic plan focused on sustainability, staff experience and participant outcomes. Projects have included the rollout of a new workforce strategy, refreshed supervision and training models and improved data systems. These efforts are already enhancing communication pathways, creating a more streamlined experience for participants and supporting our staff to deliver even greater impact.

### Creating a more autism-friendly Australia

The Autism Friendly team has continued to grow in both size and influence. With national engagement across NSW, Victoria, Queensland, ACT and WA, the team trained people, contributed to major media and supported the ABC's *The Assembly*. In Sydney, grant-funded roles transitioned into permanent positions, a testament to the program's long-term value. The opening of a new Melbourne office, supported by Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) funding, brought three new team members – two of whom are Autistic – and new partnerships, further expanding our reach and embedding lived experience into every facet of our work. The successful implementation of a custom-built Salesforce platform has transformed the way the team connects with partners, improving customer experience and data-driven service delivery.

### Evolving our approach to giving

Fundraising at Aspect has also evolved. In 2024, we piloted new face-to-face fundraising programs, refreshed our community fundraising activities and updated our value propositions for regular giving and Gifts in Wills. Campaigns like Shine for Autism have broadened our reach and deepened engagement with our supporters, helping secure vital funds to extend our impact.

### Advancing digital capability

A key focus has been our digital transformation, with the appointment of a Chief Information Officer to lead the development of a clear roadmap. This strategy will align technology with business needs, ensuring we operate more efficiently, make smarter data-driven decisions, and deliver an enhanced experience for our students, participants and staff. From cloud-based systems to responsible AI, the emphasis is on meaningful innovation that supports people – empowering our teams with the tools they need while safeguarding data and strengthening resilience across the board.

### Investing in our people

Our people are at the heart of all we do. In a competitive and challenging labour market, we took proactive steps to address workforce pressures. With the appointment of a Chief People Officer, we have begun reviewing and revitalising our workforce strategy to better support our current staff and attract new talent. This includes building the capability of our People, Culture and Safety team, ensuring we continue to meet the needs of our organisation and community well into the future.

### Thank you

As we reflect on a year of significant progress and meaningful change, I want to sincerely thank the people who make this possible. To our incredible staff – your skill, compassion and perseverance continue to inspire. Your work is the driving force behind our progress, and the difference you make each day is both profound and far reaching.

To our Board of Directors, thank you for your generous time, wise counsel and steady guidance. I would also like to acknowledge our Executive and Leadership teams, whose focus and adaptability have helped steer Aspect through another dynamic year.

Most importantly, to the Autistic individuals, families and communities we walk alongside – thank you. Your voices shape our direction, your trust fuels our purpose and your aspirations continue to guide everything we do. Together, we are building a more inclusive and understanding Australia – one that recognises and celebrates every different brilliant.

*Jacqui Borland*

**Jacqui Borland**  
Chief Executive Officer



Aspect continues to be one of Australia’s leading providers of autism-specific education and support services. Our 2023–2025 Strategic Plan aims to shape and progress our vision, while building on our 55+ years of experience in delivering evidence-based knowledge, informed by lived experience. It provides revised priorities that reflect the changes in the external environment and a renewed focus on innovation to take us into the future.

# Our strategic plan

## What we do

### Australia’s leading autism educator

Leading the way in developing and applying innovative, evidence-based education approaches that create positive outcomes for Autistic people.

### Trusted specialist autism support

Providing pathways and foundations for Autistic people that support them to develop the right skills and capabilities to thrive in life.

### Practical autism innovators

Showcasing what works based on our practical evidence-based knowledge and deep understanding of the lived experiences and priorities of Autistic people.

#### OUR PURPOSE

**a different  
brilliant®**

Understanding,  
engaging and celebrating  
the strengths, interests  
and aspirations of people  
on the autism spectrum.

## STRATEGIC PLAN: 2023–2025

### Our core strategies



#### CORE STRATEGY 1:

Deliver evidence-based, high quality, highly valued autism-specific education and services for our students, participants and their families.

- Review and transform Aspect services into efficient, sustainable models that meet the needs of the people we support
- Develop and evaluate specialised programs for specific cohorts of Autistic children and adults
- Deeply understand transition pathways and what supports are needed, develop and pilot programs of support.



#### CORE STRATEGY 3:

Develop community understanding about autism to create a more inclusive world.

- Invest in strategic partnerships to expand and scale our autism-friendly consulting business
- Develop a business model for Individual and Community Capacity Building services with a clear value offer.

#### OUR VISION

The best opportunities for people on the autism spectrum.

#### OUR VALUES

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



#### CORE STRATEGY 2:

Build new opportunities and create greater impact through strong partnerships.

- Work in partnership with Autistic people throughout Aspect (in governance, service planning and delivery, and research)
- Develop and refine our partnership model in education, therapy, and individual and community capacity building initiatives
- Develop and pilot business partnerships for new products and services.



#### CORE STRATEGY 4:

Position Aspect for a strong future through innovation.

- Develop an innovation framework to test, trial and evaluate new initiatives
- Create a product/service development framework and prioritisation model
- Build a culture of innovation and continuous improvement at grassroots level.

### Our enablers



People



Business  
development  
and marketing



Fundraising



Technology  
systems and  
facilities



# Every aspect of our impact

Revenue  
 **\$153.6m**

Schools and satellite classes   
**10 schools  
>100 satellites**



Locations  
**79**



Students  
(main campus and satellite)  
**1,260**



Participants  
**2,731**

Page views on website  
(across the year)

**1.2 million** 

Social Media followers

**210k** 

People reached  
through all media

**23.8 million**



Podcast  
downloads

**25,100**

People receiving  
external newsletter

**~ 7,300**

Assessments sponsored  
for disadvantaged families

**30**

Therapy hours

**50,089**

Assessment  
NPS\*

**+76**

Assessments  
completed



**784**

Teletherapy hours provided

**3,788**



Workshop  
NPS\*

**+81**

Workshops and  
webinar participants

**655**

Relationship  
NPS\*

**+64**

\* Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a widely used measure of customer satisfaction and loyalty. It reflects how likely individuals are to recommend a service to others, providing valuable insight into their overall experience. Scale goes from -100 to +100. Anything above +30 is great and above +70 is excellent!





# Advancing learning outcomes



In 2024, Aspect Education continued their journey with the Aspect Learning Improvement Collaborative (ALIC), a professional learning initiative designed to transform teaching practices and enhance student outcomes.

## The impact of the ALIC program

ALIC provides a structured, evidence-informed approach to drive school improvement. By embedding high-impact teaching strategies and fostering a data-driven culture, we are empowering educators and unlocking the potential of every student.



### A systematic approach to improvement.

Developed with Dr Lyn Sharratt, ALIC is grounded in 14 parameters for system and school improvement. Since implementation, we've seen notable gains, particularly in communication and literacy. Using data walls to help track progress, educators now use real-time data to tailor instruction, aligning with autism-specific best practice.

The program has also strengthened leadership and teaching. Principals feel more confident in leading improvement, and educators have enhanced their data literacy to refine teaching and make informed decisions.

ALIC emphasises collaboration and ongoing learning. Learning walks and talks foster reflection and sharing of best practice, while Instructional Case Management Meetings (ICMMs) support timely student interventions, improving engagement and attendance.

### A culture of excellence and continuous growth

The ALIC program represents a culture of continuous improvement that is shaping the future of autism-specific education. By equipping educators with the tools to drive evidence-based teaching and by strengthening collaboration across Aspect schools, we are ensuring that every student receives the support they need to learn, grow and thrive.

*"Our work with ALIC has strengthened our culture of learning through a shared belief that every student can learn."*

MARK RUDD  
Principal, Aspect Central Coast School

*"Data has illuminated the faces of our Autistic students at Aspect Treetop School through providing a framework for teachers to have a collaborative approach to supporting student learning."*

KAYE PERRY  
Principal, Aspect Treetop School

### IMPACT

60  
Staff participating in ALIC

10  
Schools participating

89%  
Increase in Principal confidence in leading school improvement approaches

78%  
Increase in knowledge and confidence in teaching and learning over 12 months

97%  
Growth in leadership, practice and knowledge



1.

# Advancing autism research across life stages and contexts

The Aspect Research Centre for Autism Practice (ARCAP) continues to drive impactful research aimed at enhancing the lives of Autistic individuals across all stages of life. Our work spans key life events such as post-diagnosis support and pregnancy, as well as everyday challenges like travel, social connection and mental wellbeing.

## Exploring loneliness among Autistic adults

ARCAP has led a pioneering international study to develop a world-first loneliness measurement tool, specifically designed for Autistic adults. Unlike other common loneliness measures, this tool was co-developed with Autistic and non-Autistic collaborators to ensure accessibility and accuracy.

A study using the tool, with 416 Autistic and 212 non-Autistic participants, revealed stronger links between loneliness, anxiety and depression in Autistic adults, offering vital insights for improved support strategies. ARCAP also contributed to the NSW Parliament inquiry into loneliness, advocating for targeted, autism-informed interventions. Loneliness remains a key research focus, with plans to explore new solutions that foster meaningful social connection for Autistic adults.

## Understanding early development in later-diagnosed Autistic females

Autistic females are often diagnosed later than males, possibly due to diagnostic tools based on male-centred traits. ARCAP’s research explored the early development and barriers to diagnosis for later-diagnosed Autistic females.

Findings suggest that sensory sensitivities and a preference for routine may be more reliable early indicators than social differences. As social demands grow with age, challenges often become more apparent – important insight for clinicians assessing older children.



## The Welcome Pack: supporting Autistic adults after diagnosis

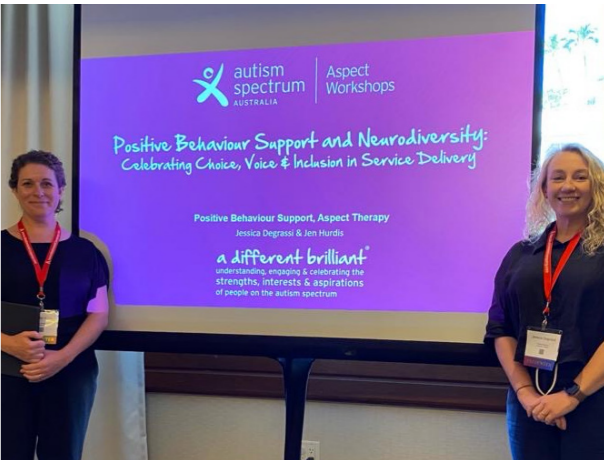
An autism diagnosis in adulthood can be both affirming and overwhelming. In response, ARCAP partnered with Griffith University and Reframing Autism to evaluate a neurodiversity-affirming Welcome Pack – a free, Autistic-led resource to provide information to newly diagnosed Autistic adults.

Participants shared that the pack offered vital validation, emotional support and practical guidance. While many found a strong sense of connection and clarity, the study also identified a need for peer-based support to complement self-guided tools. Ongoing collaboration is underway to build scalable, sustainable models that empower Autistic adults on their journey post-diagnosis.

Dr Ru Ying Cai and Dr Chris Edwards received an Early Career Research Award at the TheMHS Mental Health Service Awards 2024 in recognition of their innovative research that is improving the mental health of Autistic adults through the cultivation of self-compassion.



IMPACT AT A GLANCE	
Studies completed	Conference presentations
11	29
Journal articles published	Workshops
14	34
Internal research enquiries	Research participants
140	1511



## Advancing neuroaffirming practices on the global stage

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) practitioners, Jessica Degrassi and Jennifer Hurdis, represented Aspect internationally in January, presenting at the 25th International Conference on Autism, Intellectual Disability and Developmental Disabilities (DADD) in Hawaii. They presented their session, *Positive Behaviour Support and Neurodiversity*, to an audience of educators, administrators, researchers and college instructors from the USA and Canada, exploring the evolution of behaviour support practices and the shift towards neuroaffirming approaches.

Their session highlighted the need to adapt historical behaviour support models to better align with Autistic perspectives. Jessica and Jennifer collaborated with Dr Chris Edwards from ARCAP; Ainslie Robinson, Aspect’s Working in Partnership Officer; and PBS Practitioner, Tegan Ferguson, ensuring the information was evidence-based while centring on lived experience.

Aspect’s presence at the DADD conference reinforces our commitment to leading conversations on inclusive, progressive support strategies and promoting a more neuroaffirming future.

“It was a great opportunity to showcase Aspect’s collaborative work to ensure more inclusive and supportive frameworks in the field. Once again, Aspect is leading the way in evidence-based supports and working in partnership with our community.”

JESSICA DEGRASSI  
Manager, ICS PBS and Safeguarding, Aspect



Flourishing together: highlights from the 2024 Aspect Assessments and Therapy National Conference

The 2024 Aspect Assessments and Therapy National Conference (AATNC) brought together over 200 Aspect Therapy and Assessment staff from across Australia on 9–10 July, creating opportunities for collaboration and professional development. Centred on the theme “Flourish”, this year’s conference focused on advancing the holistic wellbeing of Autistic individuals while also encouraging staff to grow professionally in their roles.

Keynote speakers included autism relationship advocate Jodi Rogers, neurodivergent health researcher Dr Kana Grace, and ARCAP’s Head of Research, Dr Vicki Gibbs, who provided valuable insights to enhance learning and practice. The event also marked the first Individual and Community Services (ICS) Staff Recognition Awards, celebrating the outstanding contributions of staff.

The conference concluded with a keynote by First Nations advocate Kristy Greaves, who shared her experience of supporting her Autistic son through a cultural lens.

*“Our aim was to help staff translate research into practice through innovative strategies that support Autistic individuals, their families and carers. We look forward to continuing to empower our staff with lifelong learning so they can support others while also caring for their own wellbeing.”*

RACHEL KERSLAKE  
National Director, Individual and Community Services, Aspect

Thriving with the right support

Shia’s story

When Shia was just a toddler, his parents, Teeara and Zac, began to notice differences in his development. At 16 months, he became intensely focused on particular objects and words. By 18 months, his words had faded altogether, and he wasn’t engaging in gestures like pointing or clapping.

Thanks to an early diagnosis just before his third birthday, Shia was able to access the support he needed without delay. By the age of five, he had enrolled at an Aspect school – an environment carefully designed to meet the needs of Autistic students. And from that moment, something remarkable began to unfold.

Now 10 years old, Shia is thriving. His progress over the years has been extraordinary – gaining confidence, developing his communication skills and mastering tasks that once felt out of reach. He’s become an enthusiastic cook (cakes and cookies are a favourite), and he lights up when he’s in the school’s sensory room or learning about animals, one of his special interests.

“He still likes routine,” says his mum, Teeara, “but one of his biggest strengths now is how well he adapts to change.”

For Shia’s parents, the journey has been one of understanding and embracing their son’s unique path. “We take the scenic route through life, not the highway,” says his dad, Zac – a sentiment that speaks volumes about their unwavering support.

The tailored, nurturing approach of his Aspect school has made a significant impact on Shia’s learning and happiness. The low student-to-teacher ratio, the sensory spaces, and the strong connection with his speech pathologist have all helped him find his voice – and his confidence.

Today, Shia continues to grow and shine. His story is a reminder that with the right support, Autistic children can not only learn – they can flourish.

# Nurturing powerful partnerships



In November, Aspect proudly hosted representatives from AWWA, a leading special education organisation in Singapore, for a five-day study tour exploring best practices in autism education.

## Fostering global collaboration: AWWA study tour visits Aspect



As the first program of its kind at Aspect, this initiative provided a valuable opportunity for international collaboration, allowing us to share insights, strategies and innovations that shape our approach to supporting Autistic students.

The tour featured expert-led presentations from the Aspect team, covering key topics such as personalised learning, autism-specific strategies, and person-centred approaches. AWWA's team also visited several Aspect schools, gaining firsthand experience of our purpose-built facilities and student-centred teaching in action.

Workshops throughout the week delved into data-driven curriculum differentiation, evidence-based autism education, student voice and autism-friendly school environments. Discussions underscored the importance of inclusive decision-making, collaborative teamwork among educators and therapists, and the integration of sensory accommodations into school settings.

A mix of presentations, case studies, group reflections, panel discussions and hands-on activities enriched the learning experience, ensuring participants were able to translate insights into practice.

This study tour marked the beginning of an ongoing exchange of knowledge and expertise between Aspect and AWWA, strengthening our shared commitment to creating inclusive, effective learning environments for Autistic students worldwide.

*"One of the main things I observed ... is the student voice. One of the schools we went to, we had the chance to interact with the students and it was just amazing how they have the social skills to introduce themselves, to come up and share about their day, even share about what they enjoy about school and even come and tell us what they think needs to change. I think that was really amazing. We really value what you've done. The fact that you came to visit us to try to understand our needs to customise the whole program to meet these needs really helped. Thank you."*

AMY TAN,  
Principal, AWWA School Napiri (Singapore)

# 2.

## Empowering families and educators through Positive Partnerships

For more than 15 years, Positive Partnerships has been a vital program supporting families, educators and communities to create better outcomes for young Autistic people.



Funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and implemented by Aspect, the program provides high-quality, accessible resources designed to strengthen understanding, inclusion and advocacy.

Through a diverse range of offerings – including in-person and online workshops, live and recorded webinars, interactive learning modules and an extensive library of downloadable materials – Positive Partnerships equips parents, carers and educators with practical strategies.

Resources are available in multiple languages and tailored materials ensure First Nations communities have culturally relevant support.

This year saw a strong demand for in-person and online workshops, with educators, parents, and carers actively engaging in training sessions. The Positive Partnerships website also experienced significant growth, welcoming new visitors and subscribers to the Online Learning Hub. Feedback from participants continues to reflect the program's positive impact, with high levels of satisfaction and trust in the resources provided.

By offering all resources free of charge, Positive Partnerships ensures that families, educators, and communities have access to the tools they need to create meaningful change for young Autistic people.



### IMPACT

143

In-person workshops delivered

2.2k

Educators reached

1.5k

Parents reached

3.0k

People accessing webinars and training

92k

Website visits

## Partnering with the Autistic community

In 2024, Aspect strengthened its commitment to working in partnership with Autistic people, ensuring their insights shape our services, strategies and advocacy efforts.

### Aspect Advisory Council

The Aspect Advisory Council welcomed new members – Tammy McGowan, Tea Rundback, Daniel Giles and Josh Crawford – expanding the diversity of lived experience represented. The Council met four times throughout the year, contributing to a range of strategic discussions. Their input played a vital role in shaping Aspect's approach to supporting mainstream schools, refining our response to the draft NAS and exploring potential partnerships in cause-related marketing. Additionally, Council members participated in preparatory discussions ahead of Aspect's Board/Executive Strategy Day and provided input into the development of Aspect's new Autism Plan, which will replace the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP).

### Think Tank

The Aspect Think Tank continued its important work, providing valuable lived-experience perspectives to ensure Aspect's programs and services remain responsive and inclusive. This year, members contributed to making health services more accessible by reviewing BreastScreen NSW's intake forms.

They also played a key role in shaping Aspect Education's Girls' Strategy, ensuring diagnostic reports adopt a positive, strengths-based lens. Additionally, they refined the messaging for the Walk for Autism campaign, which introduced a new mental health focus.

### Working in partnership

Collaboration with Autistic individuals extended across a range of initiatives in 2024. Autistic voices helped shape all Fundraising and Philanthropy campaigns, including refining the messaging for Walk for Autism. Fundraising's creative agencies also received training to enhance the authenticity of their campaign messaging. In addition, the World Autism Understanding Day campaign was co-developed with Autistic contributors, reinforcing our commitment to inclusion. Within Aspect Education, Autistic partnerships informed autism-friendly assessments across school sites and were central to the *Nothing About Us, Without Us* session during Aspect's first international study tour. Aspect's ongoing work in inclusive recruitment was another key initiative shaped by Autistic perspectives, ensuring a fairer and more accessible hiring process.

Through these collaborative efforts, Aspect continues to uphold its commitment to ensuring that Autistic voices drive meaningful change, reinforcing the principle that true inclusion is built through authentic partnerships.



## The Assembly: A ground-breaking autism-friendly journalism project

Aspect is proud to have collaborated with Helium Pictures on *The Assembly*, a six-part ABC TV Australian-first series that puts Autistic voices at the forefront of Australian journalism. The program follows 15 Autistic student journalists as they prepare and conduct interviews with some of the nation's most well-known figures, including Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Delta Goodrem, Hamish Blake, Adam Goodes, Sam Neill and Amanda Keller. The series demonstrates the capabilities of Autistic interviewers with a range of different backgrounds and abilities.

In partnership with Macquarie University, Aspect's Autism Friendly team adapted a journalism course to ensure an inclusive and accessible learning experience. Students were supported with visual stories, structured sessions, sensory adjustments, 1:1 support and experienced mentors, including esteemed journalist Leigh Sales, who guided them in refining their research and interviewing skills.

Beyond the series, *The Assembly* also creates meaningful career pathways. All participants were offered paid internships with ABC, highlighting the importance of inclusive employment opportunities. With Autistic individuals facing disproportionately high unemployment rates, this initiative demonstrates how tailored supports can empower Autistic professionals to thrive in media and beyond.

*"One of the major highlights was having the opportunity to meet a whole bunch of incredible like-minded people and bonding with them over this insane shared experience."*

ANGUS HAMILL

*"I usually hate going up to someone and asking for help, but Tom and Emma made it so clear that I can go up to them and if I needed help, they would help me."*

DALE MACKAY



## Gold Coast Airport leads the way in inclusive travel

**Gold Coast Airport (GCA) is expanding its commitment to accessible travel through an initiative that aims to create a fully inclusive airport experience by addressing the needs of passengers with a range of disabilities.**

Building on its role as the first Australian airport to introduce the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program, GCA recently conducted a multi-disability environmental assessment to build on the work already delivered by Aspect Autism Friendly. Our staff supported individuals with different disabilities – including wheelchair users and people who are hearing or vision-impaired – to participate in a walkthrough to identify key areas for improvement.

The insights gathered will guide recommendations for facility and process upgrades, with the potential to influence national accessibility standards for airports.

This collaborative approach moves beyond isolated disability initiatives to a more holistic, inclusive framework.

Gold Coast Airport's leadership in accessibility is reinforced by research from ARCAP, which found that autism-friendly initiatives, such as sensory-friendly spaces and the Sunflower Program, significantly improve travel experiences. The study also identified opportunities for further enhancements, such as clearer quiet zone signage and increased staff training.

*"Gold Coast Airport is focused on making its terminal and precinct welcoming and inclusive for people of all abilities. We are on a path of continual improvement, and Aspect's multi-disability environmental assessment will help identify gaps and opportunities to upgrade our facilities. Ultimately, we want to empower and encourage everyone to travel."*

BRIAN MCGUCKIN  
Chief Property and Planning Officer and  
Executive Sponsor of the Internal Accessibility Committee,  
Queensland Airports Limited

### IMPACT



15

Number of  
participants



4.3m

Number  
of viewers



225

Hours of support  
provided



A more  
inclusive  
world



In 2024, Aspect's Autism Friendly program reached new heights – doubling its revenue year-on-year and expanding its national presence.

## Aspect Autism Friendly: expanding inclusion, deepening impact

This financial success reflects growing demand and enables continued investment in innovation, partnerships and inclusive practice. With a clear mission to build environments where Autistic individuals feel welcomed and understood, the program continued to grow in reach, capability and impact.

### National reach, local impact

In 2024, Autism Friendly worked with partners in NSW, Victoria, Queensland, ACT and WA – training thousands of people and sharing best practice through published articles and presentations at major conferences. Our collaboration with ABC TV's *The Assembly* helped amplify Autistic voices and share inclusive practices with a national audience.

### A new chapter in Melbourne

Funded through an ILC grant, the new Melbourne office opened in September with a team of three – including two Autistic staff. In just months, they established six new partnerships, including with Football Victoria and Queer Sporting Alliance. These partnerships are already creating more inclusive sporting and cultural spaces, supported by sensory-friendly environments and positive community feedback.



### Inclusive entertainment with Disney

In June, Aspect once again partnered with Disney to deliver a relaxed performance of *Beauty and the Beast* in Brisbane. Modified for sensory sensitivities, the event offered a supportive and welcoming experience for children and adults who may not otherwise attend a stage production.

### Recognition for inclusive sport

At the 2024 Wanderers Medal ceremony, Aspect's Executive Manager, Tom Tutton received the Chairman's Award for outstanding contributions to sports inclusion. Under Tom's leadership, the team co-developed the Sensory Friendly Space at CommBank Stadium and worked with Western Sydney Wanderers FC to make football clinics more accessible for Autistic children – initiatives that continue to foster belonging and inclusion.

#### IMPACT

Revenue growth

135%

Staff trained

>2k

Training NPS\*

+80

Service delivery NPS\*

+100

\* Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a widely used measure of customer satisfaction and loyalty. It reflects how likely individuals are to recommend a service to others, providing valuable insight into their overall experience. Scale goes from -100 to +100. Anything above +30 is great and above +70 is excellent!



3.

# From awareness to understanding: World Autism Understanding Day 2024

For decades, autism advocacy has focused on raising awareness. In 2024, Aspect continued our mission to shift the conversation from awareness to understanding – because understanding leads to acceptance, and acceptance leads to inclusion.

World Autism Understanding Day (WAUD), held on 2 April each year, has become a powerful movement that amplifies the voices of Autistic people, ensuring their perspectives shape the broader community’s knowledge of autism. More than just a day of recognition, WAUD is a campaign that builds lasting change across workplaces, schools, public spaces and within families.

This year’s campaign was a testament to the power of co-design. Developed in collaboration with our Communications Working Group (Autistic individuals, parents and Autistic parents), it ensured that the voices of those with lived experience were authentically represented. From concept to execution, the campaign was built on the principle that understanding is most meaningful when it comes directly from those with the experience.

A powerful theme

The 2024 WAUD campaign was centred around a simple but powerful statement:

*“If you find out I’m Autistic, I want you to know ...”*

This approach gave Autistic people the opportunity to share their own narratives, breaking down stereotypes and misconceptions while fostering deeper understanding. Through social media, videos, blogs, podcasts and traditional media, their voices reached millions, creating ripples of impact well beyond the campaign itself.

The response was overwhelming. In just a few weeks, the campaign engaged over 4.7 million people – a 106% increase from the previous year. More people than ever before visited Aspect’s website to access resources, download information sheets and to take action in their own communities. The reach across social media platforms alone saw a massive increase, while the demand continued for the downloadable resource packs and information sheets.

A new prevalence estimate:  
1 in 40 Australians on the autism spectrum

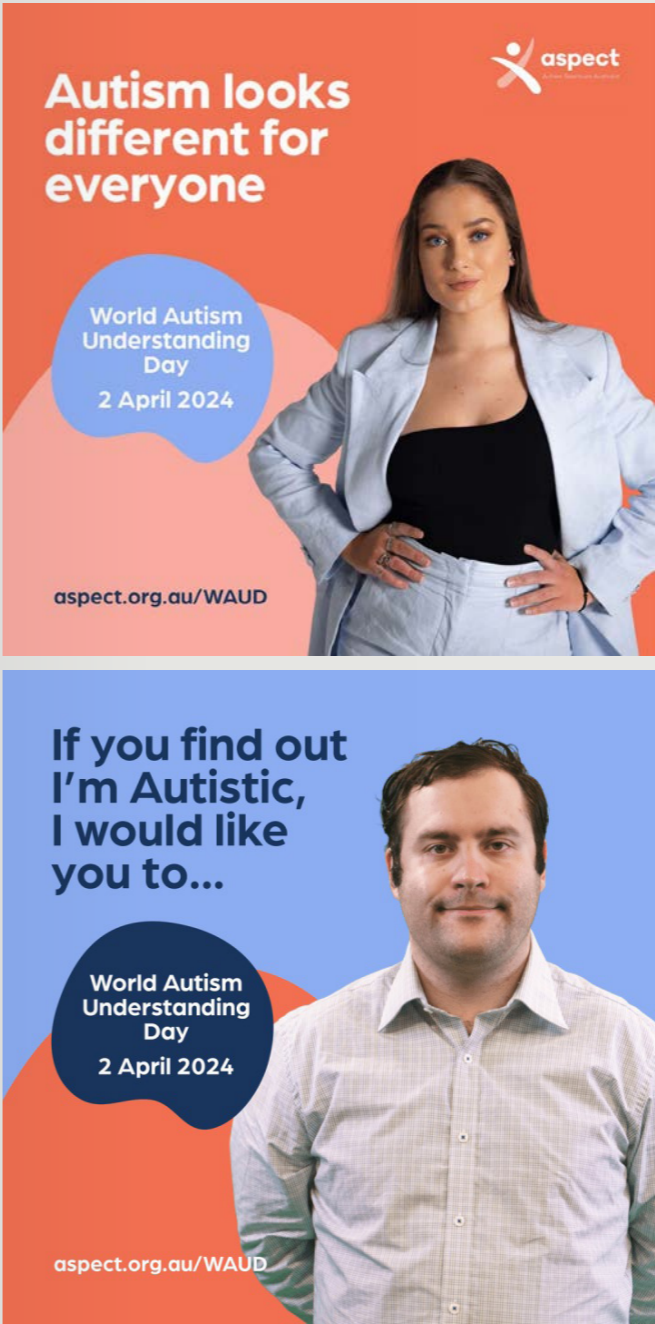
As part of this year’s WAUD campaign, Aspect announced a new autism prevalence estimate: at least 1 in 40 Australians are on the autism spectrum. This figure, updated from the previous 1 in 70, does not indicate an increase in autism, but rather an enhanced ability to recognise and diagnose autism, especially in groups historically under-diagnosed, such as women, girls and older Australians.

For many Autistic people and their families, this new statistic was a validation of their experiences. It reinforced the reality of neurodiversity in Australia, and underscored the need for a society that is not only aware but also genuinely inclusive.

Building a more inclusive future

WAUD is more than a campaign; it is a movement toward an autism-friendly world. Aspect is committed to advocating for change, ensuring that understanding leads to action – so that workplaces become more supportive, classrooms become more accommodating, and public spaces become more inclusive.

We are immensely grateful to the Autistic community for sharing their voices, experiences, and insights. Their contributions were the heart of this campaign. We also extend our sincere thanks to our partners and supporters, whose commitment helped amplify these messages far and wide.



IMPACT AT A GLANCE

People reached	Social media reach
4.7m	653k
Website visits	Partnership Pack downloads
~40k	660
Organisational partners	
18	

COMMENTS ON POSTS

Thank you for sharing different perspectives – WAUD MAIN VIDEO – INSTAGRAM

Loved reading this! Thanks so much for sharing. – SEAN’S SIBLINGS POST – INSTAGRAM

Thank you I found this very helpful and informative and in many ways confirming what I already felt. – AINSLIE’S BLOG POST – FACEBOOK



### Growing skills and confidence: Aspect's gardening program

For the past five years, Autistic adults from Aspect's Adult Community Services (ACS) centre in Hawthorn, Victoria, have been rolling up their sleeves and immersing themselves in nature as part of the Flora and Fauna program. In partnership with Friends of South Surrey Park, this monthly initiative offers participants the chance to develop gardening skills while enjoying the therapeutic benefits of the great outdoors.

Each session is designed around the strengths and interests of the participants, providing hands-on learning in planting, weeding and plant identification, all while fostering independence and social connection. Beyond the garden beds, participants also gain essential life skills, helping to build confidence in everyday routines.

For long-time participant Ari, the program has been life changing. His passion for gardening and the sensory experience of being outdoors has led to

new opportunities, including employment at a local garden nursery where he now maintains green spaces in his community.

The impact of the Flora and Fauna program has been recognised far beyond the park, with ABC's *Gardening Australia* recently filming an episode showcasing the program. The feature, aired in December, highlighted the dedication of volunteers, the joy of participants, and the power of community-driven initiatives in fostering meaningful engagement and skill development for Autistic adults.

*"While the adults love getting the sensory experience with planting, they are also learning important life skills including catching a tram and bus to attend and packing a day bag of essential items, which builds confidence and self-esteem."*

CHRISTINE EDWARDS  
Regional Coordinator, Adult Community Services, Aspect



### Flying with confidence: enhancing airport experiences for Autistic travellers

**A recent study by ARCAP explored the airport experiences of Autistic travellers at Sydney and Gold Coast Airports. Both airports have worked with Aspect Autism Friendly to introduce initiatives that make travel more accessible and supportive for Autistic people and their families.**

Interviews with 13 Autistic individuals and family members highlighted the benefits of accessibility features such as sensory maps, visual guides and the Hidden Disability Sunflower program. These tools offered reassurance and, when recognised by staff, the Sunflower symbol led to more supportive interactions.

However, challenges remain – particularly in managing sensory overload. Participants called for quiet spaces that are clearly marked and easy to access.

Awareness of existing supports was also limited, and inconsistent staff understanding of the Sunflower symbol impacted traveller confidence.

Ultimately, the research shows that true inclusion doesn't come from infrastructure alone – it is built through awareness, training and proactive support. Travellers urged greater visibility of resources and a more consistent, informed response from airport staff.



Innovating  
every  
aspect



As one of Australia's leading autism-specific service providers, we've refreshed our brand to reflect who we are today – modern, innovative and growing stronger than ever. At the heart of the update is a fresh logo, a vibrant colour palette and a streamlined name: Aspect.



## A fresh new look for Aspect

*"Our revitalised brand identity truly reflects who we are, where we have come from, and the incredible journey ahead. It is a clear signal that we are continuing to innovate and evolve to best serve the Autistic community."*

JACQUI BORLAND  
CEO, Aspect

### Why the change?

We listened to our community – students, participants, families and staff – and the response was clear: the name Aspect truly represents the breadth of what we do.

It's simple, powerful, and honours our rich history while embracing the future.

Of course, "a different brilliant<sup>®</sup>", our purpose statement, remains at the core of who we are, celebrating the strengths and diversity of Autistic individuals.

### More than just a logo

This isn't just a facelift – it's a reflection of our journey. From a single autism-specific school in Forestville, Sydney, to a national leader in autism services, Aspect has evolved. Our refreshed brand signals that we are forward-thinking, adaptable and ready for the future.

### Standing out in a changing landscape

With the disability sector rapidly evolving – particularly under the NDIS – families are seeking trusted, innovative and responsive organisations. Aspect's brand refresh reinforces that we're not just keeping up – we're leading the way.

This exciting transformation was made possible in partnership with ET Collective, ensuring our refreshed identity aligns with our purpose and values.

4.

# A new era of autism-specific education: Aspect Hills Shire School

"This school represents a commitment to high-quality, autism-specific education that empowers students to thrive. We look forward to welcoming our first cohort of students in Kindergarten to Year 2 and their families into this exceptional learning environment."

SHANE MORRIS  
Principal, Aspect Hills Shire School

In a year marked by innovation and growth, Aspect Hills Shire School took shape as the newest addition to Aspect's network of autism-specific schools.



Nestled in the thriving community of Gables, Sydney's north-west, this purpose-built primary school will provide tailored education for up to 72 students on the autism spectrum from Kindergarten to Year 6.

From concept to completion, the development was driven by a commitment to creating an environment that nurtures engagement, independence and optimal learning. Designed with innovative and adaptable spaces, the two-storey school features 12 autism-friendly classrooms, a multi-purpose hall, a sensory outdoor area, a life skills kitchen, a technology room and a library. Every element has been thoughtfully crafted to meet the diverse learning needs of Autistic students.

This \$10.2 million project was jointly funded by the NSW Government's Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants and Aspect. With Western Sydney's population continuing to grow, the new school addresses rising demand for autism-specific education in the Hills District, offering families greater choice and access.

## From ground-breaking to grand opening

The journey of Aspect Hills Shire School began in January, with an official ground-breaking ceremony marking the start of construction. The event welcomed representatives from the NSW Government, who emphasised the school's far-reaching impact – not only for students, but for their families and the wider community.

To lead this exciting new chapter, Shane Morris was appointed Principal in April, bringing extensive experience from Aspect Western Sydney School to shape the foundation of this new campus.

To mark the school's completion, families and students attended their very first orientation day in December. With guided tours, engaging activities and a warm welcome from staff, the event provided a glimpse into the enriching journey ahead for Aspect's newest school community.

## Bringing our vision to life

Aspect Hills Shire School is the tenth autism-specific school established by Aspect in New South Wales and South Australia. This project would not have been possible without the commitment of our partners, suppliers and contractors who have worked alongside us to bring this vision to life. We are especially grateful to the Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants program for their support and belief in the importance of autism-specific education.

IMPACT

72

Full school capacity

24

New enrolments in 2025

12

New staff employed

\$5m

Funding received from NSW Government



The co-designed Autism Alert Card

Autism Alert Cards can be a simple yet powerful tool, helping Autistic people communicate their needs in moments when words may be hard to find. Whether navigating public spaces, visiting healthcare providers or engaging with emergency services, these cards offer a reassuring bridge to understanding.

What sets Aspect’s Autism Alert Card apart is its co-design process. Informed by the experiences of more than 270 Autistic people and parents, the cards were developed to be practical, personalised and empowering.

Based on participant feedback for a more durable option, the cards are now available in two formats: a folded cardboard version with tips and space for personal details, and a sturdy plastic version featuring a QR code linking to resources. Research showed that while only half of the cardholders needed to use their card, the majority found value in simply having it. Over two-thirds of cardholders said they would recommend the card to others, highlighting its role as a “safety net” and a source of comfort.

IMPACT

1,350

Alert cards dispatched

“It is an easy non-verbal way to explain why we need extra support or compassion when shopping or attending events”

PARENT/CAREGIVER

“Just knowing it’s there gives me comfort”

AUTISTIC ADULT



Coming soon: Aspect’s game-changing community hub in Liverpool

Aspect is bringing a first-of-its-kind community hub to Liverpool – a game-changing space designed to empower, connect and support Autistic individuals, their families and the wider community. With a development application now submitted, we’re one step closer to making this vision a reality for Western Sydney.

“Our vision is to create a space that is more than just a service centre – it will be a place where Autistic individuals, their families and carers feel truly supported and connected. This hub will set a new benchmark for autism-specific services in Australia.”

RACHEL KERSLAKE  
National Director, Individual and Community Services, Aspect

A hub for connection and support

Designed as a welcoming and inclusive space, the hub will provide essential services tailored to the needs of the Autistic community. It will feature an assessment clinic to support early diagnosis and intervention, alongside dedicated therapy rooms where individuals can access personalised support. The hub will also include multi-purpose spaces designed for group programs, workshops and social activities, ensuring that families and individuals can connect, learn and build meaningful relationships. Central to the space will be an all-inclusive sensory playground, carefully designed to be engaging, accessible and supportive of sensory needs.

An incubator for change

At its core, the community hub will be a catalyst for greater understanding of neurodiversity and the autism spectrum. As the demand for autism-specific services in Western Sydney continues to grow, the hub will deliver accessible, innovative, and life-changing supports and services to individuals, their families and the broader community.



Targeted education strategies: supporting Autistic girls and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

At Aspect, we believe every student deserves an education that truly understands and supports them.

That’s why we launched two targeted education strategies – one focused on Autistic girls and another on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students – to create more inclusive, responsive and empowering learning environments.

A tailored approach for Autistic girls

Autistic girls often mask their traits, leading to later diagnoses and increased mental health challenges. While teachers may see them coping at school, parents often witness the impact at home.

To bridge this gap, Aspect is developing specialised programs to improve wellbeing, engagement and learning outcomes. Initiatives may include professional development for staff, girls-only spaces and programs, targeted mental health supports and holiday programs. These strategies will help create a safer, more supportive environment where Autistic girls, including non-binary and trans students, can thrive.

Culturally safe education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Creating school environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, values, and languages are recognised and celebrated ensures a more welcoming school community. At the heart of this approach is equipping educators with the knowledge and skills to embed Indigenous perspectives into teaching, fostering diverse learning styles, and setting high expectations for all students. By building strong local partnerships, creating culturally safe spaces, and weaving Indigenous knowledge into the curriculum, we are shaping a more inclusive and empowering education experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

A key step in this initiative is appointing Aboriginal Education Officers to bring cultural knowledge and lived experience into Aspect schools. We are delighted to be joined by Leteasha Ruttley – a Kamilaroi and Wiradjuri woman. With a background in health, education and community support, Leteasha is passionate about cultural education and engagement.





## Supporting new beginnings: autism, pregnancy and parenthood

Autistic people often face unique challenges during pregnancy and early parenthood – challenges that the current healthcare system is not fully equipped to address. From sensory sensitivities and increased risk of prenatal anxiety to communication barriers with healthcare professionals, these experiences can impact both parental and infant outcomes.

To address this gap, Aspect's research centre formed the APEX (Autistic Pregnancy and Early Parenthood Experiences and Support) project team – a collaboration of Autistic and non-Autistic researchers, advisors and practitioners. Together, they worked to shape more informed, inclusive healthcare pathways.

With input from both Autistic parents and healthcare professionals, the team developed a digital hub offering resources, tools, and training for navigating pregnancy and early parenthood. This hub empowers both practitioners and Autistic individuals to engage more confidently and collaboratively throughout the perinatal journey.

Funded by the Victorian State Government, auDA Foundation and The Woodend Foundation, this work is a critical step towards equitable, evidence-informed care – ensuring every parent feels seen, heard and supported from the very beginning.

## Expanding support: introducing ADHD assessments

**In October 2024, Aspect expanded its diagnostic services to include ADHD assessments, alongside existing autism and cognitive assessments.**

This initiative builds on our existing expertise in autism and cognitive assessments, and reflects our commitment to holistic, person-centred care.

The inclusion of ADHD assessments was driven by a growing recognition of the intersection between autism and ADHD – commonly referred to as AuDHD. This can present unique challenges in areas such as attention, executive functioning and emotional regulation. By offering ADHD assessments, we're helping individuals gain a more complete understanding of their experiences and ensuring access to appropriate supports.

Available both in-person and via telehealth, in the first three months, over 25 assessments were delivered, with demand expected to grow into 2025.

As we look ahead, Aspect remains committed to meeting the evolving needs of our community through evidence-informed, inclusive and accessible services. Our ADHD assessments are one more way we are listening and responding to the needs of people on the autism spectrum and their families.

Spreading kindness and joy:

## Meet Michael

**Michael's story is one of creativity, self-discovery and determination.**

**His path to public recognition began when he appeared on the popular television series *Love on the Spectrum*. While the show offered a glimpse into Michael's life, it was just the beginning of a broader journey – one shaped by a strong sense of identity and a passion for connecting with others.**

Michael received his autism diagnosis as a young adult, a moment he describes as transformative. It provided clarity and a renewed sense of confidence. "I wasn't broken – I was just different," he shares. "Being Autistic is nothing to be ashamed of. It's who I am." Through the support of his family and services like those provided by Aspect, Michael gained a deeper understanding of himself and his strengths.

Following his television debut, Michael began to explore new creative avenues. He launched the *Mr A+* podcast, where he interviews a wide variety

of guests and shares stories with his signature honesty and warmth. His goal is simple but powerful: "I like to spread kindness and joy, and help people see the good in others."

Michael has also pursued opportunities in acting, writing and public speaking. He is especially passionate about screenwriting and hopes to see more authentic portrayals of Autistic characters on screen. His ambition is to one day play such a character himself.

Michael has also brought his lived experience to Aspect's Marketing and Communications team, where he works part-time. Through blogs, podcasts, videos and other materials, he plays an important role in amplifying Autistic voices.

Despite his growing public profile, Michael remains grounded in his values. He continues to learn and evolve, always guided by a strong sense of kindness and purpose. "I'm still learning and growing every day. But I like who I'm becoming."

We would like to extend a big thank you to all of our supporters!

# Fundraising: extending reach and impact

<p>For Aspect, fundraising and philanthropy are much more than just funding avenues. They're the heartbeat of our purpose, enabling us to go above and beyond for people on the autism spectrum.</p>		<p>Fundraising revenue</p> <p>\$7.58million</p>	
<p>Regular givers</p> <p>4,367</p>		<p>Regular Giving revenue</p> <p>\$940,947</p>	
<p>New supporters acquired for appeals</p> <p>947</p>	<p>Revenue raised from Golf Day for fee relief for disadvantaged families</p> <p>\$74,650</p> <p></p>		
<p>Revenue from Walk and Run campaigns</p> <p>\$1.79m</p> <p></p>	<p>Participants in Walk and Run campaigns</p> <p>14,070</p>	<p>Media reach from Walk and Run campaigns</p> <p>4.5m</p>	
<p>Revenue raised in appeals</p> <p>\$504,312</p> <p></p>			



## Driving innovation and impact: a transformational year for Fundraising

In 2024, our incredible community of supporters helped us raise a record-breaking \$7.58 million. This milestone reflects not just generosity, but the shared belief in a more inclusive world. It fuels programs beyond government funding, eases financial burdens for families and drives research that makes a tangible difference.

This year has also been one of innovation and transformation for our programs. We piloted face-to-face fundraising, strengthened the donor value proposition for Run and Walk for Autism, and launched new propositions for Gift in Wills and regular giving. Our approach to direct mail acquisition was also reimagined, ensuring sustainable growth and deeper engagement with our supporters.

Every initiative, every innovation and every dollar raised brings us closer to a future where no one on the autism spectrum is left behind.

### Night at the G

In October, Aspect hosted over 100 guests at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) for a special *Night at the G* event, bringing together the autism and sporting communities in a shared celebration of inclusivity. Hosted by Helen Kapalos, the evening was filled with personal stories, expert insights and a common purpose to make Australian sport more accessible to Autistic individuals.

The event highlighted the benefits of physical activity for Autistic people and showcased Aspect's initiatives to foster autism-friendly sporting environments. Dr Ru Ying Cai presented on the latest research from ARCAP in this space, while a powerful short documentary featuring Grace Tame, ultra-marathon runner and former Australian of the Year, followed by a Q&A, offered a deeply personal perspective on the positive impact of sport on mental wellbeing.

A practical autism-friendly sports demonstration by Dr Tom Tutton and Matthew Oastler further illustrated how small adaptations – such as those implemented in Aspect's collaboration with Western Sydney Wanderers FC – can create welcoming and predictable sporting experiences.

Expert speakers, including elite athletes Elise Muller and Ben Taylor, and Aspect's Christine Edwards, enriched the evening with valuable insights, reinforcing Aspect's vision of an inclusive sporting landscape where everyone has a place to play.

### Aspect named a finalist for FIA National Awards for Impact Through Events

Aspect is proud to be one of only three finalists in the Impact Through Events category at the Fundraising Institute Australia (FIA) National Awards, recognising the success of our signature events. These include *A Night at the Gallery* at the Art Gallery of NSW, which explored the connection between art and Autistic individuals, and *A Night at the Stadium* at the Sydney Cricket Ground, celebrating the benefits of sport for Autistic participation.

Developed in collaboration with Autistic individuals, these events raised vital funds and created meaningful connections, thought-provoking discussions and authentic storytelling. This achievement is a testament to the dedication of our Autism Friendly and Philanthropy teams, alongside key partners like Dr Tom Tutton and Ainslie Robinson, who have been instrumental to our success.

# Our supporters and donors 2024

## Major donors

- auDA Foundation
- Chehab Foundation
- Clubs NSW
- Councils NSW
- Davies Family Foundation
- Dee Why RSL Club
- EA & N Hulak Foundation No 2
- EnergyAustralia
- Foundation Theatres Pty Limited
- Gandel Foundation
- Greater Charitable Foundation
- Guy Reynolds AO & Jenny Reynolds
- IFM Investors
- Louise Dobson
- Morialta Charitable Trust
- NSW Community Building Partnership Program
- OWS International Building Materials Pty Ltd
- QBE Foundation
- River Birch Foundation
- Rotary Club of Albury Inc.
- Suan Yeo & Family
- The Bluesand Foundation
- The James N Kirby Foundation
- The Kenneth & Peter Gibbs Foundation (Perpetual)
- The Redan Foundation Limited
- The Woodend Foundation (Perpetual)
- Toyota Community Trust
- VIC Department of Health
- Walter Richard Salmon Foundation
- Waratah Education Foundation
- Western Suburbs Leagues Club (West's Newcastle)
- Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program (formerly WestInvest)

## Corporate support

- Ability Action Australia
- ACR World
- Ausgrid
- Australian Sentinel
- Baker Hughes Foundation
- Bendigo and Adelaide Bank
- Collective Financial Partners Thornton
- CompNow

- Fidelity
- Intopia
- Jensen Hughes
- Land Eco Consulting
- March Energy
- Microsoft
- Mount Thorley Warkworth
- NAB
- Newcastle Jets
- Olight Australia Pty Ltd
- One Mile Grid
- Queensland Performing Arts Centre
- Scentre Group Ltd
- Shoes & Sox
- The Powder Principle
- Toyota Manual Handling Australia Pty Ltd

## In-kind

- Catherine Gow
- Deloitte
- Four at Fifty
- Grace Tame
- Good360
- Greater Charitable Foundation
- Scentre Group (Westfield)
- Jensen Hughes
- Western Sydney Wanderers
- Wests Tigers Rugby League Club
- Newcastle Jets

## Gift in Will

- Estate of the late Leslie Bruce Blackshaw
- Estate of the late Elizabeth Myrtle Bull
- Estate of the late Christina Busby
- Estate of the late Terence Allan Cooper
- Estate of the late Heatherbell Margaret Evans
- Estate of the late Lynette Beverley Hammonds
- Estate of Patricia G Hookham
- Estate of Marion Armstrong Kingston
- Estate of the late Patricia Margaret McClare
- Estate of Godavari Pala
- Estate of the late Gerard Richard Rochat
- Estate of the late Phillipa Barbara Walsh
- Estate of Roy Edward Williams

# Celebrating Autistic expression through art



Every Friday morning, Autistic adults gather at Aspect’s Hawthorn site to take part in Get Creative – an inclusive and beginner-friendly arts program offered through our Adult Community Services.

Designed as a supportive, sensory-considerate space, the program empowers participants to explore self-expression through art while developing fine motor skills, building confidence and forming meaningful social connections.

Throughout the year, participants engaged in a wide range of creative experiences, including painting, drawing, screen printing and wheel-throwing ceramics. They also visited local galleries and studios, strengthening their connection to Melbourne’s wider arts community and finding fresh inspiration in new environments.

A significant highlight was being able to exhibit their artwork at *The Future is Interest-spective*, held at Hawthorn Town Hall Gallery as part of the Boroondara Community Exhibitions Program.

The show featured 24 unique works by eight Autistic artists from the Get Creative program, celebrating their diverse experiences, passions and perspectives.

“For many, this was their first time exhibiting artwork publicly,” said Tess Healy, Aspect Support Worker. “It was a powerful opportunity to share their voice, build confidence, and take part in Melbourne’s vibrant creative scene.”

Held in recognition of World Autism Understanding Day, the exhibition invited the wider community to engage with artworks exploring identity, sport, science fiction and language. At a special event, participating artists shared insights into their creative processes – an opportunity that fostered connection, pride and understanding. Several works were available for sale, with all proceeds going directly to the artists.





# Facilities: building spaces where students thrive

Our commitment to providing contemporary, autism-specific learning spaces continued with a series of transformative capital works across our school network. These projects were designed to meet growing demand and enhance the everyday experience of our students, educators and families.

## Aspect Riverina School — Albury Campus

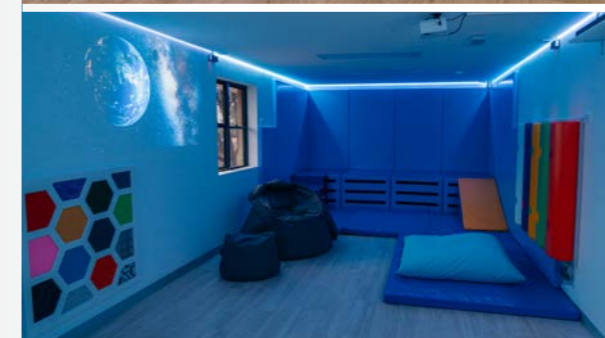
In April 2024, the newly refurbished Brewer Building at Albury Campus was completed. This project delivered a revitalised classroom, a multipurpose room for staff and students, and a welcoming new library – creating a space where students feel safe, supported and engaged in their learning journey.



## Aspect South East Sydney School — Marrickville Campus

Completed in January 2024, the upgrades at Marrickville campus transformed the entire school environment.

The refurbishment included dedicated student bathrooms, a new staff room and the complete renewal of all classrooms – ensuring every space reflects our commitment to creating calm, structured and purposeful learning environments.



## Aspect Western Sydney School — Wetherill Park Campus

A major refurbishment project completed in April 2024 at Wetherill Park saw upgrades across all classrooms and the administration building, representing a \$4.2 million investment in educational excellence.

This was complemented by the launch of a new state-of-the-art sensory room, designed in collaboration with Moduplay and the Creative Agency. The space includes interactive tactile panels, custom lighting and sound and soft play equipment, all tailored to support sensory needs and enable structured learning. The space provides a vital opportunity for educators to support student development in areas such as emotional regulation and attention.

Aspect Hunter School – Thornton Campus

Students and staff at Thornton now benefit from improvements including upgraded classrooms, AV installations and enhancements to external spaces. Safety was also a priority, with the installation of a fire indicator panel and back-to-base monitoring, ensuring peace of mind for families and staff alike.



Aspect South Coast School – Unanderra Campus

To replace outdated facilities, construction began on new purpose-built demountable classrooms at our Unanderra campus. Designed to offer a more functional, flexible and autism-friendly learning environment, the new spaces will better support the diverse needs of our students. Completion is expected in early 2025.



Aspect Macarthur School

Aspect Macarthur School underwent a series of upgrades, including an additional classroom, new access control across the site, and refurbishment of the staff laundry and office space. A refreshed playground also ensures students have access to engaging, safe and sensory-informed outdoor environments.



Every aspect of the design has been considered with students’ needs in mind, supporting a calm, flexible and engaging environment.

A new chapter for Aspect Education in Port Macquarie

Opening in 2026, our new school campus in Port Macquarie will offer a purpose-built, autism-specific learning environment that reflects the evolving needs of students and families in the region.

Located in Thrumster, the site will accommodate up to 48 students from Kindergarten to Year 6 across eight thoughtfully designed classrooms.

Blending heritage with innovation, the project will revitalise existing homestead buildings while introducing new, modern facilities. This unique combination will provide students with a learning space that is both inspiring and inclusive.

The campus will also feature landscaped playgrounds, additional parking and secure fencing – ensuring a safe, welcoming space for all.





New spaces, new possibilities at ACS Heatherton

ACS Heatherton, Victoria, has recently undergone a purposeful redesign, enhancing the facilities to better support Autistic adults.

At the centre of these upgrades is a new sensory room – designed with interactive lighting, soft furnishings and calming visuals to support regulation and comfort. A rainforest-themed quiet room now offers a peaceful space for reflection and retreat.

The renovation also includes a brand new 130m<sup>2</sup> kitchen, creating new opportunities for participants to build life skills, socialise and develop independence through hands-on learning. Refreshed bathroom facilities have further improved comfort and accessibility across the site.

These developments were made possible through the generosity of our major donors, including a special gift in a will that funded the new kitchen. This funding has been instrumental in bringing these developments to life. Our donors' generosity has made a significant impact on our community, and we're so thankful.



Powering a sustainable future

Aspect is making significant strides toward sustainability, with a strong focus on reducing energy use and lowering our carbon footprint across schools and services.

Recently, new solar panel systems were installed at six campuses, including Aspect Vern Barnett, Treetop, Macarthur, Hunter, Central Coast (Junior) and South East Sydney (Loftus). These build on the success of earlier installations at Western Sydney and South Coast schools.

Additional energy-saving initiatives include upgrading all electric hot water systems to energy-efficient heat pumps across five schools, made possible through the NSW Energy Savings Scheme.

LED lighting upgrades and further efficiency improvements are also underway, with future plans including battery storage solutions and energy awareness campaigns.

Collectively, the systems are expected to save \$67,000 annually in electricity costs – amounting to \$1.67 million over 25 years – and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 335 tonnes each year.



# Our people: thank you...

At the heart of Aspect's impact is a remarkable team of compassionate and skilled professionals who bring our purpose to life each day.

Reflecting the diversity of the communities we support, our people contribute a wealth of knowledge, empathy and perseverance to everything they do. Their expertise, integrity and tireless effort continue to create meaningful outcomes for Autistic individuals and their families.

To every member of the Aspect team – thank you. We are honoured to share this journey with you.



Number of staff

1,458



Average length of service

5.5 years

### Staff breakdown

Full-time 400

Part-time 698

Casual 360

2.2%	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff	8.5%	Staff who identify as LGBTQIA+
16%	Staff who identify as neurodivergent	59%	Staff who have parenting responsibilities
19%	Staff who are linguistically or culturally diverse	76%	Staff feel that they belong at Aspect

### Long service awards

10 years	15 years	20 years
38	20	11

25 years  
**3**  
Philippa Sherington  
Vern Barnett School  
Hatem Fiorani  
South Coast School  
Tracy Matejka  
Hunter School

30 years  
**5**  
Robin Hawkes  
South East Sydney School  
Anastasia Keramea  
South East Sydney School  
David Kettley  
South Coast School  
Bronwyn Jones  
South Coast School  
Robyn Missen  
Macarthur School

## Celebrating excellence: ICS Staff Recognition Awards

The inaugural ICS Staff Recognition Award Ceremony took place on 9 July at the annual Aspect Assessments and Therapy Conference, with a follow-up celebration held for ACS staff the following week.

The event honoured the outstanding contributions of ICS staff who support Autistic participants and their families across a wide range of roles.

With 97 peer nominations received, the awards highlighted the deep respect and appreciation among colleagues.

Winners were recognised for excellence in areas such as mentorship, strengths-based practice, leadership, collaboration and autism specialisation.

Each recipient or team received a trophy, certificate, \$500 prize and digital recognition, reflecting their vital role in advancing Aspect's mission and culture.





# Shining with pride: Aspect at Mardi Gras 2024

For the sixth consecutive year, Aspect proudly marched in the Sydney Mardi Gras parade, standing alongside The Neurodiversity Rainbow – a group that celebrates the intersection of neurodivergence and LGBTQIA+ identities.

This year’s theme, “Our Future ...”, invited participants to imagine a more inclusive world – one where acceptance, visibility and celebration continue to grow for both LGBTQIA+ and neurodivergent communities.

For many, Mardi Gras was a powerful moment of identity, connection and joy. Families and individuals walked together in an autism-friendly environment, embraced by a shared sense of pride and belonging.

Aspect’s ongoing participation reflects a deep commitment to fostering inclusive spaces where Autistic people – regardless of gender, sexuality or identity – feel seen, supported and celebrated.

## Enhancing professional learning in Aspect Education

In 2024, Aspect Education introduced key initiatives to strengthen teaching, leadership and student wellbeing across its schools.

### Leadership development

Building on the Aspect Leadership Framework, the Education Team developed a Leadership Framework Capability Handbook to help staff reflect on their leadership practices, identify strengths and plan professional learning. This framework is shaping new leadership programs set to launch in 2025.

### Berry Street training

In August, 700 staff, including teachers and teaching assistants, completed the final stage of Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) training, focusing on stamina, engagement and character development. Schools continue embedding BSEM principles alongside learnings from the Aspect Learning Improvement Collaborative (ALIC).

### Aspect personal development and safety program

A working party developed a new program, based on the SoSAFE! framework, to support primary students in building safe personal relationships. Piloted in three schools in 2024, the program equips educators with visual tools to teach social safety and reporting strategies for students with disabilities. The full rollout across all Aspect schools, along with a secondary student version, is planned for 2025.

## Investing in growth: Professional Development Grants Program

Aspect was proud to champion the growth and development of our people through the inaugural Professional Development Grants Program, launched in May. This initiative was designed to provide flexible, personalised learning opportunities that align with both individual aspirations and team goals.

Whether staff were aiming to build on existing strengths, deepen expertise or explore new areas of interest, the program offered support tailored to where they are in their professional journey.

Structured around six strategic learning categories – Impactful Educator/Service Provider, Enabler, Advocate, Innovator, Leader, and Teacher Practicum Support – the program reflects Aspect’s broader commitment to capability building across all levels of the organisation.

# Our Patron, Life Governors and Life Members

<b>Our Patron</b> Mr John Doyle AM	<b>Life Governors</b>  Mr John Doyle AM Mr David Epper OAM Mr Adrian Ford Mr Hilton Grugeon AM Mr Gerry Harvey Ms Cheryl Hatch Mr Peter Werner
<b>Life Members</b>	<div><div>Mrs Clasina Andrews</div><div>Ms Julie Anthony AM OBE</div><div>Mr Mark Bowen</div><div>Ms Judy Brewer AO</div><div>Mr Robert Brown</div><div>Mrs Diane Brown</div><div>Mr Henry Capra</div><div>Mrs Barbara Cummins</div><div>Professor Peter Dodd</div><div>Mr Peter Drayton</div><div>Mrs H Emanuel</div><div>Mr Mark Fogarty</div><div>Ms Annette Gallard</div><div>Mr John Gerahty</div><div>Mrs Amanda Green</div><div>Ms Julie Hamblin</div><div>Mr Laurie Horin</div><div>Ms Judith Johnson</div></div> <div><div>Mr PeterMayne</div><div>Mr Michael McColm</div><div>Mr Malcolm McEwen</div><div>Mr Tony McGrath AM OBE</div><div>Mrs Shirley McIntosh</div><div>Mr Richard Owens</div><div>Mr Keith Perkin</div><div>Mr Robert Pesavento</div><div>Mr Ostilio Pisanu</div><div>Dr Gretchen Poiner</div><div>Dr Jacqueline Roberts</div><div>Mr Weston Ryan</div><div>Mr Basil Sellers AM</div><div>Mr John Shand</div><div>Dr David Starte OAM</div><div>Mrs Margaret Stead</div><div>Mrs Andrea Werner</div><div>Ms Jenny Young</div></div>

*In memory of:* Lady Sybil Joel (Life Member since 1975)

# Our Board of Directors



Paul Khoury

CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Paul joined the Board in March 2018 and is Chair of the Education Strategy and Oversight Committee and a member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. He was elected Chair of the Board on 24 May 2023. Paul is a member-elected Director.



Karen Orvad

DEPUTY CHAIR

Karen joined the Board in 2019 and is a member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and a member of the People, Culture and Safety Committee. She was elected Deputy Chair in July 2021. Karen is a member-elected Director.



Marielle Latour

HONORARY TREASURER

Marielle joined the Aspect Board in November 2018 and is Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and a member of the Governance Committee. Marielle is a member-elected Director.



Pamela Rutledge

DIRECTOR

Pamela joined the Board in 2018 and is Chair of the Governance Committee and is a member of the People, Culture and Safety Committee. Pamela is a member-elected Director.



Dr Emily Russo

DIRECTOR

Emily joined the Board in March 2020 and is Chair of the People, Culture and Safety Committee and a member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. Emily is a member-elected Director.



Tori Haar

DIRECTOR

Tori joined the Board in December 2020 and is a member of the Governance Committee. Tori is a member-elected Director.



Georgina Harrison

DIRECTOR

Georgina joined the Board in November 2023 and is a member of the Education Strategy Oversight Committee. She is a member-elected Director.



Jenny Bridge

DIRECTOR

Jenny joined the Board in December 2023 and is a member of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee and Education Strategy Oversight Committee. She is a member-elected Director.



David Cowan

DIRECTOR

Dave joined the Board in September 2024 as a board-appointed Director. He is a member of the Cyber Security Working Group.



Jim Boynton

DIRECTOR

Jim joined the Board in September 2024. He is a board-appointed Director.



# Year ended 31 December 2024

## An overview...

### It is with great pride that I present Aspect's financial results for 2024.

This year continued to pose economic challenges, including rising wages in the education sector, workforce shortages and persistent funding complexities within the NDIS. Despite these pressures, Aspect has remained financially strong and adaptable. For the first time, we surpassed the milestone of \$150m in turnover and achieved a Total Comprehensive Income of \$29.43m. Our ability to navigate these conditions reflects our commitment to providing exceptional autism-specific education and support services while maintaining sound financial management.

In the face of external challenges, Aspect has successfully strengthened its educational presence, as demonstrated by the continued rise in student enrolments, now reaching 1,260. Additionally, Aspect's Individual and Community Services (ICS) has remained resilient in delivering a broad range of support services, including therapy, adult community services, assessments and positive behaviour support. These essential services continue to empower our diverse community, ensuring that participants have the best possible opportunities to achieve their personal and broader life goals.

Throughout 2024, Aspect demonstrated its ongoing commitment to enhancing service quality through strategic investments in its workforce and infrastructure across multiple sites. A key initiative was the Aspect Learning Improvement Collaborative (ALIC) program, which has played a pivotal role in monitoring and improving student learning outcomes across the school system. Infrastructure enhancements included upgrades to Aspect Western Sydney School, the near completion of the new Aspect Hill Shire School, and the acquisition of a property in Liverpool to establish a new innovative hub, supported by the NSW government's Western Sydney Infrastructure Grant. Additionally, Aspect expanded its collaborative efforts to create greater impact by forging new partnerships, as reflected in the growth of the Autism Friendly program and the hosting of a study tour for AWWA from Singapore.

Looking ahead, the accumulated surplus will provide a strong financial foundation, enabling Aspect to explore opportunities under the new National Autism Strategy while advancing its current strategic plan, which focuses on four key areas:

### 1. Services

Deliver evidence-based, high quality, highly valued autism-specific education and services for Aspect's students, participants and their families.

### 2. Partnership

Build new opportunities and create greater impact through strong partnerships.

### 3. Understanding

Develop community understanding about autism and work to create a more inclusive world.

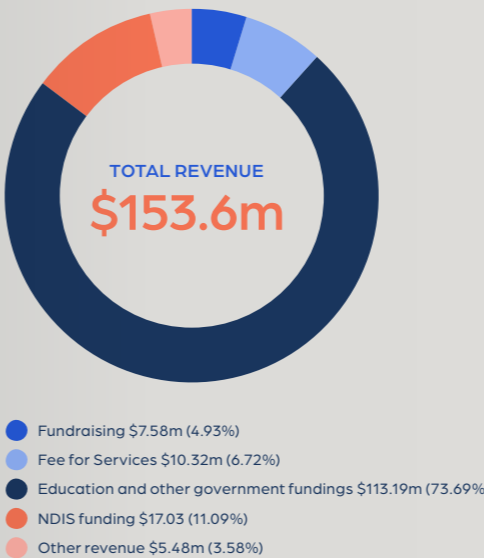
### 4. Innovation

Position Aspect for a strong future through innovation.

## Revenue

Total revenue for the year was \$153.6m (Graph 1). Government funding (Education, NDIS and other Government funding) continued to be the primary source of revenue for Aspect, representing 84.78% of total revenue, which was 1.47% lower than the previous year, mainly due to the increase in other revenue sources as a portion relative to Government funding. This shift reflects management's efforts to diversify Aspect's funding sources.

GRAPH 1: SOURCE OF REVENUE

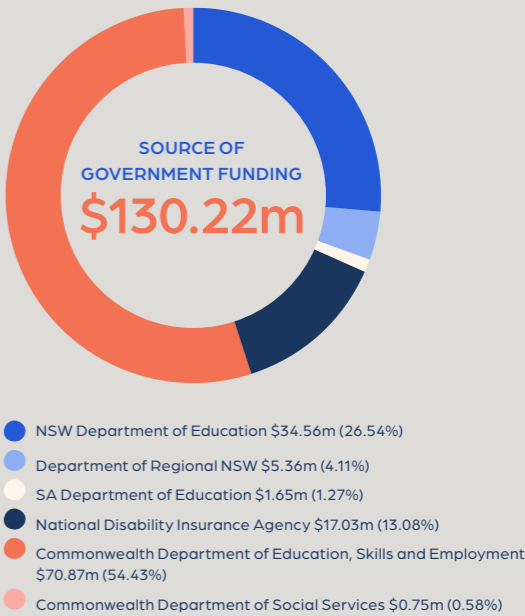


Total fees for services, including school fees, was \$10.32m (\$9.95m in 2023), which accounted for 6.72% (6.77% in 2023) of total revenue. The increase in fee for service revenue was primarily driven by the growth in student enrolments and the application of mild indexation to Aspect's service fees.

Gross fundraising revenue for 2024 was \$7.58m, which was an increase of \$1.36m from 2023. Aspect appreciates the unwavering support from donors during this tough period of increased cost of living. Their generosity remains indispensable, as fundraising continues to be a crucial component of Aspect's revenue. This vital support enables us to deliver services that either lack government funding or have costs that exceed such funding.

Government funding experienced a slight increase of \$3.56m, reaching a total of \$130.22m, as depicted in Graph 2. This increase can be solely attributed to the Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants received for the establishment of Aspect Hills Shire School and the new ICS Hub in Liverpool.

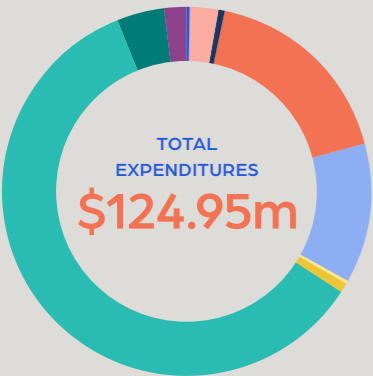
GRAPH 2: SOURCE OF GOVERNMENT FUNDING



Expenses

Total expenditure for 2024 rose by \$7.01m, reaching a total of \$124.95m, as depicted in Graph 3. This increase was primarily driven by increased staffing costs and other expenses incurred in the provision of existing and new services. Each business unit manager was responsible for overseeing their respective unit's financial position to ensure Aspect resources were being used efficiently. The Board wishes to express its appreciation for the organisation's effective and prudent management of this substantial cost base, which has been instrumental in sustaining the robust growth of the business.

GRAPH 3: WHERE THE MONEY WAS SPENT



- Investments & Loans \$0.12m (0.1%)
- Aspect Fundraising \$2.91m (2.33%)
- Aspect Research \$0.77m (0.62%)
- Aspect Individual & Community Services \$21.91m (17.54%)
- Shared Services \$15.42m (12.34%)
- Commercial Product Development \$0.51m (0.41%)
- Aspect Practice \$0.91m (0.73%)
- Education \$74.91m (59.95%)
- Positive Partnerships \$5.25m (4.2%)
- Other Operational Costs \$2.23m (1.79%)

Aspect Education accounted for 59.95% of total expenses by business group, followed by Aspect Individual and Community Services at 17.54%. By expense type, employee and related expenses were \$100.12m representing 80.13% of total expenditure, which was in line with our ongoing strategy to invest in service quality and people. Other expenses, excluding salary expenses, increased by \$0.37m to \$24.83m in 2024.

Capital expenditure in 2024 was \$18.83m compared to \$17.70m in 2023, a considerable portion of which was related to the upgrade of Aspect Western Sydney School, Aspect Hills Shire School and Aspect Hunter School Port Macquarie campus. The remainder was related to a range of improvements, such as facilities improvements and technology upgrades.

Assets and reserves

In 2024, Aspect's overall net assets increased by \$29.43m from the previous year, reaching \$170.16m. This growth reflects the organisation's ongoing financial strength and resilience, ensuring it remains well-positioned to support its purpose and long-term objectives.

Throughout the year, Aspect's cash position fluctuated due to the timing of government funding and the invoicing of school fees in three instalments. By the end of the period, cash and cash equivalent balances increased steadily from \$70.91m to \$75.45m.

The Investment Reserve also saw an increase of \$1.75m, bringing the total to \$18.24m as of 31 December 2024, a result of the proactive management undertaken in close collaboration with our investment advisers, Perpetual. The portfolio's performance is regularly assessed against carefully selected benchmarks that align with Aspect's strategic priorities, liquidity requirement and risk tolerance, with ESG issues also considered as outlined in Aspect's Investment Policy Statement.

As a key pillar of Aspect's financial strategy, the reserve plays a crucial role in strengthening long-term financial sustainability. The reserve generated by each school is earmarked exclusively for the school's future needs, while the remaining funds have been used to bridge gaps in Aspect's non-educational services. Over the past two years, more than \$3m has been invested in these areas. Additionally, the reserve acts as a safeguard, offering the flexibility to support major Board-approved capital investments aligned with strategic objectives or to address significant business contingencies as needed.

On the liabilities side, service contract liabilities amounted to \$9.56m, primarily representing government funding received in advance, which will be allocated to programs and capital projects in 2025. Additionally, the provisions' balance stood at \$14.46m, largely consisting of accrued staff entitlements such as annual leave and long service leave.

Conclusion

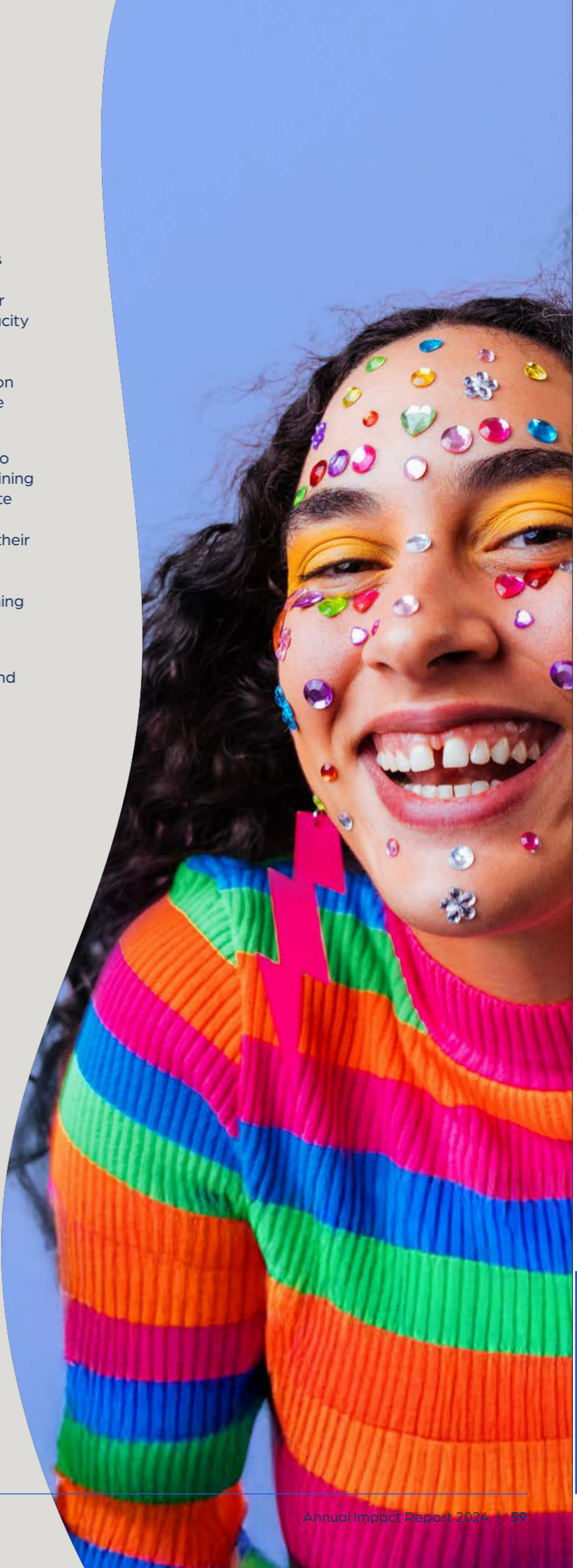
A strong financial foundation is crucial to Aspect's ability to deliver high-quality, sustainable and innovative services well into the future. In 2024, our financial performance has strengthened our capacity to implement our strategic vision and expand our reach and impact. With the rollout of the National Autism Strategy and anticipated shifts in education funding, Aspect's financial stability ensures we are well-positioned to adapt and respond effectively.

The Board and management remain committed to enhancing financial management capabilities, refining processes, and developing robust tools to navigate an increasingly complex operating environment. I would like to acknowledge the Finance team for their commitment to strengthening financial oversight throughout the year. Their collaboration with the Executive team has been instrumental in maintaining Aspect's financial resilience.

Finally, I extend my sincere gratitude to my fellow Board members, particularly the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, whose unwavering guidance and support have been invaluable in 2024.

*M. Latour*

Marielle Latour  
Honorary Treasurer





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